

Reagan Reconsidered

Edmund Morris

**Dutch: A Memoir
Of Ronald Reagan**

Random House, 874 pages.

Dinesh D'Souza

**Ronald Reagan:
How an Ordinary Man
Became an Extraordinary Leader**

Free Press, 292 pages.

Reviewed by Yitzhak Klein

The United States is today the world's dominant political, economic and ideological power. Only twenty years ago, however, matters looked very different. In 1980, the democratic ideals for which the United States stood were in retreat around the world; the Soviet Union was extending its influence in many developing countries; the American economy suffered from high inflation and unemployment, and was growing more slowly than that of any other major industrial country; and American

society was riddled with self-doubt following a string of humiliations on both the international and domestic fronts—including Vietnam, impotence in the face of OPEC and the Iranian hostage debacle. America seemed to be a civilization in decline.

Within a decade, all this had been turned on its head. Soviet Communism had disappeared. Democratically elected parliaments had sprung up to replace despotic regimes in places where such an outcome had never been thought possible. The energy crisis was forgotten. American inflation, unemployment and interest rates had plummeted, and economic growth had accelerated. With the passage of yet another decade, America's recovery and its influence on world affairs took on even greater dimensions. In the 1990s, democracy became entrenched in Latin America, Eastern Europe and East Asia. The United States economy grew faster than that of any other major industrialized country, while unemployment fell to levels most economists had once considered unattainable. American economic, military and

political power came to dominate global affairs. Matching America's material success was Americans' recovered pride in themselves, their country and their ideals.

Many political, economic and social factors, which were unleashed during the 1980s and continue to exert their influence today, combined to produce this remarkable turnaround. No single person or group can claim credit for every aspect of the American recovery. Increasingly, however, one person seems to have played the role of catalyst: Ronald Reagan, who served as U.S. President from 1981 to 1989. Reagan prosecuted the Cold War against the Soviet Union, which he correctly termed an "evil empire," to its successful conclusion. He initiated controversial economic reforms aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship and rewarding hard work. And he championed the virtues of the American nation, encouraging his fellow citizens to take pride in themselves and in the values embodied in their society.

This view of Reagan's achievements finds scant acceptance in many quarters even today. A certain conventional wisdom judges Reagan by his frequent verbal gaffes and his poor grasp of the details of policy, while finding his insistence on discussing public affairs in terms of moral values embarrassing. It seems that those who find it difficult to give Reagan credit for what took

place in the past twenty years simply cannot believe that a man of such apparent intellectual shortcomings could actually have *done* what he did. For this reason, one must welcome the publication of two recent books, the long-awaited authorized biography by Edmund Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, and Dinesh D'Souza's *Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader*. Each one, in its own way, sheds light on the character and leadership of America's fortieth president.

Edmund Morris was selected by Ronald Reagan's White House staff in 1985 to write the authorized biography of the President. Morris' *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* achieved notoriety overnight, largely because of the strange literary device he employs in his account of Reagan's life. Morris has written his book in the style of a personal memoir. Since he was born twenty-eight years after Reagan, immigrated to the United States from Britain in 1968 and began to associate closely with Reagan only in 1985, he has invented a false persona for *himself*, as narrator, pretending to be Reagan's contemporary and schoolmate from small-town Illinois, devoting much effort to maintaining this illusion throughout the book. The fabrication does not seem to have contaminated the book's genuine biographical material,

except by undermining from the outset one's confidence in Morris' judgment and, consequently, in his assessment of Reagan's life and career.

Morris is a close observer of his subject. The Reagan he describes is, unsurprisingly, a masterful orator, a charismatic figure in person or on television. He is also a good administrator, a tough but flexible negotiator, a man of goodwill and genuine Christian virtues. Yet Morris does not whitewash Reagan's flaws. Like many observers of the Reagan presidency, Morris found disconcerting how distant Reagan was even to his closest advisors, even to his children. He could fire aides without compunction—the scene in which Reagan summons his secretary of state, Alexander Haig, and hands him a brief note accepting a resignation Haig had not tendered, is chilling—and he never thought to call an old acquaintance or former employee.

