# Publius before Kant: Federal-Republican Security and Democratic Peace

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Reflecting American and allied ascent, Liberal IR theorists have revived earlier theorists, notably Kant and democratic peace, constructing neoclassical liberalism to challenge Realism. Republican security theory (RST) begins in antiquity and reaches a conceptual watershed in the Enlightenment, not in Kant, but in Publius = *Federalist*. Pessimistic, RST assumed republics were small and expansion would fatally deform, a conclusion derived from Roman history. In a pivotal advance, Publius advanced federal union, suggesting the federal-republican security hypothesis — federal union enables republican viability in competitive interstate systems. Kant does not address the logically and historically prior question of how democracies come to populate competitive state systems sufficiently to make pacific unions. The historical record of the global industrial state system suggests federal-republican security is more important than democratic peace.

KEY WORDS ♦ federal union ♦ geopolitics ♦ Kant ♦ Montesquieu ♦ Publius ♦ republicanism ♦ Roman Republic ♦ security ♦ Seeley

## Introduction

With the decisive defeat of fascist and communist rivals in worldwide struggles spanning most of the 20th century and consuming tens of millions of lives, the United States and its allies stand at the threshold of the third millennium in an historically unprecedented pre-eminence. Whether marking the 'end of history' or simply a hegemony unprecedented in modern times, the ascent over the last three centuries of liberal-democratic polities from utter marginality to their current ascendence is now an unmistakably central fact of world politics. Despite its many flaws, this Western political

order encompasses a zone of peace, freedom and prosperity far greater than any other in history.

As the ascent of the United States and its allies has become the most salient fact of world politics, Liberal international relations theorists have advanced increasingly robust arguments challenging Realism's intellectual hegemony. Moving to belie the dismissive Realist labels of 'idealist' and 'utopian', Liberal theorists over the last several decades have ceased primarily offering schemes to change the world for the better, and begun providing a variety of concepts useful for understanding and explaining aspects of the world as it actually is.

This resurgent international Liberalism has also entailed a recovery of earlier thinkers. Just as Realism's intellectual hegemony is significantly buttressed by its highly developed sense of itself as a tradition of practice and theory stretching back to Thucydides in Greek antiquity, so too Liberal theorists have begun to recover and reinterpret earlier writers and theorists in order to establish Liberalism as a full-bodied tradition of international practice and theory. As thus far constructed, most prominently by Michael Doyle, the tradition of international liberalism largely begins with what is widely referred to as the *neoclassical liberalism* of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, specifically the arguments of the commercial liberals (Smith, Bentham and Cobden) and the 'democratic peace' hypothesis attributed to Immanuel Kant.[1] Thus neoclassical liberalism primarily centers on the pacific effects of two major liberal institutions, market capitalism and political democracy.

In the contemporary resurgence of international Liberalism, particularly as it addresses the 'high politics' issues of war and peace that have traditionally been the strength of Realism, Kant's 'democratic peace' argument unquestionably occupies a central position. The democratic peace hypothesis has received extraordinary attention, being hailed coming 'as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations' (Levy, 1989: 88) and recognized as 'arguably the most important challenge to one of realism's central precepts' (Jervis, 1998: 980). Employing Kantian categories, numerous theorists speak of the emergence of a 'pacific union' or 'democratic zone of peace' encompassing the European and North American core areas of Western civilization, and optimistically envision the further spread of liberal democracies eliminating war throughout the global state system.[2] In the wake of the attacks of 9/11, the Bush Administration has belatedly, but forcefully, articulated a robust neo-Wilsonian agenda of anti-despotic intervention and democratic nation-building as a blueprint for re-making yet another region of the world.[3]

In contrast to the attention lavished upon Kant, the theory and practice of

the American founding, and the role of the United States in the emergence of the democratic zone of peace, is almost invisible in the contemporary corpus of international theory, Realist as well as Liberal. In major recent reconstructions of the history of international theory offered by Michael Doyle, Torbjorn Knutson and David Boucher, the theory of American federal republicanism as articulated in the *Federalist* is notably absent.[4] For Realists the United States is simply a large and particularly powerful nation-state with a somewhat eccentric domestic political system whose expansive claims and unrealistic ambitions are seen as a source of international disorder rather than order. For theorists of the democratic peace, the United States is simply another entry on the growing list of democracies whose interaction can be studied.

