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# The Realism of Hans Morgenthau

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The Realism of Hans Morgenthau

by

Brian A. Keaney

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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Dedication

For Patricia

and in memory of

Moyra, Charlie and Jim

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## The Realism of Hans Morgenthau

Brian A. Keaney

### ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the life and career of Hans J. Morgenthau, commonly accepted as the father of the realist paradigm within the field of international relations. It does so by offering a dynamic revisionist account of the nature of Morgenthau's classical realism and suggests how the approach discussed might have wider application in the field of international relations. Traditional perspectives of Morgenthau suggest that in the course of his career, he changed from holding what would generally be labeled a conservative political viewpoint to a liberal political viewpoint. This thesis takes a different starting point. It does so by suggesting that constancy, not change, was the hallmark of Morgenthau's intellectual development. Thus, what appeared to be a shift from right to left, was in fact merely the different applications of a consistent reading of international relations.

Central to this interpretation of Morgenthau's work is the second innovative argument of this thesis: that Morgenthau's realism contained within it the potential for both conservative (as traditionally defined) and progressive (as traditionally defined) applications. Acknowledging that realism as conservatism is already an accepted understanding within the field of international relations, this thesis focuses on drawing out the progressive potential of Morgenthau's realism, by proving that what appeared in Morgenthau's later career to be an intellectual shift in fact stemmed from the progressivism inherent in the actual existing realism of Morgenthau's early career applied to new situations met in his later career

Based on this analysis of what has been accomplished within the framework of classical realism by Morgenthau, it is the challenge of this thesis to invite contemporary

realist thinkers to do the same. In short, the thesis invites contemporary theorists to explore, recover and reclaim the liberatory and progressive potential of classical realism. In so doing, the thesis suggests the potential for two new research programs. First, reclaiming the liberatory potential of Morgenthau's approach and use of realism provides for the creation of a new understanding of contemporary realism which can transcend both the essentially sterile internal debates between classical and neo-realism and those between classical realism, neo-realism and neo-classical realism. Second, foregrounding the liberatory possibilities of classical realism offers a fruitful approach for the recreation of common ground between realism and other more 'politically progressive' paradigms in contemporary international relations theory such as peace research or constructivism. It is the final hope for this thesis that it might, by building bridges within and between different fields, lay the foundations of a possible path for the reintegration of the whole discipline of international relations.

## Introduction: Defining Realism

Over the course of the past half-century, realism, or the attempt to understand the behavior of states based on the recognition that “international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power,” has been one of the central paradigms in United States International Relations theory.<sup>1</sup> The concept of realism or *realpolitik* can be dated back to Thucydides and Ancient Greece or perhaps Cardinal Richelieu of the French Ancien Regime.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, more commonly associated with Otto Von Bismarck, the first Chancellor of Germany and his efforts to create a nuanced counter-balancing between the great European powers so as to avoid a general war in the later half of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In the United States it is yet more commonly associated with the work of Hans J. Morgenthau, who both as a professor at the University of Chicago, and as the author of *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, the seminal textbook of realist theory, articulated what came to be accepted as the foundations of a realist understanding of the post-war Cold War world.

If Morgenthau articulated and defended realism for over thirty years from within the academy, it was policy makers in Washington who attempted to apply its theories to the reality of international relations. Represented in such key policies as containment - the conviction on the part of U.S. policy makers that they should try and ‘contain’ the power and influence of the Soviet Union - realism came to be as central to the post-1945

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<sup>1</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948),

<sup>2</sup> Thucydides, *The Melian Dialogue, The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (Harmonsworth: Penguin Classics, 1954) cited in John A. Vasquez, *Classics of International Relations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996). Cardinal Armand Jean du Plessis Richelieu, *The Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu*, trans. Henry Bertram Hill, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Man and Statesman*, (New York: Knopf, 1955); David Blackbourn, *A History of Germany 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).



foreign policy of the United States as it was to the field of international relations.<sup>4</sup> Although the practical application of containment was first laid out in George F. Kennan's famous Long Telegram, made public in 1947 in his anonymous *Foreign Affairs* article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," better known as Article X, it was Hans Morgenthau who provided the intellectual basis for the policy.<sup>5</sup> The readiness of United States policymakers to embrace both the theory and practice of realism may be traced in part to the tremendous influence exerted by Morgenthau over the future U.S. policymaking elite. Indeed, it would not be too much to suggest that for many U.S. diplomats, politicians and civil servants, Morgenthau's realism was the framework through which they understood their world.

As significant as the theory of realism has proven to be to the practice of politics, however, its importance within International Relations theory has declined. As Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman have pointed out, "realists believe that realism is the only story of world politics. Post-realists assert that realism is only one story among many: although it is an important story, it provides neither the only plausible explanation nor the only possible world."<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, theorists such as Alexander Wendt have argued that contrary to realism's focus upon power and material power structures, it is ideas and culture that govern relations between states.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis takes a different starting point. As it does so, it offers three major conclusions. First, through an analysis of the published writings of Hans Morgenthau over the course of his forty-year career, the thesis suggests that Morgenthau, despite appearances to the contrary remained consistent in his thought and analyses. Simply put, Morgenthau, in the course of his career, appeared to shift from what would generally be labeled a conservative political viewpoint to a liberal political viewpoint. In 1948, he laid out the basis for what would become the containment of communism in Eastern Europe by advocating an aggressive stance toward the Soviet Union; in 1968, he argued for the acceptance of communism in South East Asia by advocating the withdrawal of U.S.

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<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Waltz *Theory of International Politics* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> George F. Kennan "The Sources of Soviet conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, XXV (July, 1947), 566-82

<sup>6</sup> Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman, "Realism and Rhetoric in International Relations," in Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman ed., *Post Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

troops. Despite the apparent shift in thought suggested by these different policies, however, it is the thesis of this paper that they in fact represent two sides of the same intellectual understanding of international relations, two sides of realism.

The second conclusion offered by the thesis is contained within the first: that realism contains within it the potential for both conservative and progressive analyses, and that the likelihood of one or the other being suggested at any given time or in any given situation depends on the particulars of the time and situation. Thus, contrary to traditional understandings of realism as a purely conservative doctrine, this thesis demonstrates that realism contains within it a progressive, liberatory and even moral component. It is this component which will provide the mechanism by which Morgenthau will appear to shift from conservative to liberal. The conservative component of realism has long been recognized. It is the aim of this thesis to break new ground by highlighting the progressive component – not as a sign of Morgenthau’s change of heart but as a sign of the progressivism inherent within realism.

Third, the thesis suggests that accepting the legitimacy of these understandings of Morgenthau changes the manner in which Morgenthau’s work should be read, and thereby changes both our understanding of what realism really is or was meant to be, and our understanding of the consequences of the implementation of realist theory by so many practical disciples in the years since 1945.

In order to understand both the subtleties of Morgenthau’s original concepts of realism along with the significance of his evolving applications, it is best to begin with an analysis of what might best be termed ‘basic’ realist theory. As proposed by Morgenthau in the first edition of *Politics Among Nations*, published in 1948, realism may be said to be based on a number of key assumptions. Firstly, that the state is the central actor on the world stage. Thus for Morgenthau, the implication is that international organizations and other non-governmental formations, whether commercial enterprises or co-coordinated networks of individuals of like mind, are either essentially reflective of the interests of established sovereign states, and thus would be covered under the general rubric of his classical realism, or are simply not relevant in terms of his paradigm. Secondly, that the natural state of international politics is that of anarchy - anarchy not in the sense of a war of all against all but anarchy in the sense that there is no legal authority to bind a state

when it perceives that breaking any agreement with other states is in its interests. Morgenthau did not suggest that the international legal order of conventions, treaties, agreements, understandings and common shared practices of states have no effect but rather that their effect is contingent upon the value placed upon them by the states which observe them. Thirdly, that all states will seek to have the greatest amount of power that they possibly can. Fourth, that it is the intrinsic nature of the human actors who control the states that causes states to behave as they do. Fifth, that in their pursuit of security or power, states will conduct politics and adopt policies according to a rational framework. Sixth, that force, or the ability and willingness to use force when perceived to be necessary, is an integral part of statehood.

Building on Morgenthau's work, Kenneth Waltz later adapted realist theory to incorporate the notion that it was the international structure, not the deliberate willed actions of men and women, which influenced states' behavior. According to Waltz it is the structure of the international system itself that determines the behavior of states.<sup>8</sup> In the years since, Waltz' neo-realism, or structural realism, has of course been further refined by other scholars. Indeed, contemporary realist theory or neo-classical realism now contains within it a number of critical debates. There is, for example, the debate between offensive and defensive realists. Offensive realists hold the view that the constant ebb and flow of security and power between states guarantees that the international system will be dominated by opportunistic states forever fearfully looking over their shoulders at potential and actual competitors. According to this offensive interpretation, states must continuously seek to strengthen themselves and their position vis-à-vis other states, even in the absence of a directly perceived threat. As a result, the behavior and desire of states are mainly shaped by a perception of the relative capability of other states. Thus the unknowable future and risk of threat are characteristics of the offensive realist.<sup>9</sup>

By contrast, defensive realists hold the view that real security is available, and that the best way for a state to achieve it is to forgo overtly offensive postures. In other words, because of the anarchical nature of the international environment, the security of

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<sup>8</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

<sup>9</sup> For an explication of offensive realism see, John J. Mearsheimer *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

the nation is not always best achieved through a maximization of the nation's power vis-à-vis other nations.<sup>10</sup> According to this defensive interpretation, the international system creates positive incentives for behavior that does not threaten the wellbeing of other states and which thereby preserves the stability of the international system. Unlike offensive realism which posits a direct relationship between the international system and the policy choices that states make, defensive realism sees the matter as being more complex, in that the relationship between the nature of the 'international' and the behavior of states is frequently of an indirect nature. While it is possible to present this conflict within realism in other terms – as a debate between hawkish and dovish realists, or between optimistic and pessimistic realists – the offensive/defensive characterization seems best able to capture the two sets of counter positions.

The vitality of the debates outlined above suggests that realism is a sufficiently thriving force in International Relations practice for theorists to want to figure it out. This thesis represents a contribution to that debate. Specifically, it seeks to reclaim the liberatory potential of classical realism and in so doing suggests as one of the implications of that reclamation, a new research program which may bring about the possibility of real and systematic integration and melding between realism and other paradigms in the field such as constructivism and democratic peace theory. Not alone then does this thesis seek to reclaim Morgenthau's own interpretation and application of realism in a liberatory direction, but it also offers a path toward a new general theory of international relations for the twenty-first century; a theory which may finally resolve the decades' old tensions between realist and idealistic or normative approaches to the field.

The thesis will begin by examining in Chapter Two Morgenthau's life, bringing out the influences of his youth which appear to have affected his later years, but focusing on his adult life and his formation and articulation of realism. The thesis will pay particular attention to Morgenthau's protestations against United States' policy in Vietnam, illustrating how what has traditionally been perceived as a liberal expression of protest more clearly fits within an enhanced understanding of realism. Indeed, the

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<sup>10</sup> Key defensive realist works include Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) and *Revolution and War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Snyder, *Myths of Empire*; William C. Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

argument that the issues involved in Morgenthau's appraisal of Vietnam illustrates more clearly than anything else the combination of flexibility and constancy that was inherent within Morgenthau's understanding of realism is a thread which will run throughout the thesis.

Chapter Three looks at the various editions of *Politics Among Nations*, drawing out the core paradigm of realism while also illustrating how Morgenthau adapted each edition to suit changing times. Chapter Four and Five consider selections of Morgenthau's other published works, again using them to show the consistency with which Morgenthau approached the issue of international relations. Chapter Six focuses on Morgenthau's published reviews of the work of other scholars. More than some academics, Morgenthau used the opportunity created by these reviews to articulate his own views, judging a book largely by whether it fitted within his framework or not, whether it offered a helpful lens through which to view the field and practice of international relations. Finally, Chapter Seven, the conclusion, places Morgenthau's achievements in a larger context, offering suggestions for future research. Before we can appreciate the significance of Morgenthau the scholar, however, we need to learn something of Morgenthau the man. It is to that task that we now turn.

Chapter One:  
Morgenthau: From Realist to Realist

Hans Joachim Morgenthau was born on 17 February 1904 in Coburg in North East Germany. As the seat of local government at the height of the German Empire under William II, Coburg represented the heart of German conservatism.<sup>11</sup> This political environment clearly suited the Morgenthau family who, in recognition of their perception of themselves as loyal subjects of the German state named their only child after the youngest son of the Kaiser, Prince Joachim of Prussia; commissioned a portrait photograph of the young Morgenthau dressed in the uniform of a Prussian Dragoon;<sup>12</sup> and mixed in sufficiently rarified circles to be invited to the court receptions of the Duchess of Bavaria.<sup>13</sup> Befitting his membership in this social class, Morgenthau attended an elite secondary school – the Humanistisches Gymnasium – where as Morgenthau described his fellow pupils “there was not a worker’s child among them.”<sup>14</sup> Morgenthau’s perception of himself during his school career was as a loyal German enthusiastic for the success of the empire in the Great War.<sup>15</sup> Despite being the only Jewish pupil in his class Morgenthau perceived himself to be a loyal and integrated German subject. At this point in his life, Morgenthau already had some sense of what would later become his career; rejecting the idea of becoming “a run-of-the-mill lawyer or teacher,” and hoping instead to become “a writer, perhaps a professor, maybe even a poet.”<sup>16</sup> In any case, receiving the Abitur with high awards in spring 1923, Morgenthau seemed destined to follow in the footsteps of his father into a position of respect in the Weimar middle class.

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<sup>11</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “An Intellectual Autobiography: 1904-1932,” *Society*, Vol. 15, No. 2, (Jan/Feb, 1978), 63-69.

<sup>12</sup> This charming picture was published in Morgenthau, “An Intellectual Autobiography,” 63.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Frei., *Hans J. Morgenthau. An Intellectual Biography*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 13.

<sup>14</sup> Frei.. *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 13. Morgenthau, Johnson interview, quoted in Frie, p.15.

<sup>15</sup> Frei.. *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 15. Morgenthau recorded this view in a school composition written in March, 1918.

<sup>16</sup> Morgenthau, “An Intellectual Autobiography,” 63.

Morgenthau entered the University of Frankfurt am Main intending to study philosophy.<sup>17</sup> Unhappy with his experience of philosophy as taught there, however, he switched to law in the autumn of 1923 at the University of Munich. Still determined to study philosophy, however, Morgenthau complemented his law studies by taking additional courses in his areas of interest. Specifically, he studied with art historian Heinrich Wolfflin, and the nineteenth-century historian Hermann Oncken. It was the latter who introduced Morgenthau to Bismarck's foreign policy, and more generally, to the relationship between foreign and military politics. Oncken's work had a "profound impression" upon Morgenthau. As he phrased it, "For the first time I felt the impact of a coherent system of thought, primarily a distillation of Bismarck's realpolitik that appeared to support my isolated and impressionistic judgments on contemporary issues of foreign policy"<sup>18</sup> These "isolated and impressionistic judgments" albeit further developed, and perhaps better articulated, would form the basis of much of Morgenthau's subsequent writings, appearing as a consistent train of thought throughout his publications. Some sense of the debt Morgenthau perceived himself to owe to Oncken may be seen by his always pausing in front of the photograph of Oncken that hung in the History Department at the University of Chicago.<sup>19</sup>

A third influence on Morgenthau's intellectual formation at Munich was the Professor of Constitutional and Church Law, Heinrich Rothenbuecher. Rothenbuecher impressed Morgenthau not only on account of his work - the political and social philosophy of Max Weber - but because he was "a man of exemplary and, in the contemporary German context, extraordinary civil courage." Morgenthau perceived a similarity between the subject of the seminar, Weber, and the teacher, Rothenbuecher, as both men approached political problems with "detachment, objectivity, and penetrating intelligence."<sup>20</sup> In light of Morgenthau's expressed admiration for both the men and the character of their intellectual endeavors, it is perhaps hardly surprising that he appears to have modeled his own subsequent role as a scholar upon them. Thus, whilst the political

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<sup>17</sup> Morgenthau, "An Intellectual Autobiography," 63.

<sup>18</sup> Morgenthau, "An Intellectual Autobiography," 64.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth W. Thompson, "The Writing of Politics Among Nations: Its Sources and its Origins," *International Studies: Notes of the International Studies Association Special Issue: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (1999). Oncken had been a visiting professor at Chicago in 1905, a prefiguration of Morgenthau's own later trajectory.

<sup>20</sup> Morgenthau, "An Intellectual Autobiography," 64.

turmoil in America caused by the Vietnam War was hardly akin to that caused by the rise of the Nazis, and while a number of intensive tax audits hardly compared with persecution by the Gestapo, still in his own work, Morgenthau held by his convictions, refusing to concede when it might have made him more popular with the authorities to have done so.

Morgenthau graduated from Munich in February 1927 and immediately began training as a lawyer. The professional part of his training consisted of a series of placements with various government departments. His main work focused on drafting briefs on points of criminal and labor law. Whilst Morgenthau found this work to be sometimes fascinating as an intellectual exercise, he perceived the questions with which it dealt to be “marginal to the crucial issues with which society had to come to terms.” According to Morgenthau what really mattered in contemporary Germany “was not the merits of different legal interpretations but the distribution of political power.”<sup>21</sup> In the context of Weimar Germany, a democratic government facing threats from all sides, Morgenthau’s analysis certainly makes sense and helps explain perhaps his later perception that power and the nature of its distribution were the core issues within society.

As he trained, Morgenthau commenced work on his doctorate at the University of Frankfurt which he completed in 1929 with a thesis entitled “The International Judicial Function and the Concept of Politics.” Morgenthau had first become interested in the topic of international law under the tutelage of Professor Karl Neumeyer at the University of Munich. Building on his work with Neumeyer, which had led him to the conclusion that international law was “a particularly weak kind of law,” Morgenthau in his thesis suggested that its weakness stemmed from “the intrusion of international politics.” Taking this discovery “one step further” prompted Morgenthau to issue what would come to be the essence of his later work: “what really mattered in relations between nations was not international law but international politics.”<sup>22</sup> Thus we see that the constancy that would later come to be a hallmark of Morgenthau’s realist thought after *Politics Among Nations*, was in fact already a part of his intellectual framework twenty years before. His

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<sup>21</sup> Morgenthau, “An Intellectual Autobiography,” 65.

<sup>22</sup> Morgenthau, “An Intellectual Autobiography,” 65.



experience in the German law courts, his experience in the archives, and his experience living in Weimar Germany, convinced him of the twin propositions that what mattered in any society was power, and the nature of its distribution, and that what mattered in international relations was politics not law, or as he would later phrase it, the politics of power as it was actually was, not the aspirations of how things should be.