Morris explodes the canard that Reagan was unintelligent. Many of those who expressed contempt for Reagan did so because the president lacked the ability to reason on his feet. When asked a question, he was at times unable to grasp its import, or to answer with anything but a prescribed response, which might not always have been the right one. This scandalized intellectuals for whom quick repartee is a prerequisite for public life. Reagan's writings, however,

reveal a very different view of the man. His letters and papers (including his speeches, most of which he wrote himself) are models of clarity and articulation. "I've never known anybody," writes Morris, "with such an ability to reduce a situation to its simple essence. And simple is not necessarily simplistic." Reagan was not an intellectual or an originator of ideas, but he possessed an integrated and comprehensive view of American society, its strengths and weaknesses, and the proper role and policies of government. A careful reader of *Dutch* will discern in Reagan the ability to develop a firm opinion about which matters were crucial to him, and then to take a firm stand on them. Whenever Morris graces his readers with a description of Reagan coming to a decision—whether to sign California's abortion bill, for instance, or to develop strategic nuclear defenses—he comes across as deliberate and reflective.

Yet Morris' analysis of Reagan's decisionmaking is neither systematic nor thorough, and he offers no considered evaluation of Reagan as a policymaker. For Morris is singularly lacking in political perspective. He seldom discusses the issues which formed the context for Reagan's decisions, and where he does his knowledge is usually fragmentary and inaccurate. One gets the impression that Morris does not really care much about economics, American

politics or international relations. He has produced an insightful study of Reagan's personality, but is unable to draw conclusions about the relationship between Reagan's personality and his politics. In fact, the only personal trait whose political significance Morris notes explicitly is Reagan's ambition. Yet the United States has many ambitious politicians. Morris conveys little sense of why *this* politician's character was different, or how it led Reagan to the White House and, ultimately, to dominate global political and economic affairs. This, perhaps, is why Morris designed his book as a make-believe memoir: He lacks the knowledge and insight to write a genuine biography of Ronald Reagan.

This becomes evident as soon as Morris' memoir reaches Reagan's career in public office. Morris relates the main events of Reagan's governorship of California as a series of unconnected events. Particularly irritating is his expectation that the reader will excuse him for not doing essential homework. His account of Reagan's first California budget is typical: Three months after taking office in 1967, after a campaign which centered on Reagan's pledge to reduce the size of government, Reagan approved the largest tax *increase* in California's history. Rather than offering any insight as to what led to Reagan's about-face, or what the consequences were for California or for

Reagan's future political career, Morris presents the event as just another link in a chain of impressionistic non sequiturs: The budget simply "went through to the legislature on March 27," Morris writes, "and here the pen of a fiscal retard begins to quail." Quailing, Morris offers no assessment of the event's significance.

The 1967 California budget, however, was a pivotal moment in Reagan's career as a political leader. California law said the budget had to balance, and Reagan's \$1 billion tax increase was needed to comply with the law. The rest of Reagan's tenure in office revolved around his efforts to control expenditure, especially welfare spending, so as to avoid having to raise taxes again. California's balanced-budget law was a central element of the struggle. Reagan skillfully used it to wrest control of the political agenda from state-house Democrats, while convincing California's voters that they were not obligated to cough up additional funds for every social program the state's liberals proposed. Thus Reagan's governorship (1967-1974) was the formative period during which his views on welfare and budgetary policy took shape, as did his ability to dominate a recalcitrant legislature—factors that would loom large once he was in the White House, and whose impact on American domestic policy is felt to this day.

Morris' ignorance of public affairs is evident once again in his account of Reagan's presidency. A central theme of Reagan's foreign policy was the political struggle against the Soviet Union. In the popular mind this struggle has become associated with the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), or "Star Wars." The Soviets knew they had neither the technology nor the economic resources to build effective strategic defenses, and they strongly suspected that the United States did, so they made eliminating SDI a major target of their negotiating strategy. Reagan's refusal to give in on SDI caused a breakdown in strategic arms control talks and earned him the opprobrium of American liberals who thought Star Wars a fantasy that made war more likely. In the end, however, it was Reagan's steadfastness on SDI that convinced the Soviets that they could not compete with America in a sustained arms race, and they returned to the negotiating table on American terms. Morris writes a great deal about SDI, but again makes no effort to explain its significance within the larger strategic and political context. One gets the impression that he focuses on SDI simply because of its literary value—the drama of Reagan's meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev at Geneva and Reykjavik—and because Morris accompanied Reagan at the Geneva summit in 1985.

Dramatic as it was, however, the confrontation over SDI was not the turning point in the struggle between East and West, something of which Morris appears completely unaware. The actual turning point occurred several years earlier, in 1983. At that time, the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union was over Western Europe: The United States sought to preserve NATO's political integrity, the Soviet Union to destroy it. The Soviets' chosen tool was the deployment of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF), nuclear weapons that could threaten Western Europe but not the United States. In response, NATO decided to deploy an American INF system in Western Europe, consisting of Pershing II and cruise missiles targeted at the Soviet Union. The Soviets sought to block this step through veiled threats that the deployment of the American weapons would trigger a war. With Soviet encouragement, a mass protest movement sprang up against the deployment of American INF throughout Western Europe.

Had the Soviet campaign succeeded in turning Western European governments against Reagan's policy, it would have signaled the demise of the Atlantic alliance—and the success of Moscow's thirty-year-long effort to neutralize the European powers. The key diplomatic victory of Reagan's career came when the United States

and its European allies called the Soviets' bluff and closed ranks over INF deployment. It was this political success that demonstrated to the Soviets that they could not pry NATO apart through bullying diplomacy. They already suspected they lacked the arms and technology to match NATO in a conventional war, so their inability to defeat NATO politically signaled the ultimate failure of thirty years of Soviet foreign and economic policy intended to bring Europe under Soviet hegemony in America's despite. It paved the way for the rise of Gorbachev and *perestroika*, which in turn unleashed the process of the Soviet Union's disintegration. It provided the essential political foundation for SDI. The few times Morris mentions INF, he is oblivious to its importance.

The foundation of Ronald Reagan's political success lay in his domination of American politics, his ability to define the country's political debates, win those debates at the polls, and remold policy—first in California, later in America and the world—according to his vision. Morris offers no analysis of the sources of Reagan's appeal to the American voter. Nor is he interested in the manner in which Reagan crafted his electoral victories. Reagan's presidential campaign of 1984, to cite one example, was a first-rate work of political engineering. Knowing that women were a majority of the electorate and that

women voters leaned heavily against him, Reagan and his staff conducted a skilled campaign that led to his winning a majority of women's votes in November 1984. Among men, Reagan enjoyed an unprecedented landslide. Yet in Morris' lengthy memoir, the 1984 race merits about a page of anecdotes, the 1980 contest even less.

Edmund Morris has produced a compendium of stories, recollections and one-liners, almost untouched by analysis or perspective. Morris apparently takes for granted that most of his readers were politically aware during the Reagan presidency and appreciate instinctively Reagan's dominance of American politics and the profound change he worked on political and economic agendas around the world. He therefore does not attempt to explain these things. As raw material for subsequent historians, Morris has offered an accessible, amply indexed volume. But a scholar or student a generation from now, trying to understand Reagan's role in creating America's dominance of world politics at the turn of the twenty-first century, will find this book of little use.

Dinesh D'Souza, a senior policy analyst in Reagan's White House during the last two years of his presidency, is now a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His *Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man*

Became an Extraordinary Leader is not intended to be a definitive biography of Reagan, and in fact dedicates only two brief chapters to Reagan's life prior to his election to the White House in 1980. Rather, *Ronald Reagan* is everything that *Dutch* is not: An analysis of Ronald Reagan as a policymaker of vision, and as a leader who motivated the American people and its allies to support him in realizing that vision. Reagan, according to D'Souza, was the most significant American leader since Franklin Roosevelt, setting his stamp upon the second half of the twentieth century as deeply as Roosevelt did upon the first.

According to D'Souza, Ronald Reagan deserves credit for two great political achievements which together reversed America's domestic and international decline: Winning the Cold War, and reviving the American economy after a decade of stagnation.

The reason for Reagan's success against the Soviets, D'Souza explains, was his determination to break with United States foreign policy as it had been conducted by every president since Truman. Before Reagan, American foreign policy centered either on containment, that is, struggling to prevent the Soviet Union from increasing its sphere of influence; or on détente, the effort to temper Soviet belligerence through negotiated agreements. Under what Charles Krauthammer has called the

"Reagan Doctrine," America took a more aggressive approach, actually attempting to roll back Soviet gains, and ultimately to bring the entire Soviet system down. "The West won't contain Communism," Reagan told students and faculty at Notre Dame University in 1981, just months after taking office. "It will transcend Communism. It will dismiss it as some bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are being written even now."