Morgenthau's last legal position, toward the end of 1931, was that of Acting President of the Labor Law Court in Frankfurt. He found the experience dissatisfying, however, and returned to his earlier focus upon an academic career. To achieve this he needed to complete his habilitation, an advanced doctorate. With no openings available in his own university Morgenthau took leave from his judicial function in February 1932 and went to Geneva to enroll in the Graduate Institute for International Studies, taking a position as an instructor in German public law at the University of Geneva. His time in Switzerland was not overly happy, however, as he grappled with anti-Semitic students, fought with his colleagues, was unable to teach as much as he would have liked, and found himself in sufficient financial peril that he had to supplement his university stipend with some journalism. Perhaps in part as a result of these difficulties, Morgenthau initially failed his habilitation, although he did, after much effort, eventually get this decision reversed. Unfortunately, however, even if he had wanted to return to his post as a judge, from which he had been on leave-of-absence since 1931, it would have been impossible for at this point the national history of Germany caught up with Morgenthau and as a result of the Nazi "Law for the Restoration of the Career Civil Service," Morgenthau was purged on 17 November 1933 from his position with the Frankfurt Labor Court.<sup>23</sup>

The next four years were cumulatively quite difficult for Morgenthau, being marked by his attempts to secure employment, of a kind he found amenable, wherever he could – quite a difficult task for a Jewish refugee in the 1930s. Morgenthau was initially fortunate, however, that two years later, when his time in Switzerland came to an end, and he was unable to return to Germany, he received assistance from the Emergency Committee for German Scholars Abroad which arranged for him, in 1935, to go to Spain. There he joined the faculty of the newly-created Institute of International and Economic

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<sup>23</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 49.

Studies as a professor of international law. Whilst in Spain Morgenthau married Irma Thormann (with whom he subsequently had two children) and took his first steps as a public intellectual by writing for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, the major Swiss daily newspaper-of-record.<sup>24</sup> The paper was renowned both for its extensive coverage of economic and business matters and for its intellectual and in-depth articles and was, and still is, politically close to the liberal Free Democratic Party of Switzerland.

Morgenthau was in Merano, Italy on vacation in the summer of July 1936, when the Spanish Civil War began. Unable to return to Madrid because of the fighting, Morgenthau and his wife stayed in Italy for several months before continuing to Paris, where they were to later learn that the Institute in Madrid had closed.<sup>25</sup> Forced out of Germany, unable to work in France, and now shut out of Spain, Morgenthau and his wife were forced to look outside Europe for a place to live. Whilst he had not previously considered the United States as a possible home, it rapidly appeared, in light of the growing anti-semitism in Europe, as one of the few options available to him. It proved difficult, however, to get an entry visa, but after some time and through a combination of good luck and good connections, Morgenthau and his wife immigrated to the United States in July 1937.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, Morgenthau joined the great wave of refugees who fled to North America from Nazi Germany and who helped fight America's war. Unlike many of his contemporaries, however, Morgenthau's contribution to America was neither the defeat of the Nazis nor the creation of the Atomic Bomb; his war was the Cold War, his enemy was the Soviet Union, and his contribution was the political theory of realism.

On the road to that contribution, however, Morgenthau had first to support himself by working as an instructor in government at Brooklyn College.<sup>27</sup> While there, Morgenthau made it clear through his teaching that despite his experiences over the last few years, and despite his difficulties in Germany and Switzerland, he had resisted radicalization and had in fact remained the staunch German Conservative of his youth.

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<sup>24</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 50.

<sup>25</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 57.

<sup>26</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 59-61. Frie records that the Morgenthaus were able to get a visa to the U.S. in part because of a note of support from Irma Morgenthau's wealthy second cousin, Samuel Rothschild.

<sup>27</sup> "Hans Joachim Morgenthau," *Current Biography 1963*, ed. Charles Moritz, (New York: The M.W. Wilson Company, 1963), 275.

Morgenthau maintained his conservatism even to the extent of having difficulty with students over his “anti-communist position.”<sup>28</sup> In light of these difficulties, it is perhaps not surprising that Morgenthau was happy to leave Brooklyn in 1939 for a full time job at the University of Kansas City, even though the position carried a heavy teaching load of 18 hours split between the Liberal Arts College and the School of Law.<sup>29</sup> Even at Kansas, however, Morgenthau continued to be dogged by controversy. Feuding with the administration, for example, resulted in his being fired, and although, rather like his experience with habilitation in Germany, he later forced the decision to be reversed, he made few friends in Kansas. Despite the feuds, however, he did take the opportunity to become both a U.S. citizen and a member of the Missouri Bar.<sup>30</sup> In September 1943 Morgenthau’s life took a dramatic turn - perhaps even more significant for Morgenthau than his original entry into the United States: he was offered the opportunity to leave Kansas by replacing Quincy Wright for 6 months at the University of Chicago.<sup>31</sup> The position was to be the making of Morgenthau.

At Chicago, first as a visiting and subsequently as a permanent Associate Professor, Morgenthau began work in the then new interdisciplinary subject of International Relations. In 1946 he published his first monograph, *Scientific Man versus Power Politics*. Following this success, Morgenthau turned his attention to what was to be his greatest work, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, the first edition of which was published in September 1948. The book was immensely popular, filling a gap in the market for an up to date text to supply the growing population of US universities. Proving far more popular than its main competitor, Fredrick Schuman’s *International Politics*, Morgenthau’s book was the first coherent text that sought to make sense of the postwar world. On the strength of this success Morgenthau became a Full Professor in 1949 at the age of 45, and in 1950 was awarded funding to set up the Center for the Study of American Foreign and Military Policy in 1950 of which he remained the Director until 1968.<sup>32</sup>

It was during these years that Morgenthau’s work became an essential fixture on

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<sup>28</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 65.

<sup>29</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 66-67.

<sup>30</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 69.

<sup>31</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 70.

<sup>32</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 74.

the syllabi of so many courses in International Relations taught across the country, and during this same time that realism became an integral part of IR theory. Indeed within a month of the book's publication, it was adopted as a textbook for foreign policy and international relations by Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia and Notre Dame, and within six months by ninety additional colleges.<sup>33</sup> Arguing that "international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power," Morgenthau proposed that the only correct approach to the conduct of United States' foreign policy was an approach based on the tenets of realism.<sup>34</sup> Thus, only a robust application of balance of power politics would be sure to generate the most positive possible outcome for the United States. After the publication of *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau found himself with the opportunity to express his concerns on an increasingly broad canvas.

He did so within the context of the Cold War. While the origins of this ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union can be traced back to 1917 and Lenin's subsequent announcement of the Third International, the years immediately after 1945 saw the conflict between the two remaining super powers escalate into a full-scale Cold War.<sup>35</sup> As might be expected given both his background and his current residency, Morgenthau backed the United States. More than this, he specifically advocated an aggressive realist approach to U.S. foreign policy, an approach predicated less on securing an ideal peace between nations and more on recognizing that peace in the long-term could only be achieved through a realistic assessment of national interest. In short, Morgenthau believed that the United States should practice what he preached.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 73.

<sup>34</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).

<sup>35</sup> In establishing the Third International, Lenin, at least in theory, offered support to socialists elsewhere in the world who sought to establish socialism in their countries. As might be expected, whether intended as such or not, the Third International was perceived as a threat by the leaders of the Western Democracies.

<sup>36</sup> For an analysis of realism in action in U.S. foreign policy, see Joel H. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists : Political Realism, Responsible Power, and American Culture in the Nuclear Age* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

This presumed relationship between what Morgenthau taught and what U.S. diplomats practiced worked well throughout the 1950s. The result was Morgenthau's increasing academic stature as he was offered Visiting Professorships across the country, including positions at Berkeley, Harvard, Northwestern, Columbia and Yale. His perceived direct relevance to future policy makers, militarists and analysts may be gauged from his frequent invitations to lecture at the Armed Forces Staff College, the NATO Defense College, and the Air, Army, Navy and National War Colleges, as well as his association with the Washington Center for Foreign Policy Research.<sup>37</sup> In all, and standing testament to his significance to the field, Morgenthau delivered over 1300 formal guest lectures between 1950 and 1980.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to his academic credits, Morgenthau throughout the 1950s grew in political fame as others perceived him to be a theorist willing and able to intervene and advise on matters of current policy. Thus, at the invitation of George Kennan, the author of the famous Long Telegram in 1947 which had first outlined the case for the policy of containment subsequently implemented by President Harry S. Truman, Morgenthau had right of audience at the State Department Planning Committee between 1948 and 1951 - the key years of the development of the realism-based policy of containment.<sup>39</sup> In 1951 the State Department drew upon Morgenthau's presumed area of natural interest and expertise by asking him to make an official visit to occupied Austria and to offer advice on the removal of Allied control and the restoration of sovereignty. Building on this visit, and perhaps in recognition of the larger relevance assigned to Morgenthau's work, the Department subsequently invited Morgenthau to visit South East Asia in 1954. The visit proved to be the start of a turning point in Morgenthau's career causing him ultimately to come into conflict with the practitioners of policy within the U.S. Government.<sup>40</sup>

### Warnings About Vietnam

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<sup>37</sup> "Hans Joachim Morgenthau," *Current Biography 1963*, ed. Charles Moritz, (New York: The M.W. Wilson Company, 1963), 276.

<sup>38</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 75.

<sup>39</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 77, note 64.

<sup>40</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 77, note 64. Frie records that Morgenthau also served as a Defense Department advisor between 1963 and 1965, although little actual use was made of his expertise at this time.

During his visit Morgenthau had the opportunity to make the acquaintance of South Vietnamese policymakers of the highest level, including a meeting with Ngo Dinh Diem himself. Morgenthau published the findings of his trip to South East Asia in a series of articles in *The New Republic*. In these essays Morgenthau sounded a note of warning. At first glance the warning might have appeared odd, in light of the fact that U.S. policy in South East Asia appeared to be based on the very theories of realism propounded by Morgenthau in the classrooms of Chicago. Visiting Vietnam, however, and seeing the consequences of U.S. involvement in the region, prompted Morgenthau to analyze the likely causes and consequences behind the U.S. presence. Outlining the situation, Morgenthau described the war as consisting of one superpower engaged in warfare and diplomacy in a region outside its direct and natural area of concern, and another much smaller power engaged in (depending on one's point of view) a civil war or at the very least local war.<sup>41</sup>

Thus right from the beginning of his association with Vietnam, Morgenthau expressed reservations about U.S. policy. In particular, Morgenthau had a fundamentally hesitant view about John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State under President Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953 to 1959. In his piece on Dulles published in 1961 as a chapter in *An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century*, Morgenthau fiercely criticized the development of U.S. foreign policy under Dulles.<sup>42</sup> Suggesting that Dulles was simply not up to the task, and furthermore was one who gave the impression to those with whom he dealt of being deceptive, Morgenthau evidenced his growing disillusionment with those in government who were in charge of the conduct of U.S. foreign affairs. After his first experience of Vietnam, Morgenthau's growing disillusionment with the actual conduct of foreign policy became more obvious through his writings and public pronouncements over the course of the next few years. Thus although Morgenthau acted as a consultant for the Department of Defense as late as 1962, his growing disenchantment with the actual conduct of the foreign policy of the United

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<sup>41</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Immaturity of our Asian Policy," reprinted as "The Immaturity of our Asian Policy," in Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Impasse of American Foreign Policy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962), 251-277.

<sup>42</sup> Reprinted as "John Foster Dulles," in Hans J. Morgenthau, *Truth and Power*, (New York: Praeger, 1970), 87-108.

States increasingly led him to voice criticism of the government.

Thus even as his seminal work was becoming an essential part of the International Relations canon, Morgenthau, in response to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, began to shift his political focus. He did so in the full glare of the popular political limelight. With the fruition of television as a medium for popular political discussion, Morgenthau became increasingly involved in public debate. This was especially true when, following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the fall of Diem, the Lyndon B. Johnson administration significantly escalated the military involvement of the United States in the conflict in Vietnam. Morgenthau became increasingly concerned, and after observing the course of the conflict in the early part of 1965, argued in a major piece published in *The New York Times* that the United States should extract itself from Indo-China by diplomatic means.<sup>43</sup> In the event, 1965 did prove to be a turning point in U.S. involvement in Vietnam but not for the reasons hoped for by Morgenthau. Ironically the year was also a turning point for Morgenthau's public and private political theories.

Responding to Johnson's Johns Hopkins University speech of April 7, Morgenthau praised Johnson for recognizing that the communist world was not a monolith and for accepting that the United States would need to have a repertoire of different types of responses to different types of situations. Referring to this particular situation, Morgenthau explained that "we are militarily engaged in Vietnam by virtue of a basic principle of our foreign policy that was implicit in the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and that was put into practice by John Foster Dulles from 1947 onwards. This principle is the military containment of communism."<sup>44</sup> According to Morgenthau it was now time to change the policy, to adopt a different repertoire for a different situation: "...the alternative to our present policies in Vietnam would be this: a face-saving agreement which would allow us to disengage ourselves militarily...; restoration of the status quo of the Geneva Agreement of 1954, with special emphasis upon all Vietnamese elections; co-operation with the Soviet Union in support of a Titoist All-Vietnamese government which would be likely to emerge from such elections."<sup>45</sup>

Morgenthau's criticism and call for withdrawal might appear odd given that

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<sup>43</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "We Are Deluding Ourselves in Vietnam," *New York Times*, April 18, 1965.

<sup>44</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

*Politics Among Nations* and its realist approach might be said to have provided a critical part of the intellectual framework for the development of the policy of containment. The paradox is easily resolved, however. Realism expects nation states to act according to their perceived self-interest. In his call for withdrawal and an effective acceptance of a communist Vietnam, Morgenthau was not suggesting that the United States abandon its natural self-interest. Rather, he was suggesting that the Cold War and the general fight against communism, though first targeted effectively against a Soviet Union perceived to be ideologically and territorially expansionist, had now blinded United States' policymakers to the real interests of their state. For this 'blinding' Morgenthau placed a great deal of responsibility on John Foster Dulles: "it is ironic that this simple juxtaposition of "Communism" and "Free World" was erected by John Foster Dulles' crusading moralism into the guiding principle of American foreign policy when the national communism of Yugoslavia, the neutralism of the Third World and the incipient split between the Soviet Union and China were rendering that juxtaposition invalid."<sup>46</sup>

Accusing policymakers of being blind to the United States' real interests and focusing his critique upon one individual allowed Morgenthau to present his argument still within a realist framework. For what is significant about Morgenthau's reasoning is that it was based not on a moral assessment of U.S. policy but rather on a realist analysis of what actions or policies in the given circumstances would best serve the interests of the United States. Thus Morgenthau explained, "for better or for worse we live again in an age of revolution. It is the task of statesmanship not to oppose what cannot be opposed with a chance of success but to bend it to one's own interests."<sup>47</sup> Bismarck himself could hardly have phrased it better. In effect, it was no longer a realist policy for the United States to continue a military engagement in South East Asia. Quite the contrary. The realist policy would be to accept what could not be changed – the presence of communism in the region – and figure out how best to turn that presence to the advantage of the United States.

If Morgenthau blamed Dulles for the mis-application of containment, he also blamed Diem for changing the rules of the game within Vietnam. According to

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<sup>46</sup> Op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>47</sup> Op. cit., p. 85.



Morgenthau it was the refusal of Diem to agree to all-Vietnamese elections following what was supposed to be the temporary division at the 17<sup>th</sup> Parallel that committed the country to war.<sup>48</sup> It was then the decision (and fault) of the United States “to change the character of the war by unilateral declaration from a South Vietnamese civil war to a war of ‘foreign aggression.’ Aggression from the north...”<sup>49</sup> Morgenthau articulated his assessment of U.S. policy in Vietnam not merely to play the ‘blame game’ but in the real hope that his advice would be acted upon. Thus he concluded his review “hop[ing] and pray[ing] that vaunted pragmatism and common sense of the American mind...would act as a corrective upon those misconceptions before they lead us from the blind alley in which we find ourselves today to the rim of the abyss.”<sup>50</sup> Again, it is worth reiterating that Morgenthau did not call for withdrawal because America was losing. He called for withdrawal because it was his belief that America could not win, and that to continue would therefore be to act contrary to America’s national interests. It would be to act contrary to the policies suggested by a realist understanding of international politics.

In the aftermath of his *New York Times* piece, Morgenthau clearly nailed his flag to the mast of opposition to the war and was thus caught up in the maelstrom of academic debate over the utility and righteousness of American involvement in Vietnam. As *The New York Times* reported on May 2, 1965, the divisions within academia were not always along ‘party’ or traditional lines. Thus, the debate “...has now reached the point...where the prominent spokesmen of both sides are now fighting with each other, with Dean Rusk, the Phi Beta Kappa and Rhodes Scholar, condemning the opposition teachers and students; Joe Alsop calling Hans Morgenthau an ‘appeaser’ and Morgenthau describing Alsop’s pro-administration line a ‘scandal’”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> At a peace conference in 1954 the French and North Vietnamese had agreed to a temporary division of the country at the 17th parallel. The French in the South and the Army of North Vietnam in the North.

<sup>49</sup> Morgenthau, “Deluding Ourselves,” *New York Times*, 85.

<sup>50</sup> Op. cit, p. 87.

<sup>51</sup> James Reston, “Ann Arbor: The Strange Bedfellows in Vietnam,” *New York Times*, 2 May, 1965, E10. Joseph Alsop was an influential political journalist and commentator with easy access to the thinking behind government policy at very high levels. See generally, Robert W. Merry, *Taking on the World: Joseph and Stewart Alsop: Guardians of the American Century* (New York: Viking, 1996).

Perceived by the mid-1960s as a liberal both by many in Johnson's cabinet and by many fellow academics such as Henry Kissinger, then a professor at Harvard University, Morgenthau was involved in a long-running series of political engagements or sparring matches. He did so as a member of what British author Malcolm Muggeridge has referred to as the "telly-dons" – academics, or in Oxbridge parlance, dons such as historians A.J.P. Taylor and Hugh Trevor-Roper who were a constant presence on television, educating and influencing popular opinion on a variety of subjects. Morgenthau's success as a 'telly-don' in the United States in the post-war world derived at least in part, as had been the case for his first entrée into State Department business, from his Germanic heritage.

By the 1950s, in American popular culture, through sources as varied as the character Ludwig von Drake in the Disney pantheon of roles, to the 'professor' in the science fiction film, *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, the idea of the German professor as an authoritative source of comment and intellectual superiority was well-established. Thus, Morgenthau with his heavy German accent and the precise yet somewhat ponderous manner of a Weimar-educated professor slotted into an already created role. He did so in an environment which was in its own way making use of popular media. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the University of Chicago produced a radio program, *The Roundtable*, which was re-broadcast by radio stations all across the United States. Befitting his role as a 'telly-don' (or in this case radio-don) Morgenthau was a regular participant on this show.<sup>52</sup> Over the course of the decade, as Morgenthau's fame grew, so the canvas on which he propounded his opinions, educating and influencing the public, expanded.