As D'Souza notes, Reagan's goal was itself dismissed at the time as bizarre by most professional observers of Soviet-American affairs. Settled opinion among the *cognoscenti* was that the Soviet Union was going to be around a long time, and that Reagan's attempt to ruin it created the grave danger of war. Reagan's unique contribution was the realization that it was indeed possible to drive the Soviet Union to ruin. In the aftermath of the Soviet demise, the same *cognoscenti* now like to dwell on the inevitability of the process, an outcome of the Soviet Union's internal economic and political decline. It is an attitude that again leads them to judge Reagan's contribution to be marginal. D'Souza points out that the Soviets' final collapse might have been long delayed, had not Reagan pressed the Cold War to its conclusion. Reagan not only foresaw the possibility of Soviet collapse; his policies were designed to *make it happen*.

According to D'Souza, Reagan's strategy consisted of two components, each of which was intended to undermine the Soviet leadership's confidence and exploit internal Soviet economic weaknesses. The first was thwarting Soviet expansionist efforts through covert and overt operations. This meant a rejection of the "Brezhnev Doctrine," according to which a country that had turned to Communism would stay that way for good. Reagan supported the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, the Solidarity labor union in Poland, Jonas Savimbi's anti-Communist forces in Angola and the *mujahadeen* in Afghanistan. As a result of this new American assertiveness, the spread of Communism was halted. During the seven years before Reagan took office, from 1974 through 1980, Soviet influence had been extended to South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, South Yemen, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Grenada and Nicaragua. During the Reagan years, not a single country fell into the Soviet orbit.

The second element in Reagan's strategy was the dramatic buildup of America's military capability. America's armed services were re-equipped with a new generation of precision-guided munitions, and deficiencies in training and personnel were made good. Large-scale investments were made in sophisticated weapons systems such as the Trident submarine, the

Stealth fighter and bomber, the Pershing and cruise missiles, and the Strategic Defense Initiative. The effects of this policy were far-reaching. The Soviet Union, which could not match either the volume or the technological sophistication of America's rearmament, was forced to agree to the reduction of conventional and nuclear arms on terms highly advantageous to the West. The effect on America's allies was equally profound; they realized that the Soviet Union could no longer hold up its end of the Cold War, and that the United States was therefore destined to win.

As D'Souza shows, Reagan's policies persuaded Soviet leaders that the Cold War could not go on. For the first time since World War II, the latter found themselves caught between the anvil of limited economic resources and the hammer of an implacable American foe working actively to bring their rule to an end. The result was Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms. Though intended to save the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's policies sent an unambiguous signal to the Communist *nomenklatura*: The Cold War had been lost, and the Soviet Union's economic and political system had lost it. The world Communist order was never to be. Complete disillusionment and the end of Communism followed.

D'Souza's *Ronald Reagan* does not try to portray Reagan as a master of the

particulars of policy. What made Reagan great was his ability to set straightforward and common-sense goals, prosecuting an unconcealed and tenacious campaign against America's totalitarian enemy, in the face of a conventional wisdom that assumed that Soviet totalitarianism and the Soviet command economy were as viable as liberal democracy. For many American politicians and pundits, Reagan's strategy was too simplistic to work, and its author too simple a man to lead. History proved both assumptions wrong.

D'Souza devotes equal space in his book to attempting to demonstrate that the remarkable expansion of the American economy, which began with the Reagan administration, was similarly the result of Reagan's "simple" vision and consistent leadership. The foundation of Reagan's approach to reviving the American economy was his faith in the creativity and drive of Americans, and his skepticism about the government's ability to accomplish more than the efforts of millions of individuals. "Reagan believed intellectuals have no right to attempt to plan or manage the economy," D'Souza writes. "Reagan held the view that individuals are the creative force in a society and should be given a greater control over their own destiny.... The main objective of Reagan's economic policies was to create an environment in which the innovative energy of

entrepreneurs could be unleashed." The United States had all the resources it needed to resume rapid, inflation-free economic growth. Only government meddling, in the form of excessive regulation and high tax rates—in some cases as high as 70 percent of income—prevented the resumption of growth by depriving Americans of the incentive to innovate and work hard.