Making his political sympathies plain, Morgenthau was prominent in the early days of the "Teach-In" movement on U.S. campuses and in May 1965 debated Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in the first nationally televised teach-in.<sup>53</sup> The next day, on NBC's Meet the Press he debated Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski, then a Soviet specialist at Columbia University.<sup>54</sup> Following his appearances on television, Morgenthau continued to

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<sup>52</sup> Frie, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 78.

<sup>53</sup> "Principal Participants in the Debate," *New York Times*, 16 May 1965, 62.

<sup>54</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski would later rise to high public office through his service to President Jimmy Carter as National Security Advisor from 1977-1981.

articulate his opposition to the war in a variety of formats. Just a few days after the Teach-In, for example, Morgenthau debated Frank Sieverts, a former State Department official of hawkish mien, at the New School for Social Research in New York.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, on 21 June 1965 he participated in a CBS News Special debate between McGeorge Bundy, National Security Advisor for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson from 1961-1966, Zbigniew Brezinski, G. J. Pauker, Rand Institute Asia specialist, O. Edmund Club, a former Asian expert who had been forced out of the State Department during the Eisenhower purges, and John D. Donahue, a former advisor to the South Vietnamese government.

In addition to speaking against the war, Morgenthau, perhaps inspired by his own position as a public academic (or telly-don), also articulated his views upon the correct role of intellectuals in society. According to Morgenthau, in an essay published in *The New Republic* in 1966, the intellectual was faced with a number of choices. First, he could excuse himself from the political world altogether; second, he could offer policy advice whilst remaining detached from the political process; and finally, he could actively involve himself in the world of politics as an expert. In light of the active political life adopted by Morgenthau, both during the height of the early Cold War and later with regard to Vietnam, and based on the lives and careers of academics he had admired as a student, it was clear that it was his belief that the intellectual had an obligation to help guide and improve government policy, “to involve himself in the world of politics as an expert.” Significantly, however, this role was to be played not as a politician, but as an academic expert, for it was the very fact of being an outsider, or depending on one’s point of view an insider protected from the outside that protected the academic from the pressures of politics. As Morgenthau phrased it, it was “...his immunity from outside pressure, manifested through job security through tenure” that gave the academic the freedom to criticize and advise. Referring specifically to his own situation, Morgenthau continued:

“This immunity provides the academic with opportunity as well as with temptation. He has the freedom to speak truth to power without needing to be afraid of more than irritating reprisals of the powers that be. The White House could threaten me with the FBI, and make the Internal Revenue Service waste

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<sup>55</sup> “New School Slates Debate on Vietnam,” *New York Times*, 21 May 1965, 13.

many man powers on repeated audits of my income tax return; it could order the Secretary of Defense to fire me as consultant to the Department of Defense, banish me from the councils of government, and ostracize me socially. But it could not deprive me of my livelihood or of my freedom to speak and write in so far as the media were willing to resist its pressure to deny me a hearing.”<sup>56</sup>

With these words, Morgenthau both challenged his harassment by the government and questioned President Johnson’s commitment to the democratic process. Johnson, according to Morgenthau, equated “...dissent with disloyalty.”<sup>57</sup> Comparing Johnson with some of his predecessors, Morgenthau suggested “I have taken a look at Woodrow Wilson’s and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s attitudes towards domestic dissent and I have been struck not by the similarity but by the differences between their democratic ethos and the climate of opinion prevailing today.”<sup>58</sup> Extending his argument in order to defend Senator Fulbright, also under criticism from Johnson, Morgenthau claimed that. “...the President has never deigned to argue with the Senator but has ridiculed and mimicked him and treated him with contempt in public and to his face. White House-broken journalists have taken their cue and have treated a brilliant, knowledgeable and high-minded public servant as though he were an ignorant, irresponsible fool.” Morgenthau continued his attack by suggesting that the treatment to which Fulbright had been subjected was not unique. “It is but a particularly spectacular and distressing example of a general policy. The White House ‘project Morgenthau’ which in 1965 had the task to disseminate information about me reflects the same general attitude.”

It is clear from Morgenthau’s writings of this era that he firmly believed himself to be the victim of a harassment campaign by the White House. Indeed as David Sanford later pointed out in his piece in *The New Republic* in 1969, Morgenthau’s son Matthew was drafted even though he was in a category of men (for medical reasons) not usually drafted. Furthermore, claimed Sanford, Matthew was persecuted and court-martialed during his basic training in Alabama, essentially because of his father’s political statements against the war.<sup>59</sup> What matters here, is not so much whether either Hans or

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<sup>56</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “Truth and Power: The Intellectuals and the Johnson Administration,” reprinted in *Truth and Power: Essays of A Decade* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 13-28.

<sup>57</sup> Op. cit., 20.

<sup>58</sup> Op. cit., 20.

<sup>59</sup> David Sanford, “Matthew Morgenthau’s Complaint,” *The New Republic*, March 1, 1969, 14.

Matthew Morgenthau were actually the targets of harassment but that they believed themselves to be so and acted and wrote accordingly.

In light of Morgenthau's past experiences both as a refugee from Nazi Germany and as an observer of the McCarthy Era, his apparent surprise and anger at his treatment by the White House might appear as somewhat naïve: he surely must have experienced and seen far worse than a few intensive tax audits, or even the unwarranted drafting of his son. In fact, his response is, I believe, comprehensible within the context of Morgenthau's status as an immigrant whereby he, like many immigrants, thought better of the country he had chosen to call home and the country which had given him better hospitality than his own. Thus, in his expectations of government behavior, Morgenthau the refugee, thinking well of his adopted homeland, overwhelmed Morgenthau the intellectual who could expect nothing but realpolitik from the governments of nation states.

Perhaps understandably in light of what he perceived to be the nature of his own situation, and aggravated by his belief in the responsibility of the intellectual to engage with the needs of society and government, Morgenthau had little sympathy with academics who either chose to stay on the political sidelines, or worse, chose to enter the fray in absolute and fixed support of the government. Morgenthau offered a searing critique of the academy when he suggested that the military-industrial complex against which President Eisenhower had warned had been "duplicated by an academic-political complex in which the interests of the government are inextricably intertwined with the interests of large groups of academics." Furthermore, "the intimate connection that research contracts have established between the government and the universities have recently been brought to public attention. It stands to reason that an academic who is working on such a contract or who expects to work on one is not likely to question the basic policies of the government either within his contractual research or outside it." As a result, according to Morgenthau, "...the interests and expectations of the government not only determine the subject matter of contractual research but also influence ever so subtly its scope and in a certain measure its results."<sup>60</sup> Morgenthau's understanding of both the ideal and the actual relationship between academics and governments was undoubtedly

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<sup>60</sup> Op. cit. 21.

shaped by his own experiences – most recently through his work with the State Department but also by his earlier work in Spain, and perhaps even by his observations of the role played by Carl Schmitt in Hitler’s Germany.<sup>61</sup>

Morgenthau’s growing disenchantment with the government of his adopted homeland started to become increasingly evident. When it was disclosed that the National Student Association had been established and run as an instrument of state policy in order to help wage the Cold War, Morgenthau once again reflected publicly in print on what he perceived to be the treason of the intellectuals.<sup>62</sup> He argued that a large number of academics, although doing so less blatantly than the National Student Association were in essence “...making it appear as though the voice of the government were of necessity the voice of truth...”.<sup>63</sup> Morgenthau believed that revelations in the media about the domestic role of the CIA “...raises three fundamental issues: [1] the ability of American democracy to pursue an effective foreign policy without destroying at home what it promotes abroad; [2] the feasibility and morality of domestic clandestine operations; [3] the relations between the Federal government and the intellectual community.”<sup>64</sup> Holding that a domestic government, presiding over a pluralistic society, must somehow manage to mobilize private organizations on behalf of its policies, Morgenthau questioned how that could be achieved without impairing, if not destroying, the ‘private’ character of such organizations?<sup>65</sup>

Applauding the eventual revelation of the truth behind the National Student Association, Morgenthau yet regretted that “...a heavy price has to be paid for this assertion of democratic scrutiny both domestically and internationally.” Morgenthau

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<sup>61</sup> Carl Schmitt, a professor of Public Law at the University of Berlin, had published a short book entitled *The Concept of Politics* in 1921. Morgenthau considered his doctor’s thesis at least partly a response to Schmitt. While recognizing Schmitt’s superior intellectual endowments, Morgenthau made clear both in writing and in conversations that he doubted that any German thinker surpassed Schmitt in subservience to the Nazis and lack of principle. For Morgenthau, the most compelling evidence was Schmitt’s defense of Hitler’s blood purge of 1934 on the grounds that the will of the Führer was the supreme law of the land. Never denying Schmitt’s brilliance, Morgenthau found him the “most evil man alive.” Morgenthau, “An Intellectual Biography,” 68.

<sup>62</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “How Totalitarianism starts: The Domestic Involvement of the CIA,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 10, 1967, reprinted in *Truth and Power: Essays of A Decade* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 51-55.

<sup>63</sup> Op. cit., 54.

<sup>64</sup> Op. cit., p.51.

<sup>65</sup> Op. cit., p.51.

suggested that “had the Government had more confidence in the strength of a free democracy than in the efficiency of pseudo-totalitarian methods, it could have served the national interest without paying so heavy a price. Internationally, all individuals and organizations speaking on behalf of the United States will from now on be suspect as secret agents of the government.”<sup>66</sup> Morgenthau virulently criticized the policymakers for having created a situation where “domestically the moral confidence of the people in their government has been shaken. This is not a moral crisis affecting this particular Administration but a moral crisis affecting American democracy.” Contrasting the sixteenth century perception of diplomats as honest men sent abroad to lie for their country, Morgenthau suggested that in the twentieth century public officials were increasingly perceived to be honest men “staying at home to lie for the government.”<sup>67</sup> Arguing that the government practiced “systematic deception paralleling that practiced by the CIA.” Morgenthau asserted that this philosophy was “...not of democracy but of totalitarianism.” Furthermore argued Morgenthau, “as the integrity and independence of the government have been subverted by the military industrial complex, so the integrity and independence of the educational community have been impaired by the academic-political complex. The educational community has in large measure become the handmaid of government, while maintaining its pretence to independence.” Offering a solution to the problems raised by the disclosures of government deception, Morgenthau called for “...a radical moral reorientation of both the government and the academic community.”<sup>68</sup>

Morgenthau took his political engagement to its logical conclusion by involving himself in the 1968 Presidential campaign as an advisor to Eugene McCarthy. Following Johnson’s dramatic withdrawal, Morgenthau put his experience of international affairs at McCarthy’s disposal, and became a charter member of a special advisory panel on foreign policy put together by McCarthy.<sup>69</sup> Under the chairmanship of Stanley Hoffman of Harvard University, Morgenthau served alongside Quincy Wright, formerly of the University of Virginia, John Kenneth Galbraith then teaching economics at Harvard, and

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<sup>66</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Truth and Power: Essays of A Decade* (New York, Praeger, 1970), 52.

<sup>67</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Truth and Power: Essays of A Decade* (New York, Praeger, 1970), 52.

<sup>68</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Truth and Power: Essays of A Decade* (New York, Praeger, 1970), 53.

<sup>69</sup> *New York Times*, 5 August, 1968.

Gabriel Almond then of Stanford University, but formerly of the University of Chicago, and the serving president of the American Political Science Association. Morgenthau made his support of McCarthy public through an article in the *New York Review of Books*, then a relatively newly established liberal counterweight to *Commentary*.

Given that Morgenthau had described U.S. foreign policy toward Vietnam as being in part a function of the psychopathology of certain individuals, he offered a contrasting image of McCarthy, writing that "...what struck me again the other day...is the complete absence of any visible contrast between the public role he plays and the man he is."<sup>70</sup> Morgenthau supported McCarthy for three reasons. Firstly, he would restore "...a philosophy of government and of the American purpose that is in tune with the genius of the American people."<sup>71</sup> Secondly, "...he can move large masses of the American people and, more particularly, of the younger generation back into active participation in the democratic process." Thirdly, "he presents clear cut alternatives to the policies of the present administration as well as of his competitors." With regard to foreign policy, Morgenthau argued that McCarthy's policies would be in essence "...common sense restored to its rightful place."<sup>72</sup> Emphasizing his support, Morgenthau quoted approvingly from McCarthy's own work, *The Limits of Power*: "...our foreign policy should be more restrained and in so far as prudent judgment can determine more closely in keeping with the movement of history."<sup>73</sup> Taking a sideswipe at Johnson's Vice President Hubert Humphrey by attacking Zbigniew Brzezinski who had been Humphrey's primary foreign policy advisor, Morgenthau claimed that, "McCarthy does not believe in the philosophy of American paramountcy as propounded by Professor Brzezinski."<sup>74</sup> Furthermore proposed Morgenthau, the United States should, if it sought to influence other states, focus on its own domestic policies first. Thus "...we serve our goal of promoting racial justice throughout the world better by setting an example in the ordering of our race relations at home than by exerting pressure on South Africa."<sup>75</sup> Morgenthau concluded by suggesting that the American mission was not to dominate but

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<sup>70</sup> *New York Review of Books*, 22 August, 1968, quoted in *Truth and Power*, 191.

<sup>71</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>72</sup> *Op. cit.*, 192.

<sup>73</sup> *Op. cit.*, 193.

<sup>74</sup> *Op. cit.*, 193.

<sup>75</sup> *Op. cit.*, 193.



to lead.

In his support for McCarthy, Morgenthau succeeded in defending his own past theories of realism even as he criticized their subsequent mis-application by particular policymakers. According to Morgenthau, McCarthy was “convinced that the great innovations that radically transformed American policy in the Spring of 1947 – the policy of containment, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan – are irreversible but he also believes that these policies suffer from two major deficiencies:...they have not been adapted to drastically changed circumstances, and they have been corrupted by a disproportionate emphasis on military measures.”<sup>76</sup> With this analysis Morgenthau defended both realism and *Politics Among Nations*, considered by some to be as much a part of the process of arming for the Cold War as any military preparations. In particular, and perhaps fittingly in light of the war’s significance to his own intellectual development, Morgenthau drew on his own service to government as a means of attacking Humphrey. Specifically he made clear that “from personal observation, the war could have had no more genuinely committed supporter than the Vice President. It is only now, in an election year, that the Vice President feels compelled to make this appear to be Mr. Johnson’s war but not necessarily Mr. Humphrey’s.”<sup>77</sup>

By November 1968, the Democratic Party had made its choice. The Chicago Nominating Convention had come and gone and the American people were about to go to the polls. In his piece “Nixon versus Humphrey: The Choice,” Morgenthau explained the absolute importance of the coming election by suggesting rather dramatically that the very survival of American democracy depended upon the election’s outcome.<sup>78</sup> Morgenthau believed that the threat to democracy came from two directions: on the one hand, the lack of any clear difference in terms of substantive policy between Humphrey and Nixon; on the other from the Wallace ticket.<sup>79</sup> By election time with the possibility of a successful Wallace-LeMay ticket, no matter how unlikely this really was, Morgenthau argued for the lesser of two evils. In the absence of a vote which would put Wallace into

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<sup>76</sup> Op. cit., 194.

<sup>77</sup> Op. cit., 196.

<sup>78</sup> *New York Review of Books*, November 7, 1968 reprinted in *Truth and Power*, 199-206.

<sup>79</sup> Curtis LeMay was a robust anti-communist WWII and Cold War air force commander. For further details see, John Paul Hill, “A.R. ‘Happy’ Chandler, George C. Wallace and the Presidential Election of 1968,” *The Historian*, vol. 64, No. 3+4 (Spring/Summer 2002), 667-685.

the White House and LeMay into the U.S. Naval Observatory, Morgenthau suggested “if the choice were simply between Humphrey and Nixon within the traditional context of a two-party system, I would have said that the choice is a matter of political taste but not political judgment since there is really nothing to choose between their qualifications. There is no lesser evil to be preferred since both candidates portend evils different in kind but not in degree.” In the concrete circumstances of the perceived possibility of a Wallace Presidency, however, Morgenthau argued that it was the candidate who was best capable of stopping such an event who should be supported. Making the case that not alone would it be necessary to stop Wallace in 1968 but also in 1972, Morgenthau argued that “...American democracy seems to be best served not only by Nixon’s victory in 1968 but also by a defeat of the Democratic Party so drastic as to amount to the disavowal of its present leadership, philosophy, and policies and to render inevitable the radical transformation of its philosophy and structure.” Morgenthau continued “for without such a defeat...the Democratic Party may consistently and on a large scale...act out what Wallace preaches.” Only if the Democratic Party of Johnson and those of a similar world view are defeated, only then “...will the men who could have saved it in 1968 – the Kennedys, the McCarthys, the McGoverns and their heirs have a chance to save it in 1972.”<sup>80</sup>

Drastic words indeed. In the event, Nixon did win the election but contrary to Morgenthau’s hopes, the Democratic Party did not take this as a sign of a need to reinvent itself and subsequently lost the next election too. By that time, however, Morgenthau had already removed himself from the center of political affairs by transferring from Chicago to New York where he taught at the New School with the rank of full City University of New York Professor until his retirement from full time teaching in 1974. Even then, however, he found it difficult to give everything up and so continued to teach a light load at the New School. He also continued to involve himself, albeit gently, with progressive affairs, serving, for example, as the Chair of The Academic Committee for Soviet Jewry, helping to facilitate the emigration of Soviet Jewish

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<sup>80</sup> Op. cit., 206.

dissidents.<sup>81</sup> He argued in support of the Jackson-Vanik amendment which linked the granting of most-favored-nation status to the U.S.S.R. to that country's granting of civil liberties to ethnic minorities, residing within its borders<sup>82</sup>. He also continued to concern himself, almost unto his death in 1980 from complications after a stomach ulcer operation, with what he considered to be the proper course for U.S. foreign policy in the post-Nixon environment by publishing such papers as "The Pathology of American Power," a salutary warning for the West to avoid a new Cold War.<sup>83</sup>

By the time of his death, Morgenthau had come full circle: from his first troubled semester at Brooklyn College he had become the 'grand old man' of political science with a personal chair at the same university. If he had traveled a circular path professionally, however, he appeared to have taken almost a linear political journey: from being the uncritical exponent of the politics of *raison d'état* to becoming a critic of the state and articulating opinions which would not have been incompatible with those of teenage political pamphleteers. The reality of this characterization is not quite so straightforward, however. It is my contention that while Morgenthau in his stand against U.S. intervention in Vietnam, and in his virulent criticisms of U.S. policymakers appeared to be rejecting the ideas laid out in *Politics Among Nations*, he was actually still advocating the same policies, albeit with a slight twist. He still advocated, for example, in favor of policies which would reflect the interests of the United States. Thus he still advocated realism. He simply believed, now, after several decades' association with power that those interests might be expressed in a different manner. Thus he suggested that "it has become obvious that the great issues of our day – the militarization of American life, the Vietnam War, race conflicts, poverty, the decay of cities – are not susceptible to rational solutions within the existing system of power relations..." Likewise, he believed that "poverty on a large scale, like the decay of the cities and the ruination of the natural environment, is a result not of accidental misfortunes but of social and economic policies in whose continuation powerful social groups have a vested

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<sup>81</sup> M. Benjamin Molloy, "Jewry's Prophetic Challenge to Soviet and Other Totalitarian Regimes According to Hans J. Morgenthau," *Journal of Church and State*, v. 39 (Summer 1997), 561-75.