On his first day in office in 1981, Reagan signed an order ending price controls on oil and gasoline. Energy prices plummeted, and the "energy crisis"—now revealed as an artifact of federal regulation—came to an end. Over the next eight years, Reagan pushed through Congress two radical overhauls of the federal income tax. The first slashed tax rates, while the second eliminated numerous loopholes and vastly simplified the tax code. Lower costs, lower taxes and less regulation led to faster and more consistent economic growth. Inflation fell from 12.4 percent in 1980 to 4.6 percent in 1989, and unemployment dropped from 7.2 percent to 5.3 percent. The GDP grew during the years 1981-1989 at an average annual rate of 3.4 percent. The median income in America, which had actually declined under Carter, rose by 15 percent in real terms between 1980 and 1989. And contrary to what is often claimed, the poor did not "get poorer" under Reagan: The average real income of the

poorest fifth of the population increased by over 7 percent.

These remarkable achievements had a price. Reagan's tax cuts, combined with a steep increase in defense spending, caused the federal budget deficit to swell from about \$50 billion in 1980 to over \$200 billion in 1989. This outcome could hardly have pleased Reagan, a lifelong advocate of fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets. D'Souza argues that political constraints forced Reagan to compromise on fiscal policy. His first priority was to cut taxes; his second was to ensure that America's defense budget was restored to adequate size. He sacrificed his third priority, a balanced budget, in order to achieve the first two.

In Reagan's "simple" worldview, high taxation and government meddling in the economy were not only imprudent but morally wrong, robbing the people of the fruits of their labor. Contemplating America's current budgetary surplus, a direct result of the rise in the American economy's growth rate since 1983, one is tempted to say that Reagan's "simple" view has been vindicated again. Reagan certainly listened to, even if he never overtly endorsed, the arguments of a small group of "supply-side" economists who predicted that this is precisely what would happen. Reagan's unconventional economic policies have become the new conventional wisdom, advocated by

left-of-center politicians such as President Bill Clinton.

D'Souza's most important contribution, however, is his portrayal of Reagan's special political gifts. Most American intellectuals and journalists failed to appreciate them. They believed a leader should be erudite, beholden to enlightened taste and, above all, expert in the ins and outs of Washington; in every respect, Reagan was the opposite. Rather than accept that a great leader may simply be able to do without these things—that is, that he really does not have to be very much like them—many commentators came up with alternate explanations of the Reagan years. The most prominent theory, which D'Souza calls the "battle for the president's mind," asserted that pragmatists such as Secretary of State George Shultz and White House Chief-of-Staff James Baker successfully seized control of American policy from "true believers" such as Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and Attorney-General Ed Meese. D'Souza refutes this supposition by analyzing a number of Reagan's policy decisions. On domestic and foreign policy alike, Reagan consistently surrounded himself with divergent viewpoints, listened to all of them, and then made all the crucial decisions himself on the basis of his fundamental principles. On the

most important matters, it was Reagan who was in charge all along.

D'Souza confirms Edmund Morris' portrayal of Reagan's intellect. Reagan was not a president who devoured long, complex position papers. (Jimmy Carter was his opposite in this respect, demonstrating how little an abundance of information avails when unaccompanied by the perspective to understand its significance or the strength of character to act forcefully.) He was not unread, though, and D'Souza relates biographer Lee Edwards' description of Reagan's library, full of good books heavily annotated. Reagan's intellect lent itself to the adoption of firm, educated points of view on the broadest and most important questions. Thus Reagan never lacked an inner moral and mental light, by which to evaluate the issues that crossed his path and to guide his decisionmaking. This inner light was the key to his own vision, to his disinterest in the details of policy except as seen in light of that vision, and his willingness to compromise in other areas to ensure that his few essential goals were pursued with full force. "It is impossible to lead," writes D'Souza, "if you are unsure about where you want to go. Vision is a function of perceptive power, but it relies less on academic intelligence than on moral imagination."