<sup>82</sup> *Op.cit.*, 563

<sup>83</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Pathology of American Power," *International Security*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Winter, 1977), 3-20.

interest.”<sup>84</sup>

According to Morgenthau neither the continuation of poverty nor the militarization of American life could in any sense be considered as reflective of U.S. national interests. Thus, according to any realist interpretation of the political system, it behoved America to solve these problems first, before it engaged in issues beyond its immediate concern. From this perspective Morgenthau may be seen to be far more consistent than has previously been thought to be the case. He articulated a realist framework (with all the potential for military engagement that framework implied) in order to meet what he perceived to be the very real threat of Soviet expansionism; he advocated withdrawal from Vietnam when he perceived it to be against America’s national interests to remain militarily committed; and he called for resolution of America’s most pressing and most divisive domestic problems because he perceived such resolution and resultant domestic unity to be in the country’s long-term interests.

In much the same way, one might argue, did Bismarck institute old age pensions and a limited form of sickness insurance: not because he believed in the worth of the programs as a means of helping German citizens, but because he perceived their institution to be a means of undercutting support for the Social Democratic Party, a much more important objective for the German Empire than the financial costs of any programs of relief. Thus the larger national security interests of Germany were preserved even if the actual policies implemented appeared contrary to the innate conservatism of the government. Likewise, the larger national security interests of the United States, the preservation of the state, dictated the resolution of domestic divisions even though the implementation of policies such as welfare relief, or anti-racist initiatives might appear contrary to the general conservatism of the government.

Thus, as I suggested in my introduction, realism, whether propounded by Bismarck or Morgenthau *was* a conservative doctrine, being based on the assumption that states, under perceived conditions of relative scarcity of essential resources, would pursue power, as defined by national interest and survival. This realism contained within it, however, a progressive liberatory potential since in order to preserve the state, it allowed

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<sup>84</sup> Hans. J. Morgenthau. Foreword Arnold S. Kaufman, *The Radical Liberal: New Man in American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), ii.

for the implementation of a wide range of policies – both in the domestic and foreign policy sphere - the value of which was to be judged according to their utility to the interests of the state, not according to a narrowly defined expression of political bias. Thus Morgenthau in advocating the containment of communism in Western Europe had begun his academic career as a realist, and despite appearances to the contrary, he had, by advocating the acceptance of communism in South East Asia, ended it as a realist. This combination of progressivism and constancy was perhaps most obvious when Morgenthau involved himself in popular and public politics. It was also obvious, however, if one read Morgenthau's realist masterpiece, *Politics Among Nations*, with the same attention to detail with which he wrote it. It is time now to do just that.

## Chapter Two

### Politics Among Nations: The Duality of Realism

*Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* was Morgenthau's masterpiece. First published in 1948, successive editions appeared in 1953, 1960, 1967, 1973, 1978 and 1985.<sup>85</sup> While each edition carried the same title, however, the sum total over the course of Morgenthau's career really amounts to more than one book re-published six times.<sup>86</sup> Indeed a close reading of the text of each edition suggests that Morgenthau should more properly be credited with producing a corpus of work representing a lifetime's thought and analysis. Specifically, over the course of his six editions, Morgenthau examined the most fitting and profitable role to be adopted by states in international relations, the means by which states acquired and maintained power, and the most likely means by which states might attain and preserve peace. More succinctly, with each edition of *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau shaped the very field of international relations according to his conception not of how the world *should* or *could* work in the future but how it *actually* worked right now.

While the substance of each edition remained largely the same, what changed, and what highlights the consistency of Morgenthau's analysis was the manner in which Morgenthau made clear how his theories, the theories first presented in 1948, could and should be understood and implemented in the light of the changed political environment

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<sup>85</sup> I have elected to confine my analysis of *Politics Among Nations* to the editions on which Morgenthau personally worked. The final edition, the Sixth, published in 1985, while still reflecting Morgenthau's core theories also included elements of the work of its editor, Kenneth Thompson. For that reason, its analysis fits better into a study of evolving theories of International Relations rather than a study of Hans Morgenthau.

<sup>86</sup> Proof of this assertion might be found in Thomas C. Walker's recollection that when as students he and John Vasquez discussed *Politics Among Nations*, they found the editions to be so different as to make them question "whether we had indeed read the same book." Thomas C. Walker, "Introduction: Morgenthau's Dual Approach to International Politics," *International Studies Notes*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1999.

of the moment.<sup>87</sup> Thus while it is appropriate to claim originality in each edition, and while students reading different editions might well be struck by the differences between them, it is also true that at heart, each edition contained the same essential premise. What was constant for Morgenthau throughout his career was his belief that the core of his arguments remained the same, even as the situations to which they must be applied changed over time. Thus this chapter follows the mold created by its predecessor and seeks to prove that appearances to the contrary notwithstanding - six editions in thirty years - *Politics Among Nations* represents two critical elements of Morgenthau's political thought: it was simultaneously constant yet flexible and contained within it the potential for both conservative and liberatory applications.

Perhaps unusually, the bulk of the material from which Morgenthau prepared the first edition of *Politics Among Nations* consisted not of archival notes, nor even of his own notes of other books or case studies, but rather tape recordings made of his lectures at the University of Chicago. As Kenneth W. Thompson, one of Morgenthau's research assistants reported, it was a tradition of students to tape the better professors, whose words were thought likely to be "destined for posterity."<sup>88</sup> Morgenthau was one of these professors, and it was the tapes and subsequent transcript by one particular graduate student, Mary Jane Benowitz, along with research and transcribing carried out by Thompson, which provided Morgenthau, who lectured without notes, with a written copy of both his lectures and what would prove to be the outline for his book. Morgenthau recognized his debt to Benowitz in the preface of the first edition. Over the course of succeeding years, many other students helped Morgenthau organize both his thoughts and his writing. In this sense at least, one might even suggest that *Politics Among Nations* was something of a collaborative work. If it was, however, it was so only in the labor-intensive parts of its production. For as useful as Morgenthau found his research team, he

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<sup>87</sup> John A. Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics: From Classical Realism to Neo-traditionalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 36.

<sup>88</sup> Kenneth W. Thompson, "The Writing of *Politics Among Nations*: Its Sources and its Origins," *International Studies Notes*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1999.

rarely discussed the origins of his work nor shared his analysis of its implications but rather used his students as a resource, asking them to provide copies of particular events or case studies for his review. Thus while students provided the material, Morgenthau provided the conceptual framework into which it was placed.

As might be expected, Morgenthau's Preface to his first edition was quite straightforward, simply acknowledging his research debts and largely allowing the text to speak for itself. Thus the book was to cover not only the traditional subject matter of international relations courses but to place particular emphasis upon the "basic problems of international law, international organization, and diplomatic history."<sup>89</sup> The text itself established the parameters of realism. Putting forward his central theory concerning the behavior of nation states, Morgenthau claimed that whatever diplomatic posturing might be assumed, in the final analysis all states would seek the greatest amount of power and security possible, even to the point of using military force to achieve it, while accepting no check upon individual national sovereignty from any international, or supranational, body.<sup>90</sup>

Even as he emphasized the centrality of the balance of power between nation states as the key means by which nations could pursue both power and peace, however, he also discussed the possible role that could be played by "normative limitations" such as "international law, international morality, and world public opinion."<sup>91</sup> Indeed for Morgenthau, ultimately it was the future obsolescence of nation states, and the giving up of national sovereignty to supranational bodies, which would be the only way to secure permanent international peace. This assertion can be read in two ways: on the one hand, as an affirmation of the primacy of the nation state as the key actor in world politics – only upon its demise could permanent peace be secured; on the other hand, Morgenthau's text could be read as an aspiration of what supranational institutions might one day achieve. Until that time was reached, however, Morgenthau offered a theory of understanding which while acknowledging the limits of "the influence of ethics" yet

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<sup>89</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), Forward.

<sup>90</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 1948.

<sup>91</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 1948, 9.



acknowledged that statesmen were not solely “moved by considerations of material power.” Thus even as he acknowledged overall the weight of the pursuit of power, he also paid homage to other non-material influences which might shape both policymakers and the decision they made.<sup>92</sup>

Having established the theory, Morgenthau then sought to apply it to the contemporary international situation, and to offer an analysis of the effects of its application upon contemporary United States actual and ideal foreign policy. As we have seen, the book, and the theories contained within it, received tremendous popular and academic acclaim, setting Morgenthau on his way to becoming an integral member of the U.S. intellectual elite. One contemporary review referred to *Politics Among Nations* as “the most incisive book of its kind.”<sup>93</sup> In a similar vein Harold Sprout, Professor and later Chair of the Politics Department at Princeton University, while taking issue with some of Morgenthau’s arguments, made clear that he believed Morgenthau to have “set a high standard for all who would venture into the treacherous quicksand of system building in international politics. *Politics Among Nations* is a work of major importance. It should do much to promote better teaching and scholarship in the critically important field of international politics”<sup>94</sup> And indeed it did. Thus contemporary scholar, and later policymaker Henry Kissinger argued that it was through the publication of *Politics Among Nations*, along with his other work, that Morgenthau created the discipline of post-war International relations<sup>95</sup> Likewise, fifty years after the event, scholar John Vasquez observed that in *Politics Among Nations*, “Morgenthau best expressed and captured what an entire generation of realist scholars...were trying to understand.”<sup>96</sup>

Six years later *Politics Among Nations* was reissued as a Second Edition. In the Preface Morgenthau took great pains to emphasize the distinctions between the two

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<sup>92</sup> Thomas C. Walker Introduction: Morgenthau’s Dual Approach to International Politics *International Studies Notes*, Volume 24, Number 1, 1999.

<sup>93</sup> L.H. Woolsey, Review of *Politics Among Nations*, Hans J. Morgenthau, *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 44, Issue 1 (Jan., 1950), 219-221.

<sup>94</sup> Harold Sprout, “In Defense of Diplomacy” *World Politics*, Volume 1, Issue 3 (Apr., 1949), 404-413.

<sup>95</sup> For an extended analysis of Morgenthau’s influence see, Greg Russell, *Hans J. Morgenthau and the Ethics of American Statecraft* (Baton Rouge, La: Louisiana State Press, 1990), 59.

<sup>96</sup> “The Enduring Contributions of Hans J. Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations*,” John Vasquez, *International Studies Notes*, Volume 24, Number 1, 1999.

editions, and in so doing revealed as much about the context of the first edition as about the second. Morgenthau explained the “considerable changes” which he had made to this edition by referencing the “new developments during the last six years in the intellectual climate of the United States, the conditions of world politics, and the mind of the author.”<sup>97</sup> Specifically, Morgenthau drew the reader’s attention to the circumstances surrounding the production of his first edition, the result of “an intellectual experience of twenty years.” Its origins lay in a period when “a false conception of foreign policy, put into practice by the western democracies, [had] led inevitably to the threat and the actuality of totalitarianism and war.”<sup>98</sup> Clearly Morgenthau had been deeply affected by what he perceived to be the betrayal of appeasement and blamed ‘guilty men’ such as Neville Chamberlain for their failure to act in a manner which would have preserved the security and interests not only of the United Kingdom but of Western democracy.<sup>99</sup>

Fighting against such a lackluster interpretations of states’ rights and responsibilities, and such a weak interpretation of what it was possible for states to achieve, Morgenthau in the first edition of *Politics Among Nations*, had put forward the case for an aggressive diplomacy, or what he termed a “frontal attack,” a “radical” statement which made clear just how much independence of action each state possessed.<sup>100</sup> In essence Morgenthau had put forward the case for realism, urging his fellow intellectuals and contemporaries in the world of diplomacy to concentrate on the realities of the world situation – the reality of a weak United Nations in the midst of strong nation states – rather than on what they hoped might become the situation – a strong United Nations capable of imposing its peaceful will upon subservient nation states.

In his call Morgenthau was undoubtedly influenced by what he perceived to have been the failure of international politics in the inter-war years, a period when academics

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<sup>97</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>98</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>13</sup> The term “guilty men’ was coined by Michael Foot et al in their analysis of the appeasement generation. Michael Foot, Peter Howard, and Frank Owen, *The Guilty Men*, (London: Victor Gollancz., Left Book Club, 1940)

<sup>100</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

and politicians alike appeared to have focused so much on what they had hoped could be achieved that they had placed excessive confidence in institutions and organizations which in reality had had little effect upon what was actually achieved. They had, in effect, hoped that a strong League of Nations or a forceful International Court of Justice would be able to impose their peaceful will upon subservient and compliant nation states. Thus whether one looked at Woodrow Wilson at the start of the age, or Neville Chamberlain at the end, each, and many others in between, were guilty of hoping that international law or agreed upon norms of behavior would be sufficient to ensure peace between nations. As Morgenthau was only too well aware, the policymakers' hopes had not been met. In Morgenthau's direct experience the 'struggle for power' by Hitler's Germany (amongst others) had overwhelmed the democracies' 'struggle for peace.' Based on this personal experience, as well as an academic understanding of international relations, Morgenthau, in the first edition of *Politics Among Nations*, had emphasized the reality that nations would, in the final analysis, always be struggling for power, but he also offered the hope that a state of international peace would be the most desirable. Until such a state was achieved, however, (most likely by the real conceding of national power to a supranational body), he argued that the theory by which one attempted to understand the world should be shaped by how the world actually was, not by what one hoped it might become. In short he argued that international relations should be understood within a realist, not an idealist framework.<sup>101</sup>

Six years on Morgenthau considered himself to have been successful. From his viewpoint, the United States had stood up to the Soviet Union, contained the spread of communism in Europe and achieved the friendship of like-minded states. Six years on "with that battle largely won," Morgenthau perceived himself, and the United States, free to shift in focus a little and to consider the changed nature of the international arena. Not only had the United Nations achieved far more than he had considered likely six years previously but particular groups of nation states had co-operated to form regional supranational bodies. Thus, according to Morgenthau, it was now possible to consolidate the victory of having his earlier robust theories accepted by now not only consolidating and defending his arguments, but where necessary, adapting them to new situations and

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<sup>101</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 1948, 5.

experiences.<sup>102</sup>

Of the many new situations perceived by Morgenthau he was perhaps most struck by the possible consequences of decolonization, the rise of supranational regional institutions, and the activities of the United Nations. According to Morgenthau “the colonial revolution has spread over much of Asia and Africa and has increased in intensity, thus emerging as a new force in world politics, creating new problems, and calling for new policies.”<sup>103</sup> Critically, and foreshadowing his later position on U.S. involvement in Vietnam, Morgenthau adapted his theory of realism to include an entirely new component. In future, he argued, “the struggle for the minds of men” needed to be added to “the traditional dimensions of diplomacy and war.”<sup>104</sup> Thus, even as early as 1953, a year before Dien Bien Phu, and almost a decade ahead of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s call to win the “hearts and minds” of the Vietnamese people, Morgenthau acknowledged the need to win the support of the people amongst whom, and with whom, the U.S. would later fight.<sup>105</sup> He was clearly ahead of his time, recognizing that even as he had earlier asserted the rights of states to act independently and free of all fetters, they were in reality limited by their ability to win “the minds of men.”

With this assessment Morgenthau had not abandoned his realist position. He still believed fiercely in the likelihood that states would act according to their perceived self-interest. He was merely now acknowledging that it was not always as easy as it had once been. Where once might had made right, (whether one liked it or not) and where once Lord Palmerston’s Gunboat Diplomacy could assure the British Empire of the success of its endeavors, now the United States, and indeed the United Kingdom, corralled and limited by the colonial revolution with its unleashing of national aspirations and political ambition, could act only if they recognized that “the struggle for the minds of men” was a new and integral “dimension of international politics.”<sup>106</sup>

In light of Morgenthau’s early recognition of the validity and, perhaps more

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<sup>102</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>103</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>104</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>105</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface. In 1965 Johnson suggested that with regard to Vietnam “the ultimate victory will depend upon the hearts and minds of the people who actually live out there.” Remarks at a Dinner Meeting of the Texas Electric Cooperative Inc, 4 May, 1965, INSERT WEBSITE

<sup>106</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

importantly, potential strength of the struggle to win men's minds, as expressed in 1953, his later arguments against U.S. involvement in Vietnam make more sense. His experience visiting the country, along with his academic assessment of the diplomatic and military possibilities, led him to believe that this was one dimension of international politics which the United States could not win. As we have seen, Morgenthau considered the conflict in Vietnam to be a civil war and blamed U.S. policymakers for transforming it, in outward appearance at least, into a war of Northern aggression. As it was not such a war, it followed that it could not be won according to such terms. Thus it is apparent again, even as early as 1953 that what would later appear to be a liberal and progressive politics on the part of Morgenthau, was in reality, a willingness to adapt - by expanding and including new facets - his political theory to a changed situation.

If Morgenthau was hesitant about the consequences of the colonial revolution, unsure of the likely effects upon the older imperial powers, he was impressed by the efforts of various nations to try and achieve a level of common interest through the creation of supranational organizations such as the European Coal and Steel Community or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This pooling of states' sovereignty appealed to Morgenthau who saw within it a means of achieving both the broad objectives of the community and the specific aspirations of the member states. Here again we see Morgenthau the realist adapting his viewpoint in order to accommodate changed circumstances. And as would be the case for Vietnam, he proved to be right. The ECSC, as is well-known, proceeded to form the foundation for the success of what would become first the European Economic Community, and later the European Union.

Published in 1953, the Second Edition was drafted in the shadow of the Korean War. Accordingly, the war and its consequences had "been worked into the theoretical framework of the book."<sup>107</sup> Indeed it was the Korean War which prompted Morgenthau to re-consider the potential utility of the United Nations. Disillusioned by the meager achievements of the inter-war League of Nations, Morgenthau, in the first edition of *Politics Among Nations*, had not initially expressed high hopes for the nascent United Nations. Six years later he was prepared to acknowledge that the organization had achieved a great deal, albeit in areas "fundamentally different" from those originally

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<sup>107</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1954, Preface.

conceived. It had been under the flag of the United Nations, for example, that the United States had been able to enter and fight the Korean War.<sup>108</sup>

Morgenthau had two other innovations to bring to the Second Edition, both of which would, as was the case with Vietnam and the UN, foreshadow his later public positions. Morgenthau asserted that this second edition would take much more account of domestic politics, even to the point of asserting a “new rule of diplomacy” dealing “with the relationship between foreign and domestic policy.”<sup>109</sup> Again, as he foreshadowed events in Vietnam, Morgenthau, albeit with a slightly different focus, articulated the primacy of domestic politics six years before the publication of William Appleman Williams’ seminal work in the field, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*.<sup>110</sup> In this light, Morgenthau’s later call for the resolution of domestic racial divisions, the abolition of poverty and the cessation of environmental pollution appear less as radical statements of a newly found liberal conscience and more as the mature reflections of an academic convinced that the first step to securing a successful foreign policy is to implement a domestic policy which in meeting the needs of the people meets the needs of the state. Thus whether one places Morgenthau’s analysis within the context of Bismarck the ‘conservative’ policymaker or Williams the ‘liberal’ academic, one can see that realism, though outwardly concerned with the behavior of states to each other, contained within it a strong element of potential progressivism.

As we have seen, it was not just what Morgenthau said in the 1960s that led both some of his contemporaries and later scholars to perceive him as a conservative turned liberal, but the changed nature of his relationship with the United States government. He appeared to have transformed himself (or been transformed) from an ally of the state, expounding the amorality of *realpolitik*, to an extremely vocal critic, sure that the U.S. state was doing something very much immoral. In fact, the paradox is only illusory, and as with so much else, was foreshadowed in the Second Edition of *Politics Among Nations*. In his Preface, Morgenthau introduced as a new “element of national power...the quality of government.” It is against this articulation about the importance of

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<sup>108</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>109</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>110</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972) First published in 1959. Williams is generally credited with being one of the first scholars to highlight the significance of domestic affairs as a determinant upon foreign policy.

the quality of government, written in 1954, that Morgenthau's later assaults upon the Johnson administration must be placed.<sup>111</sup>

According to Morgenthau the quality of the government of a country was so important that it could, in certain circumstances, determine whether a country won or lost a war. Using as examples the cases of Austria-Hungary in the Great War, and France in the Second World War, Morgenthau argued that in both cases the failure of the relationship between the governed and the governors so degraded national morale that military success was no longer an option. Specifically, in Austria-Hungary the House of Hapsburg had failed to retain the loyalty of its Slavic subjects, and in France a significant proportion of the citizenry had preferred Hitler to the socialist Bloom. Aggravating the defeat in both instances was that the initial lack of solidarity caused by the government, further prompted the citizenry to reject the government and thus led to eventual national destruction.<sup>112</sup> As an alternative, Morgenthau proposed what he believed to be the hallmarks of good or effective government: one which would cherish all of the children of the nation equally and enlist the strength of sectional groups into a common struggle for the good of all.

Taking account of all these changes in international politics, Morgenthau in 1953 informed his readers that his ideas on a great many issues had also changed. He had refined his analysis of such integral concepts as power, cultural imperialism, world public opinion, disarmament, collective security and peaceful change. Furthermore, his analysis of politics among nations had been expanded to include the new flash-words of the age such as containment, cold war, uncommitted nations and Point Four. Thus Morgenthau prepared his readers for an adjusted interpretation of the rights and responsibilities of nation states, as well as an acknowledgement that the world had changed in the course of the past six years. Putting the two together, however, did not produce an abnegation of realism but rather a readjustment to suit different times.

As a means of articulating the precise nature of that realist framework, Morgenthau included a new introductory chapter which outlined what, for Morgenthau,

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<sup>111</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Preface.

<sup>112</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, 146.

constituted the six principles of political realism.<sup>113</sup> Given the centrality of these principles to Morgenthau's intellectual framework, it is worth analyzing them in some detail, particularly so that we might see the extent to which they foreshadowed Morgenthau's later public pronouncements, providing the basis for his later (apparent) political shift. For Morgenthau, the first principle of realism was the recognition that politics was governed by objective laws which had their roots in human nature and that in order to improve society it was first necessary to understand these laws. One of these laws, constituting the second principle of realism, was that statesmen think and act "in terms of interest defined as power." According to this perspective, Morgenthau believed it futile to be concerned with either the motive or political sympathies of the individual statesman. As proof of the former he drew upon the example of Neville Chamberlain who, despite having as his objective the morally virtuous goal of preserving peace, in fact instituted policies which made the Second World War "inevitable." By contrast, suggested Morgenthau, the motives of Winston Churchill had been "much less universal in scope and much more narrowly directed toward personal and national power," yet his resultant policies were far superior. Likewise denying the importance of political preference, Morgenthau argued that statesmen must choose between what they might consider desirable, and what was possible "under the concrete circumstances of time and place."

The third principle of realism acknowledged that while the dominant force for any individual or nation state was the pursuit of its own interests, the nature of the power employed or sought would vary according to the "political and cultural environment." Applying this analysis to the division of power or interests between states, Morgenthau made it clear, perhaps particularly so to those he perceived as having mis-understood his theories, that "nothing in the realist position militates against the assumption that the present division of the political world into nation states will be replaced by larger units of a quite different character, more in keeping with the technical potentialities and the moral requirements of the contemporary world." Where realism differed from "other schools of thought," however, was the recognition that this transformation would come about only as a result of manipulating "the perennial forces that have shaped the past" rather than by

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<sup>113</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1954, Chapter 1.



“confronting a political reality that has its own laws with an abstract ideal that refuses to take those laws into account.” With these words Morgenthau made his position with regards to the United Nations quite clear. He had acknowledged in the Preface that the first edition of *Politics* had offered a somewhat pessimistic view of the UN’s potential but here he took the opportunity to clarify that though pessimistic about the likelihood of change stemming from an idealist understanding of international relations, realism did contain within it the possibility for transformation from a world of nation states to one of supranational institutions so long as the shift was accomplished on the basis of states’ real interests. Thus again, Morgenthau’s reasoning illustrates the progressive and liberatory potential within realism.

Morgenthau’s fourth principle focused on the question of morality, arguing that “universal moral principles” could not be applied as abstract formulations but only when “filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place.” Thus, a nation state must act according to what would likely preserve its national interests not according to an abstract idea of morality. The fifth principle of realism articulated by Morgenthau proclaimed that while states will inevitably pursue what they perceive to be their national interests, they should not think that in so doing, they always have God on their side. Morgenthau issued particular warning against the “crusading frenzy” which blinding a nation to its true interests, could lead to the nation’s destruction. The distinction drawn by Morgenthau here between the reality that states will always pursue their own interests and the idea that states are always right is a fine one but one that is critical to an understanding of realist thought. Equally important is the recognition that the very basis given by Morgenthau for avoiding a “crusading frenzy” is less the moral consequences of believing itself to be right and far more the political consequences that it would likely be to the detriment of the state. Thus realism, even as it acknowledges the limits of what states should do does so on the basis of what is best for the state. Again, it is from within this rationale – hinted at in 1948 but articulated here more clearly in this Second Edition in 1953 - that Morgenthau will later criticize U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

The final principle of realism asserted that whilst acknowledging the existence of other spheres, a political realist must always judge a course of action not by its effects upon those spheres but by its effects upon the power of the state. By way of illustration,

Morgenthau detailed three historical examples, and in so doing highlighted the very heart of realist thought. Weighing up whether Britain and France should have intervened when Russia invaded Finland, Morgenthau had no doubt that the answer to the legal question was in the affirmative: Russia had violated a treaty and ought, according to the legalist framework, be brought to book. According to a realist interpretation, however, France and Britain were better not to have intervened since to have done so would have put them at war with both Russia and Germany – a situation inimical to the interests of either state. Analyzing the question of the recognition of China and the decision by Britain to intervene following Germany's invasion of Belgium in 1914 in much the same light, Morgenthau used the events of history to emphasize what he perceived to be the core of realist thought: that whatever other influences might be stake, realism dictated a focus upon the power and interests of the state first and foremost.

Seven years later, in 1960, Morgenthau again revisited the theory and practice of realism as he published the third edition of *Politics Among Nations*.<sup>114</sup> While he claimed in his preface that “assumptions, tenets, and theoretical structure” had been left intact, in fact, the book, as had its predecessor five years before, included a number of innovative applications. Morgenthau placed much greater emphasis upon the existence of “an objective and universally valid truth about matters political” which was “accessible to human reason.” Even as he argued for universal truth, however, Morgenthau emphasized that its nature and form would change according to “the ever changing configurations of successive periods of history.”<sup>115</sup> In short, it would appear in different forms at different times. Thus to English people of the nineteenth century, a time when Great Britain was the workshop of the world, the notion of the balance of power as consisting of several states weighing themselves and their desires and actions against each other, each kept in check by the weight of the others, was both commonly and easily understood. By contrast, the United States currently operated within a bi-polar international system. Critical to Morgenthau's insight was his argument that while the two systems of international relations appeared superficially quite different, the earlier multi-polar, the later bi-polar, in fact the underlying principles behind each were identical. Each system

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<sup>114</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1960).

<sup>115</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1960, Preface.

was governed by a balance of power as participating states, in pursuit of their national interest, kept the other(s) in check.

Morgenthau used his Third Edition as a means of condemning those whom he perceived to have mis-understood or mis-applied his earlier work. He had first touched upon this issue five years earlier but now, in 1960, made his displeasure yet clearer. In particular, he railed against the allegation that he believed “in the prominence of the international system based upon the nation state.” Such a charge was especially unfair, claimed Morgenthau, when “the obsolescence of the nation state and the need to merge it into supranational organizations of a functional nature was already one of the main points of the first edition of 1948.”<sup>116</sup> Thus Morgenthau took the opportunity to remind readers that contrary to popular understandings of his work which fixated upon his assessment of the key role of the nation state, he was, and had always been, concerned with the possibility that such states might one day concede power to a supranational body. Morgenthau also rejected the accusation that he had made “success the standard of political action” or that he was “indifferent” to the “moral problem,” again directing readers to the substance of his earlier work as proof.<sup>117</sup>

In addition to condemning those who had mis-understood his own work, Morgenthau took the opportunity of this third Preface to criticize policymakers who equated power with “material strength, especially of a military nature.”<sup>118</sup> According to Morgenthau, there was a great deal more to international diplomacy than building up one’s arms supply. Morgenthau focused upon the growing militaries perhaps in part because of what he perceived to be an entirely new feature of the post-45 age – the obsolescence of all-out violence as an instrument of foreign policy. In short, the likely mutual destruction that any nuclear war would create made any use of nuclear power, or all-out violence, unlikely. Thus, contrary to the basic theories of realism, states would not employ all the power available to them in pursuit of their interests because to do so would be to jeopardize the greatest self-interest of all, survival. Again, it is against this context that Morgenthau’s later condemnation of U.S., military involvement in Vietnam should be placed.

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<sup>116</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1960, Preface.

<sup>117</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1960, Preface.

<sup>118</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1960, Preface.

A decade after the appearance of this Third Edition, the U.S. Government, frustrated by the continued survival of the Viet Cong, and indeed North Vietnam, had turned to a policy of massive military engagement, throwing thousands of tons of bombs at its opponents, confident (rather like the generals of the Western Front in the First World War) that the breakthrough would surely come if only they threw enough firepower at the enemy. According to Morgenthau's proscript, no such break-through would come. Indeed it could not do so since from the realist perspective of Morgenthau, U.S. policymakers had become so fixated on the acquisition of material and military strength as a means to power that they were neglecting other, equally integral aspects of the system of international relations. That Morgenthau's critique was not merely a moral critique but one framed within a realist perspective is manifest in his warning that in neglecting the vital interests of other states, in this case North Vietnam, U.S. policymakers were risking the interests of the United States. As Morgenthau himself put it " ... if we look at all nations, our own included, as political entities pursuing their respective interests defined in terms of power, we are able to do justice to all of them. We are able to judge other nations as we judge our own and, having judged them in this fashion, we are then capable of pursuing policies that respect the interests of other nations, while protecting and promoting those of our own. Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgment"<sup>119</sup>

Morgenthau waited nine years before publishing the Fourth Edition of *Politics Among Nations*.<sup>120</sup> As before, he refined his concepts and theoretical propositions and added new material to address new situations. In 1967, the primary new situation was the changed configuration of the United Nations, particularly the new election and voting procedures for both the Security and Economic and Social Councils. As he had done in previous editions, Morgenthau also took the opportunity to engage his academic colleagues – or perhaps more accurately to explain his refusal to engage. Referring to criticism leveled against him for failing to defend his theories against currently fashionable ideas within International Relations theory such as systems analysis or simulation, Morgenthau argued that academic disputes about methodology were likely to

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<sup>119</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1960, 11.

<sup>120</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 4th edition 1967).

achieve little and indeed were most likely to obscure political truths. Despite this seemingly disinterested stance, however, Morgenthau in fact did engage with the theories of his colleagues. Referring to the plethora of theories available, for example, he made clear that “a theory must be judged not by its epistemological pretenses and methodological innovations” but by “the contribution that it makes to our knowledge and understanding of phenomena which are worth knowing.”<sup>121</sup> Thus Morgenthau made clear that in his opinion the theories with which he was supposed to engage were unworthy of his time since, no matter how sophisticated they appeared, they would likely make little contribution to knowledge.

It was another nine years before Morgenthau published the Fifth Edition of his book, during which period, according to Morgenthau, international politics had witnessed the most significant changes since the end of World War II.<sup>122</sup> Morgenthau focused particularly in this edition upon the consequences of the Vietnam War, and the explicit recognition by the West of the territorial status quo in Europe, a recognition which, for Morgenthau, symbolized the effective end of the Cold War. The arena of International Politics had also changed substantially with the entry of China as a would-be third superpower and the coming of age of the defeated Axis powers, Japan and Germany, as independent, democratic nation states. Further complicating global politics, however, was the fact that the United Nations, the apparent success of which only twenty years before had caused Morgenthau to revise his initial proscriptions, had now declined as a force in international politics.

In light of Morgenthau’s public protestations over the Vietnam War by 1973, it is hardly surprising that he took the opportunity provided by a fifth edition to analyze the consequences of the war for both U.S. power, and international politics more generally. Inserting an analysis of the war into his core principles of realism, Morgenthau suggested that U.S. conduct in Indo-China provided the tools with which to construct “a counter-theory of irrational politics, a kind of pathology of international politics.” Morgenthau articulated an in-depth critique of the policy makers whom he believed responsible for U.S. policy. They had replaced experience with superstition; refused to correct their

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<sup>121</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1967, Preface.

<sup>122</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1973), Preface.

“picture of the world” in the light of subsequent experience; used intelligence not as a tool with which to adapt policy to reality but as a means of reinterpreting reality to accord with policy; allowed their egoism to widen the gap between perception and reality; and used action, “any kind of action,” as a means of closing the gap between perception and reality. Whilst the specifics of Morgenthau’s denunciation were new to the Fifth Edition, the argument on which they were based was not; it rested on the same core six principles of realism as had his earlier analyses of the Winter War, World War I, and the recognition of China. As he had done all along, however, Morgenthau applied his core thinking to new situations, and where necessary, expanded the range of analytical tools available to his readers. Thus, as a means of helping students of International Relations make sense of the Vietnam War, Morgenthau not only inserted an analysis of the war into his core principles but also expanded his analysis of political prediction and included a systemic emphasis upon the factor of irrationality in the conduct of foreign policy.

As he had made clear in previous editions, so here did Morgenthau emphasize that while all of the changes to which he referred were significant, and while they all played some part in shaping a new tapestry of international relations, still his theories, the same theories as first expounded twenty-five years before, were relevant tools of analysis.<sup>123</sup> While on the one hand this assertion might be seen as a statement of self-confidence, almost arrogance, it also reflected Morgenthau’s conviction that the substance of his arguments had not changed, even as the political circumstances to which they could be applied had. Thus again it becomes obvious that, from Morgenthau’s perspective his criticism of the Vietnam War was a logical development within the original parameters of realism as first put forward two and a half decades before.

Five years later in 1978 a Revised Fifth Edition of *Politics Among Nations* appeared, the last to be personally supervised by the then 74 year old Morgenthau.<sup>124</sup> As before, perhaps the most prominent statement by Morgenthau concerned the continuing relevancy of his work. Indeed, more than this, he celebrated the foresight shown in previous editions by suggesting that “many recent developments in foreign policy” had

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<sup>123</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1973, Preface.

<sup>124</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New York Alfred A. Knopf, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, revised, 1978

been “anticipated by the theoretical considerations contained in previous editions...”<sup>125</sup> Thus according to Morgenthau, realism, or at least his realism, was not only still a relevant analytical tool but had proved capable of predicting or at least suggesting possibilities for the future within international relations which could not have been known at the time. The consistency of the intellectual foundations of the revised fifth edition of 1978 with the previous editions is quite remarkable. As a result, although the effect of the application of his principals may have varied, Morgenthau’s loyalty to these intellectual foundations remained unaltered. Thus he remained constant in his conviction that “international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power” and that whenever policy makers “strive to realize their goal by means of international politics, they do so by striving for power.”<sup>126</sup>

The analysis Morgenthau offered the reader in 1978 of the elements of the power of a country - geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character, national morale, the quality of diplomacy and the quality of government - were the same as those he had offered the reader of the first edition in 1948.<sup>127</sup> His outline of his theme was as constant as the morning star, from the robust and nuanced realism of Parts One through Eight, to his aspiration towards the possibility of a world state in part nine. His aspirations for a more hopeful future focused, as always, on the possibility, if not the probability of human moral transformation. He hoped, as he had always done, for the possibility of a global civil society as the basis of a world state: “What is needed [for permanent peace] is a radical transformation of the existing international society of sovereign nations into a supranational community of individuals.”<sup>128</sup>

With this edition, as he had done in his career progression, Morgenthau had come full circle professionally. He had achieved fame in 1948 with the publication of the first edition of what would prove to be his masterpiece. He had sustained his renown by publishing updates of this work over the course of the next thirty years. With each edition he had acknowledged the most critical changes in the international sphere while at the

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<sup>125</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), Preface.

<sup>126</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Revised, 1973), 29.

<sup>127</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Revised, 1973), 4-15.

<sup>128</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Revised, 1973), 492.

same time making clear the continuing relevancy, through its adaptability, of his core argument. Furthermore, his confidence in the constancy of his work enabled him to offer critiques of contemporary U.S. foreign policy without losing faith in his own theories. In essence, Morgenthau, through his critiques and analysis, made clear that realism, as articulated by him over the course of the post-war period, contained within it both conservative and progressive elements and thus consisted of a theoretical consistency combined with a practical flexibility. Morgenthau's intellectual consistency was reflected throughout the successive editions of *Politics Among Nations*. It was also evident in his other monographs, monographs to which we now turn.



## Chapter Three

### Five Monographs: Morgenthau's Approach Applied

If *Politics Among Nations* was Morgenthau's singular masterpiece, he also published a significant collection of other monographs, which taken together, might be seen to match *Politics* both in terms of substantive argument, and as a reflection of the constancy combined with flexibility which was the hallmark of Morgenthau's realism. In this chapter I have chosen to focus on five such texts, all of which, I suggest, reflect a particular aspect of Morgenthau's intellectual development as applied to changing international circumstances.