Though D'Souza does not use the term, he credits Reagan with what is

sometimes called *right reason*: True and firm moral convictions coupled with good judgment. From small issues, such as the decision to withdraw America's support for the Law of the Sea treaty in 1981 because it curtailed private property in the resources of the seabed, to large ones, such as his conclusion that neglecting to develop defenses against nuclear weapons was immoral, Reagan demonstrated that his policy was determined by a sense of what was best, rather than what was expedient or expected. He made costly mistakes—such as the deployment of U.S. Marines in Beirut, and the sale of arms to Iran in an effort to secure the release of hostages—but the quality of most of his decisions testifies to the quality of the values that governed them.

Particularly enlightening is D'Souza's description of the use Reagan made of public-opinion polls. Unlike most politicians, who let the polls determine their positions on key issues, Reagan used polling data to determine where and how he had to use his considerable powers of persuasion to bring a majority of the electorate around to his view. As D'Souza writes, Reagan recognized "that public opinion on any issue is usually inchoate and unformed.... His approach was not to consult the electorate on what to do in every situation, but rather to presume that he reflected the

shared values of the people. Given the facts, he made his best judgment and acted. Then he made his case to the public....” Thus Reagan was a leader who led, as opposed to many elected “leaders” who merely follow the public’s fleeting opinions.

The convictions that lay at the heart of Reagan’s decisionmaking also underlay his unique relationship with the American electorate. His greatest disagreement lay with those who thought America evil, perverse or a mindless “system” that crushed its citizens. Reagan had a positive opinion of his fellow countrymen. He thought they embodied the values he shared with them, of liberty, fairness, enterprise and a sense of right and wrong. He exhorted them to take pride in their values and live up to them. For their part, they could see him putting those values to work in office, and most of them approved. Perhaps Reagan’s greatest contribution to the United States was that he encouraged people to believe, with him, that traditional American values were good. He imbued his supporters with the courage of their convictions.

Ronald Reagan possessed an uncommon array of political gifts—traditional virtues, firm convictions, self-confidence, determination and a consummate ability to persuade—which enabled him to do more for his country than many people thought

possible. Like all great democratic leaders, however, Reagan will be remembered not merely for his achievements, or for his personal talents, but chiefly for those qualities he was able to bring out in his fellow countrymen. Reagan’s legacy is best captured by the words of Richard Rorty, one of America’s leading leftist intellectuals, who said the following in a 1997 lecture at Harvard University:

National pride is to countries what self-respect is to individuals: A necessary condition for self-improvement. Too much national pride can produce bellicosity and imperialism, just as excessive self-respect can produce arrogance. But just as too little self-respect makes it difficult for a person to display moral courage, so insufficient national pride makes energetic and effective debate about national policy unlikely.... Those who hope to persuade a nation to exert itself need to remind their country of what it can take pride in.

In free countries, there is no shortage of people who would portray their society in the worst possible terms. They imbue their fellow citizens with self-doubt, which more than anything else undermines the nation’s ability to preserve liberty within, and to stand firm in the face of despotic adversaries without. This happened to the United States and other Western countries a generation ago, and in recent years the State of Israel has become afflicted by

the same malady. Reagan's legacy to democracies the world over is that a society built on freedom and a firm moral sense can be a source of pride for its citizens, and that such well-founded pride is the key to resolving the challenges, whatever their nature, that democracies confront. Americans turned their society around by reaffirming their belief

in their own values, traditions and achievements. One hopes that the Jewish state, now plunged in self-doubt about the meaning and worth of its own values and traditions, will learn to do the same.

Yitzhak Klein is a public policy analyst, and a Contributing Editor of AZURE.

Transcending IR

*Thomas L. Pangle
and Peter J. Abrensdorf*

**Justice Among Nations:
On the Moral Basis
Of Power and Peace**

*University Press of Kansas,
362 pages.*

Reviewed by Adam Wolfson

For generations, the landscape of foreign policy debates has been characterized by a philosophical split between idealists and realists. Idealists, it will be recalled, believe that nations should conduct their foreign policy based on universal moral principles or

ideals, and are morally culpable when they fail to do so; realists, on the other hand, see interests of state as the exclusive consideration of foreign policy, and the well-being of the nation as the only moral standard according to which governments may be judged.

In our time, this fundamental dispute has shaped the debate on a host of foreign policy issues. The idealist today places great faith in such transnational organizations as the United Nations, and in the idea that nations can no longer rely exclusively on their own "sovereignty" to maintain peace and security. From the lofty vantage of idealism, nation-states and their wars are thought to be anachronisms,