Morgenthau's first published monograph was *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, published in 1946.<sup>129</sup> In this text Morgenthau offered a critique of positivist methods in the context of a blunter analysis of the consequences of relying on an idealist framework in international relations than would be presented even in *Politics Among Nations*. Here he offered no hopes of how peace might one day be achieved through the formation of effective supranational institutions. Instead, he concentrated his fire upon the futility of attempting to apply the analysis of the laboratory to the political collective. Morgenthau accused "scientific man" of trying to understand international society according to a set of rational rules by which everyone would abide. For Morgenthau international society was not so easily ruled. Humanity was a great deal too complex to be the subject of scientific rational planning and analysis. Rather what was required was the application of judgment and experience.

Applying his theory to the international arena of the twentieth century, Morgenthau proposed that the problems of the inter-war era had arisen not because, as idealists would have it, there had been too little reason applied, but because states as a natural course of order, recognize no legal authority upon them. Certainly there might

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<sup>129</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

exist moral strictures or an international law in name, but, argued Morgenthau, an international law without the possibility of sanction was really no international law at all. Thus, if one wanted to understand the events of the inter-war era, one would do better to examine the reality of states' interests, rather than the looked-for hopes of reason and morality. Thus Wilsonian idealism had offered not a realistic means of understanding international politics but rather a false hope. A realistic, or in Morgenthau's terms, a realist, analysis based on judgment and experience would have recognized that states were interested only in the pursuit of power, in which pursuit they would be governed only according to the perceived national interests of the state.

In 1951, Morgenthau applied his theory of realism to U.S. foreign policy. Thus *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy*, examined U.S. diplomacy past and present.<sup>130</sup> According to Morgenthau, U.S. foreign policy could be broken down into four stages, or eras. The first, represented by George Washington, perhaps most obviously in his Farewell Address, was an age of realism when policymakers clearly understood and acted upon what they perceived to be the real interests of the United States. The nineteenth century, according to Morgenthau, witnessed an ideological era when the national interests of the United States were co-terminous with contemporary notions of morality. Though dangerous ground, this philosophy worked well enough because at heart policymakers still pursued the real interests of the country. The real damage, according to Morgenthau, had happened in the last fifty years when policymakers had conducted foreign policy according to a utopian or idealistic conception of the world.

Thus, here again, as he had done in *Scientific Man* and in *Politics Among Nations*, and as he would do throughout his professional career, Morgenthau reserved his greatest disdain for idealism with, as a mechanism for understanding international relations, its belief in the limits imposed upon the freedom of nation states' behavior by international institutions and mores. This belief, argued Morgenthau, was best represented by such theories and practices as Wilsonian diplomacy, Dunbarton legalism, Trumanian sentimentalism, and neo-isolation. Collectively these errors had caused U.S. policy to

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<sup>130</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951).

stray from its proper course. The result, in the post-war age, was that what should have been a realist age had been perverted. Morgenthau now called upon policymakers to abandon these errors and revert to the realism of Washington. Specifically, he urged that contemporary U.S. foreign policy should be guided by the objective of securing a balance of power in Europe and Asia, and by maintaining a dominant position for the United States within its own hemisphere. Even more succinctly, he argued that national interests should be yardstick against which all foreign policy decisions should be measured.

Just over a decade later, with three editions of *Politics Among Nations* under his belt, Morgenthau again applied the more general theories contained within his masterpiece to the particular needs of his adopted country. In *Politics*, Morgenthau had urged both theorists and policymakers to theorize and act according to the situation as it actually was, not according to how they thought it should be, or hoped it might one day become, and above all else, to focus on the national interest. Examining U.S. policy in 1962 in *The Purpose of American Politics*, Morgenthau argued that while not all states had a national interest, the absence of which explained their relative lack of influence in the world, for the United States the national interest was an amalgam of equality and liberty. It was this creative tension that existed between equality and liberty - the national purpose - that gave a normative nature to the outcome sought by U.S. foreign policy. Having asserted the centrality of national interest, Morgenthau in *American Politics* was ready to follow the same rule – even at the cost of apparently contradicting his earlier arguments.<sup>131</sup> As elsewhere, however, a close reading of Morgenthau’s argument reveals not an inconsistency with earlier thought but rather a flexibility, an ability to adapt an existing theory to a new situation sufficiently well that the original theory, might at first glance appear to have been overruled. In fact, it is still very much present.

The new situation that ‘actually was’ in 1962, according to Morgenthau, was the combined existence of nuclear weapons and the advanced rockets and guidance systems designed to carry the weapons from continent to continent. The result was that America could no longer secure its borders exclusively through its own efforts. No matter how much material strength the U.S. amassed, it could not prevent an attack of such

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<sup>131</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

magnitude as would likely destroy the nation. Thus where once Morgenthau had doubted the utility of supranational bodies, now he saw them as the only possible mechanism by which new weapons of mass destruction could be controlled. True to his earlier analysis, Morgenthau in 1962 did not suggest that a strong United Nations or some other such institution, was a guarantee that nuclear weapons would not be used, only that it was the best method of potential control available. As he phrased it, “The United States must choose not between insecurity and security, but between utter insecurity and a measure of insecurity which, in view of the alternative, is tolerable.”<sup>132</sup>

While it would be possible to read *American Politics* as a shift to the left for Morgenthau, and his call for a stronger supranational body as proof of his growing disenchantment with the politics of power between nations, it would be more appropriate to see in it a constancy of purpose, a call for nation states to act in a manner which would best serve their self-interests. Thus, believed Morgenthau, if every nation state signed up, it would make the supranational body all the stronger, and all the more likely to be able to impose its will upon constituent members, and thereby assure both the collective and individual security of those same members. From this perspective, the conceding of national sovereignty, was not, as might superficially be assumed, against the interests of nation states but rather very much integral to them.

If in *American Politics* Morgenthau applied his realist framework to an overview of U.S. foreign policy, in *Vietnam and The United States*, he concentrated his analysis upon what was in 1965, the year of the book’s publication, possibly the ‘hottest’ single issue in U.S. foreign policy.<sup>133</sup> Although the book could be perceived as being what would be termed today ‘an instant book,’ written in response to a particular set of circumstances of the moment, its analyses and arguments reflected years of scholarly research and reflection. As we have seen, Morgenthau’s analysis of U.S. involvement in Vietnam represented not an aberration of the realist conception of international relations produced in 1948, but rather its practical application to a new set of circumstances. Consisting of previously published essays drawn from Morgenthau’s contribution to the mass media between 1956 and 1965, along with an original introductory essay written for

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<sup>132</sup> Morgenthau, *American Politics*, p.68

<sup>133</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Vietnam and The United States*, (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1965).

the occasion, *Vietnam and The United States*, summarized and foregrounded Morgenthau's thoughts about U.S. policy and Vietnam.

Essentially Morgenthau proposed that U.S. policy toward Vietnam was based on three myths: "a binding commitment to the Saigon government that engages our 'honor'; aggression from the North against a people anxious to have us defend their national independence; and the identity of the interests and policies of the Viet Cong, North Vietnam and China."<sup>134</sup> According to Morgenthau, since none of the propositions behind these ideas was true, the U.S. policy which had resulted from them was also false, i.e. a policy not in the true interests of the United States. Instead, what had resulted was a policy which could result only in the "...indiscriminate killing of everybody in sight – by genocide."<sup>135</sup> Morgenthau's use in an academic monograph of language more likely to be heard on the streets, or on the campuses of student-dominated universities might, as before, suggest a shift to the left. Again, however, a contextualized reading of his argument makes clear that this is not the case. Morgenthau argued against genocide not on moral grounds but because the policy from which it would result was flawed, flawed in the sense of not serving the interests of the United States. From this perspective, as elsewhere, Morgenthau's realism may be seen to contain within it a liberatory potential since it recognized that the "...indiscriminate killing of everybody in sight" was hardly good or useful politics.

In the second edition of *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau had introduced the element of "quality of government" as an aspect of international politics. We have already discussed his later use of this dimension in reference to the Johnson administration and its harassment of him through the arms of government. In *Vietnam and The United States*, Morgenthau employed the same analytical tool to serve a blistering attack upon the individuals within government he perceived to be responsible for U.S. involvement in Vietnam. He accused these policymakers of being unable to distinguish between what was good for the country and what was good for their own reputations. His analysis is worth quoting in some detail since it manifests the anger Morgenthau clearly felt when he considered the Vietnam War. As he saw it,

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<sup>134</sup> *Vietnam and The United States*, p.13.

<sup>135</sup> *Vietnam and The United States*, p.20.

“disastrous policies consistently pursued serve the self-protection of those who have initiated or inherited them. We are here in the presence of an issue not of foreign policy or military strategy but of psychopathology. The result is the personalization of the fear of the loss of prestige, so that in the end it is not only the prestige of the nation that is at stake, but the prestige of the policymaker himself, his ability to retain his power, and his place in history. The commitment which the policymaker feels he cannot escape is not so much to the government of South Vietnam as to the public opinion of the United States.”<sup>136</sup>

As with his use of the term ‘genocide,’ Morgenthau with this critique placed himself squarely on the side of those who would later ask President Johnson how many kids had “he killed today.”<sup>137</sup> Although the desired ends were the same, however, there was a difference between Morgenthau and most street activists. Morgenthau called for an end to the war not because it was the morally right thing to do, or because the United States should abandon its interests in the region and concede to the force of popular will or compassion. Rather, the United States should withdraw from Vietnam because the country’s involvement was a result not of real or actual U.S. interests but because of the interests of particular office-holders who were intent on putting their interests ahead of the interests of the country. The extent of Morgenthau’s disdain for the Johnson administration is clear when one realizes that he condemned the policymakers not for having implemented bad policies in good faith but for continuing to implement bad policies for bad reasons. Thus, the fact that the vitriol contained within Morgenthau’s assessment of particular members of the U.S. policy-making establishment matched that launched by left-wing activists who sought both the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam and the downfall of the current U.S. administration does not mean that Morgenthau was himself a left wing activist. At times, one might walk like a duck, talk like a duck but still be very much a realist conservative, albeit a conservative whose framework contained within it the potential for liberation and progressivism.

Reflecting on his experiences toward the end of his career, Morgenthau produced

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<sup>136</sup> *Vietnam and The United States*, p. 18.

<sup>137</sup> The taunt “Hey hey LBJ, how many kids have you killed today?” was extremely popular amongst anti-war activists during the 1960s, personalizing responsibility for continuing U.S. presence on the president. For a history of anti-war activism see, Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? : American Protest Against the War in Vietnam 1963-1975*, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1984).

his last work, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* in 1969.<sup>138</sup> The very title of the book might well be seen to reflect a shift in Morgenthau's thinking. As one credited with formulating the basis on which so much of post-45 U.S. foreign policy had been built, if Morgenthau was now calling for 'a new foreign policy', then surely he must be rejecting the old, or more specifically his old. In fact, he was, as ever, developing and applying his existing policy to the new circumstances of the late 1960s. Doing so would mean a change in the actual foreign policy as currently practiced by the United States, but it would not change the fundamental grounds on which such policies would be based. That basis was the same in 1969 as it had been in 1949 – the pursuit and preservation of U.S. national security and power.

Arguing that the United States must most urgently decide what was essential for its national well-being and reject what was peripheral and contingent, Morgenthau argued for a ruthless prioritization so as best to promote the national interests of the United States. In essence, rejecting both isolationism and globalism, Morgenthau called for new policies for a new world. Reiterating his conviction that there was no such thing as a monolithic communist world, Morgenthau emphasized that in interfering in countries where it had no business to be, the United States was acting against its own best interests. Instead, Morgenthau laid out a new vision of foreign policy. Based as ever on the pursuit of U.S. national interests, this policy should, according to Morgenthau, avoid an arms race, conduct nuclear policy at the international level, recognize China and form a new Atlantic alliance with Western Europe. In short, the United States should decide where its national interests lay and implement policies exclusively in those regions, neglecting areas of no particular concern to the U.S. As harsh as the proposal might have sounded, or indeed as 'soft' as it might have sounded given its general advice to withdraw from Vietnam, the underlying message was the same as it had always been – find, and secure, the interests of the state.

Perhaps of most obvious dramatic significance, Morgenthau, in *A New Foreign Policy*, called for an end to the policy of containment. Arguing that it had been valuable "during the famous fifteen weeks of the spring of 1947" when the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan had together represented the implementation of the then innovative

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<sup>138</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States*, (New York: Preager, 1969).

policy of containment, Morgenthau now proclaimed it to be an outdated, and with particular regard to China, dangerous policy. Attempting to contain China, claimed Morgenthau, would likely lead to a serious military engagement. Far better to engage diplomatically, recognizing the realities of the situation - China was the dominant power in its hemisphere, was already becoming an economic and political competitor to the United States, and was in any case, practicing a communism different in substance from, and certainly not allied with, that practiced in the Soviet Union.

Thus by the time of his final new monograph, Morgenthau had, as he had done in other spheres, come full circle. Having become famous on the basis of the doctrine of containment, certainly justified and popularized by him if first articulated by Kennan, he was now calling for its rejection. He did so, however, not because he believed realism to have outrun its course, but because he perceived that realism had already been abandoned by U.S. policymakers and needed very much to be brought back. It was a position articulated in successive editions of *Politics Among Nations*, in a representative sampling of his monographs and also through his contributions to edited collections and his published articles in academic journals. It is to these that we now turn.



## Chapter Four

### From Germany to Nuclear Weapons: Realism in Practice

Whilst Morgenthau's monographs represent important statements of his thought, he also contributed to academic debate, and helped shape the parameters of the discussion, through the writing of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and essays.<sup>139</sup> In this chapter I have chosen to analyze three articles and one book chapter as a means of understanding Morgenthau's politics of realism. Taken together, and building on the suggestions already made through a reading of his seminal work and other monographs, I propose that here, as elsewhere, what is apparent is the flexible fixity of Morgenthau's thought.

In the summer of 1950, the Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation Annual Institute was held at the University of Chicago. These annual institutes which had been established in 1924 were the occasion of bringing various outside speakers to Chicago in order to discuss a common theme of topical importance. With the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, it seemed timely that the 1950 Institute should discuss Germany and the future of Europe, and that the editor of that year's volume should be Hans J. Morgenthau. In addition to editing the published collection, Morgenthau was also responsible for contributing a chapter of his own, "Germany and the Future of Europe," dealing with the question of how the political interests of Western Europe might be reconciled with the rebirth of an independent Germany.<sup>140</sup> The significance of this question to post-war Europe cannot easily be overemphasized. If Europe of the 1870s had been bothered by the German question in the shape of how to

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<sup>139</sup> Christopher Frei., *Hans J. Morgenthau. An Intellectual Biography*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 76. Frie records that Morgenthau published over 420 articles, essays and commentaries between 1950 and 1980.

<sup>140</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Germany: The Political Problem," *Germany and the Future of Europe*, ed. Hans J. Morgenthau, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 76-89.

cope with a newly united Germany, then the Europe of the 1950s was plagued by the German question in the shape of how to deal with a divided Germany, and in particular how to respond to a West Germany which though territorially much reduced in size was still a major economic and political power to be reckoned with.

With the decision by the United States to actively engage in a process of containment of the Soviet Union, West Germany was the frontline state with the Soviet sphere of influence. By choosing to examine the issue of Germany, Morgenthau was in many ways looking at the central problem of the early Cold War. For Morgenthau there were three key problems to be dealt with when examining Germany. Firstly, to prevent a rebirth of the worldview that led firstly Prussia, then a united Wilhemite Germany, and then Hitler's Reich into war. Secondly, how, whilst making sure that Germany would not again be a threat to its neighbors, it would yet be an economically powerful and politically stable state. And finally, how this economically powerful and politically stable German state would be able to protect itself against Finland-style domination by the Soviet Union. At the same time as he sought to avoid German domination, however, Morgenthau believed that Germany had to be sufficiently strong so as to serve as a buffer against communism. Indeed, Morgenthau believed that a strong Germany was essential to the success of anti-communism efforts. In essence, Morgenthau sought to engage with the issue of how a rearmed Germany could be prevented from dominating its neighbors to the detriment of the interests of the Western Allies while still being allowed to grow sufficiently strong as to protect them.<sup>141</sup>

Even as Morgenthau was offering solutions to Europe's, and in light of the global nature of international relations in 1950, the world's German question, he was also identifying what he perceived to be the origins of recent errors in U.S. foreign policy. According to "The Mainspring of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs.

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<sup>141</sup> Europe's German question has since been re-born yet again with the re-union of East and West Germany in October 1990. Now Europeans must grapple with the issue not only of how to respond to a united Germany (as had faced them in 1870) but how to do so in the context of the European Union. The problem might be summarized thus: give Germany too much power and freedom and it might, in enthusiasm, run away with (and thereby destroy) the Union; on the other hand, give Germany too little power and freedom and it might, in frustration, run away from (and thereby destroy) the Union. For an up to date analysis of the German question in the context of the European Union see, Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union? An Introduction to the European Community*. (Houndmills, Basingstock, Hampshire: MacMillan Press, 1994).

Moral Abstraction,” published in 1950 in *The American Political Science Review*, the premier journal in the field, the error lay in the original claim of early colonists of the would-be United States that their society was fundamentally different from Europe. Specifically, according to Morgenthau, they claimed that their society was the antithesis of Europe rather than, through its imperialistic nature, its culmination. It was only, claimed Morgenthau, because the indigenous inhabitants of the North American landmass were so inferior in terms of numbers, organization and military capability that the apologists and politicians of the European settlers were able to make the argument that the political expansion of the original thirteen colonies into the interior was an act “...of civilization rather than conquest” and as such essentially differed from, and was morally superior to, the imperialist ventures, wars of conquest, and colonial acquisitions with which the history of other nations was replete.<sup>142</sup>

As a result of this deception, claimed Morgenthau, the American public believed itself to be morally superior to Europe. With this belief, cloaking the expansion of the country in a civilizationist framework, they were denying the reality of the power politics by which the expansion had actually been achieved. This denial of power politics and the accompanying perception that politics was in fact guided by moral impulses such as the civilizational impulse which had sponsored expansion into the interior, had, claimed Morgenthau, led directly to the disaster of Wilsonian idealism. Morgenthau believed now that the only way forward was for U.S. policymakers to acknowledge the reality of what had actually made the United States such a strong country and to deny the myth of what people believed had made them strong. To do so would be to correct the basis on which future foreign policies could be established, an essential prerequisite for future success since it stood to reason that a policy built upon false assumptions, as had been the case with idealism, could reap only false rewards, or at least rewards antithetical to the real interests of the United States.

Likewise antithetical, according to Morgenthau was the granting of aid to other nations on grounds unrelated to U.S. national interests. “Preface to a Political Theory of Foreign Aid,” published in *The American Political Science Review* in 1962, might in

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<sup>142</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Mainspring of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstraction,” *The American Political Science Review*, Volume 44, Issue 4 (Dec. 1950), 833-854.

some ways be considered Morgenthau's most controversial article since it appears to be absent any sense of compassion. It is certainly one that weakens any perception of Morgenthau as a liberal. And yet, it is no different, no less realist, no less progressive than his other work.<sup>143</sup> For Morgenthau compassion in foreign policy was misplaced. To implement foreign policy according to a compassionate view of the world would be to implement foreign policy according to how one wanted, or wished, the world to look. To act according to these guidelines would be to return to the idealism of the inter-war age, an idealism which, according to Morgenthau, had clearly not worked out, and which had been obviously discredited. As Morgenthau saw it, cloaking foreign aid in idealism had clouded the minds of both policymakers and the public about what aid should really be concerned with. It was not, argued Morgenthau, about charity or help. Nor was it purely an economic transaction. It was an expression of the relationship between economy and politics and was directly tied to the securing of the interests of the United States. These interests, according to Morgenthau, did not include apparently random, or at least indiscriminate giving of aid to underdeveloped nations so that they might develop.

Perhaps somewhat harshly, but expressive of a realist viewpoint, Morgenthau suggested that some nations suffered "...from human deficiencies which preclude economic development" or "to put it bluntly: as there are bums and beggars so there are bum and beggar nations." To give such nations aid would be ludicrous, since "short of a miraculous transformation of their collective intelligence and character, what they receive from the outside is not likely to be used for economic development." Further lambasting the political structures within such nations, Morgenthau believed that in many aid-recipient nations, "peace and order" were maintained "only through the ruthless use of the monopoly of violence by the ruling group." Thus while the giving of aid might well prompt democratic forces to start a revolution, it could not control the outcome and thus revolution would likely lead not to democracy but to chaos and disorder. Hence for Morgenthau, any attempt by the United States to stimulate economic development or industrialization as a route to political democracy would, by disrupting "the social fabric of the underdeveloped nation" more likely lead to a revolution, the outcome of which

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<sup>143</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Preface to a Political Theory of Foreign Aid," *The American Political Science Review*, June 1962, pp 31-39.

would be unlikely to benefit the United States. Instead of this idealist path, the U.S. would do better to determine its aid recipients according to its friendships - a harsh proscription perhaps but one that would be more palatable, at least within the domestic sphere of U.S. politics, if the idealism under which aid was currently cloaked was abandoned and the public taught to see aid for what it really was, as another dimension of international relations.

In *Politics Among Nations* Morgenthau had articulated the hope that the international political order could eventually create a mechanism for the enforcement of international peace. In 1963, "The Political Conditions for an International Police Force," published in a special issue of *International Organization*, he looked specifically at the likelihood that such a peace could be maintained by an international police force.<sup>144</sup> Arguing that the political conditions for international peace would be in place when nation states were willing to surrender real aspects of their sovereignty to a supranational body, Morgenthau declared that that time had clearly not yet come. Thus he had reached the conclusion that in a world of sovereign nations, the idea of a reliable and effective police force was a contradiction in terms.

According to Morgenthau, an international police force, by dint of being international could not be more reliable or efficient than the political interests and military capabilities of the nations supporting it allowed it to be. Furthermore, the loyalty of the individuals within the international police force would always lie first with their own nation state. Taking as his example the attitude of the police during the forced integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962, Morgenthau argued that "the political preferences of the police are likely to color the performance of its functions."<sup>145</sup> Thus in order to be effective, a supranational body would have to create its own force rather than relying on the borrowed forces of nation states. In effect, Morgenthau was

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<sup>144</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Political Conditions for an International Police Force," *International Organization*, Volume 17, Issue 2 International Force : A Symposium (Spring ,1963), 393-403.

<sup>145</sup> Morgenthau, "The Political Conditions for an International Police Force," p.394. What Morgenthau found to be true of Mississippi in 1962 would also prove to be true of Northern Ireland in 1968, a year infamous for the obvious preference of the police force for the Protestant cause against the nationalist at the outbreak of what would come to be known as 'The Troubles.' For a through evaluation of the role of the police in Northern Ireland see, Aogan Mulcahy, *Policing Northern Ireland: Legitimacy, Reform and Social Conflict* (Cullompton : Willan Publishing, 2004); and Chris Ryder, *The RUC: A Force Under Fire*, (London: ~ Methuen Publishing, 1989).

following the advice offered many years earlier by Lenin that the dictatorship of the proletariat could not merely take over the instruments of the Tsarist state and use them for its own purposes since instruments designed for one purpose cannot readily be used for another. Thus just as Lenin held that the proletariat had to create institutions of its own, so too did Morgenthau hold that a supranational institution must create its own police force.

Significantly, and suggestive of the progressivism inherent within his realist framework, Morgenthau suggested that the creation of just such a force was a real possibility - "in a totally disarmed world." According to Morgenthau, an environment of total disarmament would create, or be created by, a supranational authority rendering the international sphere to be no longer anarchic. In other words, "total disarmament and world government go hand in hand..."<sup>146</sup> With this article Morgenthau appeared to offer something to all sides. On the one hand, a dismissal of the likely effectiveness of any international police force - a clear string for the right; on the other, the expression of hope that one day total disarmament and world government would govern international relations - a clear string for the left. In reality, Morgenthau was pulling politically for neither side. He was simply, as he had been doing since 1946, applying the essentials of his realism - that nation states sought, maintained and used power according to perceived national self-interest - to the perplexing question of whether or not, or at what point in time or circumstances, an international police would or could become a viable reality.

One of the most chilling aspects of the Cold War for many ordinary citizens must surely have been the knowledge that the destruction of their country, and perhaps the world as they knew it, was always only a few minutes away. In this respect, Morgenthau was no different from his fellows. Analyzing the influence of nuclear weapons upon international relations in "The Four Paradoxes of Nuclear Strategy," published in *The American Political Science Review* in 1964, Morgenthau proposed that the transition from pre-nuclear to nuclear age was as significant as that from antiquity to medieval and medieval to modern.<sup>147</sup> The existence of nuclear weapons was made yet more complicated by the four paradoxes of Morgenthau's title. First, the impossibility of the

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<sup>146</sup> Morgenthau, "The Political Conditions for an International Police Force," p.403.

<sup>147</sup> Morgenthau, "The Four Paradoxes of Nuclear Strategy," *The American Political Science Review*, Volume 58, Issue 1 (Mar., 1964) 23-35.

use of nuclear weapons because of the fear of their destructive capability, whilst still holding a commitment to use these same weapons. Second, the desire for the creation of a viable nuclear strategy which was sufficiently complex so as to avoid ever having to use nuclear weapons. Third, the conflict between seeking to prevent a nuclear arms race whilst continuing to develop ever more powerful nuclear weapons. And finally, the desire by the United States to create an international alliance system to protect its interests, even as there existed rockets to carry hydrogen bombs from continent to continent which, for Morgenthau, made such an alliance structure obsolete. In essence, Morgenthau suggested “all these paradoxes result from the contrast between traditional attitudes and the possibility of nuclear war, and from the fruitless attempts to reconcile the two.”<sup>148</sup> In short, Morgenthau was calling for policymakers to see the world as it actually was, as it had become, rather than either how they wished it to be, or even how it had been. The innovation of nuclear weapons necessitated a re-evaluation of international relations. Again, this re-evaluation represented not a shift away from realism but a recognition that as times changed so too must the policy stemming from a realist appraisal of the world.

The presence of nuclear weapons had not only changed the particulars of international relations, it had also changed the means by which states would or could do business with each other. Based on his experience and judgment, Morgenthau was clear that neither superpower wished to use nuclear weapons. Berlin, Korea, Hungary and Cuba, for instance, were each examples of the superpowers’ willingness to compromise their original positions so as to avoid the threat of nuclear attack on their respective homelands. As significant as this withdrawal from the brink was, however, Morgenthau drew the readers’ attention to the fact that on several occasions, each power had threatened to deploy nuclear weapons, each side in effect hoping to bluff the other into believing that it was willing to risk its homeland in pursuit of its objective. Such a position, argued Morgenthau, led to a new dimension within international relations and a new twist on the realist assumption that a nation state will, in pursuit of its interests, employ military force, the effectiveness of which in defeating an enemy or defending one’s own nation, lies in its actual application. In the new era of the nuclear age, suggested Morgenthau, this was no longer the case. Rather the “primary function of

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<sup>148</sup> Morgenthau, “The Four Paradoxes of Nuclear Strategy,” 23.

nuclear force lies in making its physical application superfluous by deterring the prospective opponent from using it.”<sup>149</sup>

Thus as he pre-figured Johnson in his call for the hearts and minds of men, here Morgenthau may be said to have pre-figured Mikhail Gorbachev who, in his vision of perestroika and glasnost, declared nuclear weapons to be irrational and ineffective tools of diplomacy since to use them would be to bring about the destruction of one’s own state.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, only five years after the first post-war protesters against nuclear weapons marched to Aldermaston<sup>151</sup> in the United Kingdom, and many years before the women of Greenham Common<sup>152</sup> would call for the removal of cruise missiles, Hans J. Morgenthau, arch-realist, proponent of a realpolitik likely to find favor with Bismarck, was calling for a new understanding of international relations in order to take account of, and preferably control, nuclear weapons.

In light of this call, it is perhaps hardly surprising that some have mistaken Morgenthau’s views, that some have considered him to have become more liberal with age. It is also possible for others to look only at the emphasis placed upon states’ interests and see only a conservative, concerned only with the preservation of his own nation state. In fact, as we have suggested throughout, Morgenthau is not so easily or neatly classified, or at least not if one insists on employing the limiting terminology of left and right. Morgenthau, as we have argued from the beginning, is in fact more easily understood as a progressive realist. As a realist, he advocated tirelessly for the implementation of a foreign policy which would best reflect the interests of the nation state. As a progressive, he advocated for causes against the perceived current political interests of his government. For Morgenthau there was no inconsistency in his position. His realism, as

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<sup>149</sup> Morgenthau, “The Four Paradoxes of Nuclear Strategy,” 24.

<sup>150</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev had first articulated his views on nuclear weapons within the larger framework of restructuring detailed in his book *Perestroika*, (Borgo Press, 1991). He later declared “I am convinced that nuclear weapons must be abolished. Their use in a military conflict is unthinkable; using them to achieve political objectives is immoral.”, quoted in *Arms Control Today*, ,( July/August 2005).

<sup>151</sup> The Atomic Weapons Establishment, the center for the design and construction of the United Kingdom’s atomic and hydrogen bombs, was set up at the former wartime airfield at Aldermaston in Berkshire on 1 April 1950. Easter weekend of 1958 witnessed the famous peace march from Trafalgar Square, London to Aldermaston. The march is generally considered to constitute the start of the Campaign for Nuclear Dis-Armament Movement (CND).

<sup>152</sup> Greenham Common was the UK base at which U.S. cruise missiles were held. Beginning in 1981, and lasting until 2000, peace protesters, predominantly women, held a vigil outside the base in protest at the missiles’ presence.



the very title of his masterpiece suggested, contained within it the recognition that relations between states were based on power but also the recognition that nations would struggle for peace as well as power. In addition to tracing that struggle in his own work, as we have seen here, Morgenthau also charted the struggle through the work of other people. It is to those reviews that we now turn.

Chapter Five  
Realism Through Other People's Words:  
Morgenthau's Book Reviews

In addition to using academic journals as a venue for his original work, Morgenthau, like many scholars, also used journals as a means of commenting upon the work of his peers. Through these book reviews Morgenthau was able to participate in the general debates of the day, bringing out the thesis of the book under review to be sure, but also ensuring that his own views were clearly expressed - whether in support or not of the particular book. As one might expect, a study of the reviews written by Morgenthau over the course of his career reveals his pre-occupation with the same themes when tackled by others, as when written about by himself. Thus, the books he chose to review dealt with issues such as idealism, the League of Nations, international law, morality, nuclear weapons, and Vietnam. I have selected this particular group of reviews because they cover a diverse range of topics and suggested solutions. Read individually, each could paint Morgenthau in a either a conservative or liberal hue – some appear quite callous with regard to the fate of individuals, some appear quite concerned with those same people. In reality, whatever the particular topic, however, and whoever the author, Morgenthau's thought, as it was in his monographs and articles, was constant, reflecting Morgenthau's conviction that much in the field of international relations could be mended if only realism was constantly, if flexibly, applied.

One of Morgenthau's earliest contributions was to *The American Political Science Review*, the premier journal in the field, and came only a month after the outbreak of war in Europe. Morgenthau rejected the argument made by author Georg Cohen in *Neo-Neutrality* that neo-neutrality was a positive force in world politics and thus different from, and stronger than, traditional neutrality. According to Morgenthau there was no community of interests at the international level sufficiently strong to overcome

conflicting interests. Thus, just as the ideals of the League of Nations were unattainable, so were Cohen's aspirations for collective security based on an unrealizable international solidarity. Morgenthau concluded "...in the realm of politics, it is by definite political, and not by abstract humanitarian, considerations that states are moved."<sup>153</sup> With this comment Morgenthau pre-figured *Politics Among Nations* as surely as if he had written his own article.

A year later, and a year into the European war, Morgenthau again returned to the limits of what international law could possibly achieve. *Making International Law Work* argued that law and force were incompatible at the international level. In keeping with his later, more developed, arguments, Morgenthau claimed the contrary. Indeed he asserted, "there is no such thing as law without force, nor has there ever been organized force without law." Morgenthau rejected the notion that a supranational state would come into existence based solely on the aspirations of international law. Rather, he claimed, supranational states would come into existence when it suited nation states to concede sovereignty. In other words, supranational institutions, as all aspects of international relations, would owe their existence to power politics not idealistic hopes. Again prefiguring his later work, Morgenthau made clear what he believed to be the foundation of international relations: "power politics is not an artificial attribute of our social life; it grows out of the very nature of man as a social being."<sup>154</sup>

Given the centrality of this perception to Morgenthau's intellectual worldview, it is perhaps hardly surprising that he chose to review Georg Schwarzenberger's *Power Politics*. In his review, he once again rejected the notion that power politics and the rule of force were the antitheses of community spirit and the rule of law. From Morgenthau's perspective, quite the opposite was true: it was only through the use of power politics that one could hope to achieve community spirit, and only through the threat or use of the rule of force that international law could work. With these words, Morgenthau foreshadowed the dualism present within *Politics Among Nations*, and the progressivism and liberatory potential within realism. Thus according to Morgenthau's realist understanding, it was

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<sup>153</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *Neo-Neutrality*, Georg Cohen, *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 33, No. 5, (Oct, 1939), 893-894.

<sup>154</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *Making International Law Work*, George W. Keeton and Georg Schwarzenberger, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (July, 1940), 537.

possible to have international community and to live according to, and within limits set by, international law. In order to effect such a situation, however, one had to accept that states would only act according to their perception of their best interests. Praising Schwarzenberger's work because it would help educate non-specialists who were easily dazzled by the "pseudo scientific pretensions of the prophets of permanent peace," Morgenthau also suggested that "...our professional peace planners would do well to ponder its lessons."<sup>155</sup>

Morgenthau returned to his vitriolic disdain for liberal idealism in the last full year of the war, a time when both policy makers and members of the public were thinking about peace. In his review of *Towards An Abiding Peace*, Morgenthau made clear his conviction that that liberalism was an ineffective means of trying to understand the world: "...the liberal who, contemptuous of power politics, endeavors to exorcise social evils by invoking reason, law, and ethics, will at best remain ineffective in the political sphere and at worst fall victim to those evil forces which he may understand but which he is unable to meet on their own ground."<sup>156</sup> Again Morgenthau foreshadowed his own later political development, making the point that for people who thought as he did, "...the antithesis is not between power politics on the one hand, and reason, law, and ethics, on the other, but between power politics for evil and power politics for desirable objectives."<sup>157</sup>

For Morgenthau the significance of power politics was not just that it governed relations between states, but that it also governed relations within states. This much was clear from Morgenthau's review of *Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure?*, a study of the treaties governing the rights and obligations of European minorities mandated by the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>158</sup> Morgenthau answered the question in the affirmative, suggesting that the treaties failed because they regarded the issue of national minorities as a legal rather than as a political question. Further complicating the chances of success by international treaty was the reality that the minority issue was a question of political

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<sup>155</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of Power Politics, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 36 No. 2 (Apr., 1942), 351-352.

<sup>156</sup> Op. cit. p. 351.

<sup>157</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *Towards An Abiding Peace*, R. M. MacIver, *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Mar., 1944), 91-92.

<sup>158</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure?* Jacob Robinson et al, *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Sept. 1944), 237.

import to the larger state within which the given minorities resided, and which was therefore unlikely to allow arbitration by an international body.

A month before the Allies declared victory in Europe, Morgenthau wrote a review of *War and Its Causes*. Morgenthau rejected the author's argument that all wars were to be equally avoided and that war was always bad. According to Morgenthau, a war of defense differed from a war of aggression, and there was a significant difference between just and unjust wars.<sup>159</sup> Significant to Morgenthau's later views is that what could here be seen as militarism, rejecting those who opposed war, in fact provided the same intellectual framework which would later allow Morgenthau to call for an end to the Vietnam War. Thus, here again we see that what later appeared to be radical, new views, had in fact already been articulated, albeit in a different context, the year World War II ended.

As the United States (and other nations) prepared for the post-war world, Morgenthau took it upon himself in book reviews, as he would later do in monographs and articles, to articulate what he believed should serve as the parameters of international relations in the post-war era. Reviewing Fox's *The Super Powers*, and using language that would later form the sub-title of his masterpiece, he chided U.S. policymakers for refusing to face the political facts of life, the very essence of which was "the struggle for power, that is, the desire of individuals or nations to keep the power they have or to add to the power they have, or to show the power they have."<sup>160</sup> Clearly Morgenthau praised Fox because his views coincided with Morgenthau's own. The same was true a few months later when he reviewed Manley Hudson's book *International Tribunals*. Morgenthau applauded Hudson's recognition of "...the natural limitations of the judicial function" and his warning "against regarding it as a universal method for the peaceful solution of international disputes."<sup>161</sup> Morgenthau would hardly put it more eloquently himself over the course of his career.

Morgenthau used the occasion of his review of *The Device of Government: An*

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<sup>159</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *War and Its Causes*, L. L. Bernard, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Apr. 1945), 365-366.

<sup>160</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *The Super Powers*, William T.B. Fox, *Ethics*, Volume 55, Issue 3 (Apr., 1945), 227-228.

<sup>161</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *International Tribunals*, Manley O. Hudson, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.39, No.4 (Aug., 1945), 802-804.

*Essay on Civil Polity*, to establish his view that the proper role of the intellectual was an activist, engaged with the problems of the age.<sup>162</sup> More poetically, a scholarship devoid of contemporary relevance, was for Morgenthau nothing less than medieval scholasticism in modern garb. Again, it is against this context that one must place Morgenthau's later anti-war activism. It was not that the Vietnam War sparked a new idea for Morgenthau, it was not that he suddenly felt a compulsion to speak out. Rather, what was new about the 1960s was that so many others felt such a sudden compulsion. Morgenthau had been articulating his realism since before the Second World War. For many of those who would become activists in the 1960s, it was the Vietnam War which prompted them to speak out. Significantly, not all who spoke out did so inspired by a realist assessment of international relations but since what they said appeared to coincide with what Morgenthau said, it appeared to the superficial observer, as though Morgenthau must be inspired by the same ideals as they. In fact, if the point needs to be made again, he was not. He was inspired by the same framework as twenty years before: a realist analysis of U.S. national interests.

As the United Nations geared up for its work, Morgenthau used his review of *Pioneers in World Order: An American Appraisal of the League of Nations* to elucidate his analysis behind the failure of the League.<sup>163</sup> Its officials, argued Morgenthau, had erred in perceiving the problems of the day to be capable of solution through technical or legal means when in fact they had been political problems that needed to be solved by political means. For Morgenthau, the gap between the ideals upon which the League was based and the concrete environment in which it was forced to work could not be "obliterated" by the "attempt to superimpose a set of abstract principles upon a recalcitrant reality." In 1946, as he would shortly make clear in the first edition of *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau was similarly distrustful of the nascent United Nations.

He was equally pessimistic about the potential for change through voluntary means within the press. Reviewing *A Free and Responsible Press*, composed by The

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<sup>162</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *The Device of Government: An Essay on Civil Polity*, John Laird, *The Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 54, No. 6 (Dec., 1946), 566.

<sup>163</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *Pioneers in World Order: An American Appraisal of the League of Nations*, ed. Harriet Eager Davis, *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 54, No. 6 (Dec. 1946), 568-569.

Commission on Freedom of the Press, Morgenthau asserted that the main threat to the freedom of the press came from monopoly practices.<sup>164</sup> Morgenthau perceived a similarity with international relations, suggesting that just as it was useless to hope that international law could work without teeth, so it would be useless to hope that monopolistic “wielders of power” would give up that power of their own volition. Thus the government should step in and create “institutional devices which will make it impossible...[for]...the abuse of power.” In this as elsewhere, we see the liberatory potential within realism, whereby the power of the state could be used to control circumstances for the good of all - if one accepts that it would be for the good of all to avoid the concentration of media power.

Proof of the potentially beneficent effects of realism was also evident in Morgenthau’s review of Herbert Feiss’ *The Spanish Story*.<sup>165</sup> During World War II Spain was dependent on Britain and the United States for oil, just as Germany was dependent on Spain for key mineral resources. Morgenthau contrasted the different policies of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Churchill used Spain’s dependency upon British oil as a mechanism by which to achieve Britain’s larger objective - ensuring that Spanish North Africa and Gibraltar remained out of German hands. By contrast, Hull saw Spain’s giving of economic supplies to Hitler as a bar to normal relations. Praising Churchill for his realism, and condemning Hull for his idealism and moral indignation, Morgenthau argued that it was the realist approach of Churchill rather than the idealist perspective of Hull, which had secured the Allies’ larger interests.

As we have seen, Morgenthau credited realism with the ability to win wars, form the basis of supranational bodies, and in his review of *La Constitution Federale de la Suisse, 1848-1948*, a centenary commemorative volume of the Swiss confederation of 1848, with the potential to form the basis of nationhood.<sup>166</sup> Morgenthau explored the image by which popular understanding of Switzerland was constructed: “...the Swiss

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<sup>164</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *A Free and Responsible Press*, composed by The Commission on Freedom of the Press, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 53, No. 3 (Nov., 1947), 225.

<sup>165</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *The Spanish Story*, Herbert Feiss, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 42, Issue 4 (Aug., 1948), 791-792.

<sup>166</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *La Constitution Federale de la Suisse, 1848-1948*. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 42, No. 6 (Dec., 1948), 1222-1224.

constitution of 1848 and the peaceful co-operation of four different nationalities under it has become one of the popular arguments in favor of international federation on a European, if not a world, scale. The public is treated to the mythological spectacle of a Swiss democracy where for more than six centuries segments of the main European nations have lived together in peace and freedom.” Against this image, Morgenthau posited the blunt assertion that Switzerland as a Federal state was the result, “not of a centuries’ old harmony among reasonable and peaceful people, but of a struggle for power culminating in a civil war through which one faction of the nation was able to impress its will upon the other.”

Returning to one of the central themes of his life’s work, Morgenthau undertook a review of Harold Laski’s *Liberty and the Modern State*.<sup>167</sup> Laski had argued that the Four Freedoms of President Roosevelt were a prerequisite to the achievement of liberalism. Morgenthau disagreed, contending that the Four Freedoms were insufficient planning tools for the post-war world, since they lacked intellectual rigor, were imprecise and were as a result, unachievable. This denunciation of what might still be termed New Deal politics would appear to place Morgenthau firmly in the conservative camp and would certainly appear to place him at odds with his later self and his calls to end poverty. In fact, as elsewhere, the distinction is more apparent than real. Morgenthau disliked the Four Freedoms because they were an imprecise basis for future policy. They did not take account of the situation as it actually was, but rather hoped for how it might become without providing the tools necessary to get there. Thus it was not the objective of abolishing hunger that Morgenthau rejected but rather the likelihood that the Four Freedoms would serve as a means of achieving it.

As early as the late 1950s, Morgenthau was already questioning the value of nuclear weapons, suggesting that their presence necessitated a re-orientation of traditional diplomacy based on military strength. Specifically, Morgenthau praised Henry Kissinger’s *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* for its recognition that peace and war, political and military policy were “different phases of one organic whole: the defense and promotion of the national interests vis-à-vis other nations.” Yet he doubted Kissinger’s

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<sup>167</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Corruption of Liberal thought*, Review of *Liberty and the Modern State*, (1949), reprinted in *Dilemmas of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).



confidence that policymakers could control nuclear weapons as an ordinary part of diplomacy and suggested instead that policymakers should restore conventional weapons to prominence.

Morgenthau returned to the Vietnam War in 1966 in his review of *Vietnam: A Diplomatic Tragedy: The Origins of The United States Involvement*. Enlarging upon the position he had taken a year earlier in his own monograph, Morgenthau made clear that the U.S. was involved in Vietnam not because of bad policies carried out in good faith, but because of a series of “untruths, half-truths, and rationalizations.”<sup>168</sup> As a result of this veil of secrecy, future historians, according to Morgenthau, would have a hard time “disentangling the tale” of U.S. engagement. Morgenthau praised the book in particular because he believed that it demonstrated that the war was “rooted in the philosophy and diplomacy of Dulles.” Personalizing his criticisms yet further, Morgenthau highlighted the fact that when first advanced, Dulles’ policy had been opposed by the then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson. A decade or so later, however, Johnson was apparently “compelled to draw the ultimate logical conclusions” from “that very same policy.” Thus again we see Morgenthau’s activism against the Vietnam War, and his denunciation of those individuals he believed to have instituted the wrong policy, in the context of his perception of what constituted the real interests of the United States.

In a similar vein, Morgenthau, as he would do more fully elsewhere, articulated his views upon the issue of foreign aid in his review of *The Cultural Approach: Another Way in International Relations*.<sup>169</sup> Emphasizing what he perceived to be the errors in current thinking about aid, Morgenthau somewhat bluntly asserted that “the concept of a foreign office sitting in a political vacuum and spreading goodwill and understanding throughout the world for the love of it has no relation to the actualities of international politics.” Rather, he argued, cultural instruments such as foreign aid should be used by states only in pursuit of their national interests. Published in *The New York Times* in the 1960s, Morgenthau’s arguments about the potential uses of foreign aid would certainly appear to label him as a conservative. By contrast, his stance on China would suggest the opposite.

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<sup>168</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *Vietnam: A Diplomatic Tragedy: The Origins of The United States Involvement*, Victor Bator, *American Historical Review*, vol. 71, No. 3, April 1966, 1101.

<sup>169</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *The Cultural Approach: Another Way in International Relations*, Ruth McMurry and Muna Lee, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 53, No. 5, (Mar., 1948), p.397-398.

Reviewing *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, Morgenthau argued that the current China policy of the United States was in error.<sup>170</sup> Specifically, Morgenthau called for the removal of the seventh fleet, the presence of which was surely a provocation to China, as a means of avoiding a regional conflict, and for a re-orientation of policy toward China in general.

Morgenthau's book reviews touched on a wide variety of subjects, but at the root of all was his twin belief that as a framework for international relations, idealism should be replaced by realism. This fundamental position, which remained constant throughout his career, led him to reject international concern for minorities within foreign nations, indiscriminate aid to foreign countries based on notions of charity, and collective security arrangements based on presumed faith and goodwill. Each of these positions would generally fall within what could be termed the politics of conservatism. The same realist framework, however, led Morgenthau to call for withdrawal from Vietnam, recognition of China, establishment of collective security based on the will of nation states, and the abandonment of nuclear weapons if not absolutely at least to international control willed by, and recognized by, nation states. Each of these positions would generally fall within what might be termed the politics of liberalism. This duality of political perspectives suggests a level of confusion within Morgenthau's thinking. In fact, there is no confusion, only two sides of a single coin. Such was the beauty of Morgenthau's realism. It, being constant and containing within it both conservative and progressive elements, could be applied to a variety of different situations, which might, because of their different natures, result in a variety of implications, a variety sufficient as to suggest conflicting positions within Morgenthau's thinking. In fact, while the suggested policy choices might differ, the fundamental analytical basis remained the same. Thus Morgenthau, recognizing his own consistency, and believing firmly in the obligations of the intellectual to engage with the problems of the day, believed himself to be compelled to honor the implications of his beliefs, whatever the public and political consequences of so doing. Thus in both his calls for withdrawal from Vietnam, and his rejection of foreign aid as a charitable endeavor,

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<sup>170</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Review of *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.*, John K. Fairbank, *China Quarterly*, No.32 (Oct.-Dec., 1967), 174-175.

Morgenthau was acting according to the same political impulse: advocacy of the policy which would best serve the interests of the United States.

## Conclusion Toward A New Paradigm?

Hans Morgenthau came to the United States in 1937 as a refugee from European fascism. He did so carrying the burden of his experience both as a man excluded from his native country because of the significance attached by one particular political party to his ascribed ethnicity, and as a European who had watched that same political party build up sufficient military strength so as to pose a threat to the rest of the continent. This experience of rejection engendered within Morgenthau an abhorrence both for totalitarianism and the weak methods of understanding relations between states on which he perceived the international system to have relied.

In addition to these burdens of rejection and disillusionment, however, Morgenthau also arrived bearing the advantages of one who had attended university and acquired a comprehensive understanding of political relations. Putting the burdens and the advantages together, it should come as no surprise that upon his entry into the U.S. intellectual academy, he should have advocated an understanding of international relations which contained within it both the potential to be aggressively robust where needs be - in order to prevent, for example, the take over of Europe by totalitarianism, whether German fascism or Soviet communism - but also the potential to be liberatory and inclusive where needs be - resolve issues pertaining to domestic ills, withdraw from fights of fancy - in order to preserve the state and promote the greater good of the society empowered by the state. It should also come as no surprise that as a member of that intellectual academy, Morgenthau perceived himself to have a responsibility as a scholar, teacher and public intellectual to convince others of the righteousness of his beliefs, and thereby work toward the advancement of both the state and society in which he now lived.

Specifically, Morgenthau published monographs, articles, book reviews; delivered

speeches, taught consistently, both at his 'home' university and at various guest institutions, and was a regular participant in popular analyses of current events. In so doing, particularly at the start of his career, he helped produce much of the intellectual underpinnings of the strategic posture of the United States during the early Cold War. *Politics Among Nations*, and the teaching that helped produce it, and later resulted from it, helped shape the worldview of a generation of scholars and policymakers. They believed Morgenthau when Morgenthau told them that relations between states were determined above all else by the pursuit of each state for power and security. They believed Morgenthau when he asserted that supranational bodies in an age of nation states were unlikely to be able to do very much. They believed Morgenthau when he proposed that states, being states, will defend their interests up to and including the use of military force. Morgenthau propounded, his students and others influenced by his words implemented.

Over the course of Morgenthau's career, he continued to propound, and others continued to implement. As the years passed, however, a discrepancy grew up between what Morgenthau was propounding and what others were implementing. Superficially, or so it appeared to many at the time, it appeared as though the discrepancy was the fault of Morgenthau. As one who had apparently shifted from arguing the need to contain the communism of the Soviet Union to advocating the need to accept the communism of North Vietnam, he had apparently shifted his political position. Indeed, it would be logical to assume that having made such a journey in his political outlook, from conservative to radical, Morgenthau would have made a similar journey in terms of his theoretical perspective. Morgenthau seemed to suggest as much when he chose to serve as a political advisor to Eugene McCarthy, the most liberal of the candidates in the 1968 Democratic primary race, and again when he chose to serve as a board member for the Institute for Policy Research, the left-wing 'think-tank' and bete noir of the American right.<sup>171</sup> Morgenthau's perception of himself as the philosopher speaking truth to power - that he must honor his convictions with actions and words - made him an uncomfortable bedfellow for some of his original political associates. As a result, seeing his apparent

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<sup>171</sup> Peter Kovler, "The Left-Leaning Think Tank," *Change* (The Magazine of Learning), Vol. 10, No. 5, May 1978.

shift and listening to his real criticisms, some policymakers condemned him for his treachery and his weakness.

As this thesis has demonstrated, however, Morgenthau, despite all appearances to the contrary, made no such shift. Certainly what he said in 1968 involved implementing policies different to those inspired by what he said in 1948, but the difference was in the policy not the theory. Thus Morgenthau in 1948 called for a robust containment of the Soviet Union ere it become too aggressive and seek to expand across the continent or even world. Morgenthau perceived that such an expansion would be against the interests of the United States. And, just as importantly, he perceived that the United States, could by making its position clear from early on, succeed in its objective and contain the communism of the Soviet Union within the Soviet Union.

In 1968 Morgenthau called for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam because he did not believe that it was in the interests of the United States to continue to involve itself in the region. Furthermore, and just as importantly, he did not perceive that the United States could succeed in its objective of preventing the spread of communism from one part of what Morgenthau considered to be a single country (even if current U.S. policymakers failed to recognize this) to the other. In both cases, however, Morgenthau was proposing that U.S. policy makers should base their course of action upon the real interests of the United States. In short, he was arguing for a realist interpretation of international relations.

It is perhaps not surprising that so many of Morgenthau's contemporaries failed to recognize the consistency contained within his arguments and so accused him of changing his political tune. Perceived to be the doctrine which provided the basis for the containment of communism, realism was perhaps inevitably perceived to be a conservative doctrine. And so it was in its opposition to the unchecked spread of Soviet communism. What was not so obvious in the early years of Morgenthau's career was the variety of potential policies which could all be justified on the basis of realism. They were not so obvious because the progressive element contained within the very theory of realism, was not so obvious. As we have seen through an analysis of Morgenthau's published works, it *was* there - right from the beginning - but again perhaps understandably, in the 1940s and 1950s, at the height of the Cold War hysteria, others

saw, and responded to, what they expected to see.

As a result, they did not see the theory for all that it was. Morgenthau did see it. Realism, for Morgenthau, never ceased to be about anything but the security interests of the nation state, but those interests, according to Morgenthau encompassed far more than a simple amassing of military strength designed to secure position vis-à-vis other states. They involved the resolution of domestic divisions in order to promote unity and well-being, and they included a recognition of what the state could and could not achieve vis-à-vis other states - the recognition that a “crusading frenzy” for the wrong ends could not but be detrimental to the state. Thus realism was, for Morgenthau, both conservative and progressive.

In taking this different starting point, this thesis offers a challenge to contemporary realists. The security problem of states, in the form of neoclassical realism is still one of the most important aspects of contemporary International Relations theory today. Even as other approaches such as democratic peace theory or constructivism gain strength, so realism remains a consistent element within IR theory. As it does so, however, it is perceived to be an innately conservative framework and thus one with little to offer the more progressive approaches. This thesis suggests otherwise.

An analysis of Morgenthau’s life and work has demonstrated the progressive potential within his realist framework. This thesis suggests that that progressive element provides a starting point for the establishment of common ground between classical realism or even neo-realism and more obviously left-wing frameworks such as democratic peace theory. Morgenthau’s understanding of his realism in the concrete political reality of the 1960s and 1970s demonstrates that classical realism may be as usefully applied to a liberal or progressive vision as to the more traditional conservative vision. Thus with this thesis, we seek to commence a process of the reclamation of the ‘left-wing’ potential of realism.

Within the context of “real-world” United States politics Morgenthau went as left as he could: as a critic of the Vietnam War and the Johnson administration, as a member and writer for Americans for Democratic Action, as a supporter of the Institute for Policy Studies, and as an advisor to Eugene McCarthy. In each of these endeavors Morgenthau employed his realism to support liberatory and progressive ends. In using his world view

to critique the development of the trajectories of domination, control and imperialism of the post-war United States Morgenthau offered a remarkable demonstration of the power and flexibility of realism.

It is the contention of this thesis that any contemporary realist might do the same. Thus it is the challenge of this thesis to invite contemporary realist thinkers to explore, recover and reclaim the liberatory and progressive potential of classical realism. The concerns raised by Morgenthau about the global environment, racism, poverty, militarism, inequality and the rising power of large trans-national corporations are all issues with which many contemporary realists are concerned today. Morgenthau predicated and analyzed these issues in terms of the classical realism he had done so much to revive, reinvigorate, articulate and popularize in his time at the University of Chicago. It is for contemporary realists to now do the same.

Illustrating what has previously been accomplished within the framework of classical realism creates the potential for two new research programs. First, reclaiming the liberatory potential of realism provides for the creation of a new understanding of contemporary realism which can transcend both the internal debates between classic and neoclassical realism and those between classical realism, neo-realism and new classical realism. Second, foregrounding the liberatory possibilities of classical realism offers a fruitful approach for the recreation of common ground between realism and other more 'politically progressive' paradigms in contemporary international relations theory.

Accepting the liberatory possibilities within realism, and the subsequent potential for engagement with other approaches in the field, such as peace research or constructivism suggests a possible path for the reintegration of the whole discipline of international relations. For while considered separately each theory within International Relations might suggest a particular number of policy solutions, it is possible that when considered together, the collective result might be the production of a great many more, and more original policy solutions for any number of contemporary problems. It is thus the somewhat immodest hope of this thesis that in exploring the constancy combined with flexibility that lay at the root of Hans J. Morgenthau's realist understanding, it has gone some way toward the laying of the ground work for an innovative liberatory-based general theory of international politics for the twenty-first century.



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