The argument of this article is that Kant has received far more attention than warranted, and should be viewed as a secondary figure in international Liberalism.[5] Kant dropped or ignored the central problematiques of his predecessors, largely failed to grasp or build upon the central innovations of Enlightenment republican security theory and practice, and is much more utopian than currently recognized. In contrast to the contemporary centrality accorded Kant, I argue that Montesquieu and the American Founders should be seen as the pivotal figures in development of Liberal international theory. They are central because they invented federal union as a solution to the two problems of dominant concern to previous republican theory and practice — making republics large enough to survive and internally stable enough to overcome debilitating internal factionalism, problems that Kant largely assumed away or ignored.

In speaking of Kant, Publius and Montesquieu as 'Liberal' theorists, an important anachronism is involved. The term 'liberal' emerged in the wake of the French Revolution and only slowly became central to political theory and discourse during the 19th century.[6] Kant, as well as Publius and Montesquieu, theorized in the conceptual vocabulary of republicanism. The main ideas of republicanism related to political structure, security-from-violence and material context are not easily mapped onto either Liberalism or Realism. Rather, the arguments of republican security theorists encompass claims which have been subsequently labeled either Realist or Liberal. Modern Realism and Liberalism are largely incomplete, if more refined, fragments of insights which were originally formulated in the conceptual vocabulary of republicanism. These odd patterns of incomplete and largely unacknowledged intellectual inheritance are perhaps most pronounced regarding the balance of power, a central power restraint arrangement first conceptualized by republican security theorists, then appropriated by Realists, while being largely rejected by Liberals (Deudney, 2003).

Of course, like Kant, neither Montesquieu nor Publius[7] employed the language of modern social science. Just as contemporary theorists have abstracted or translated the 'democratic peace hypothesis' from Kant's *Perpetual Peace*,[8] I derive what I term the 'federal-republican security hypothesis' from Publius — *federal union enables republican viability in competitive interstate systems*.[9] This proposition converts into a potentially testable social science hypothesis, the core theoretical and practical innovation of Enlightenment republican security theory. This innovation culminates republican security theory stretching from its origins in classical antiquity, and provides the pivotal development that has enabled 'free states' to ascend from historical marginality to their currently unprecedented ascendancy.

The Kantian focus of recent Liberal international theorists seeking to construct a usable tradition of international theory has obscured not just the arguments of Publius on federal union, but a much larger and complex body of thinking on the relationships between security-from-violence and republics developed by theorists prior to the American founding. To fully understand the security problems of republics which make the innovation of federal union so significant in the history and theory of republics, it is necessary to recall and review the main arguments of republican security theory. Few topics have been written about as much as historical republics, republicanism and the American founding. Unfortunately, the problematiques and arguments of republican security theory have remained obscured, forgotten or fragmented, in the immense recent literature on republicanism by political theorists,[10] intellectual historians and international theorists, with several exceptions,[11] including earlier work of this author (Deudney, 1995, 1996).

This argument proceeds in four main steps. First, I situate republican security theory within republican thought more generally, and then summarize the key animating assumptions and problematiques of republican security theory from its inception in classical antiquity. Second, I examine pessimistic arguments in ancient and Enlightenment theory about the manifold security consequences of the small size of republics, vividly demonstrated in the history of the Roman Republic. Third, I examine the arguments about the theory and practice of federal union as a solution to the security problems, particularly vulnerability to conquest, identified by earlier republican security theorists, arguments that gain particular relevance as the American federal union is drawn into the global state system in the industrial era. Fourth, I compare and contrast the views of Publius and Kant on central issues of international security theory, and then briefly examine the historical empirical evidence supporting the federal-republican security and democratic peace hypotheses.

## 1. Security Restraint Republicanism

*Republics, Republicanism and Republican Security Theory*

Our main topic, the 'federal-republican security hypothesis' is but one facet of a much broader and complicated set of arguments about all aspects of security-from-violence, republican political forms and material contexts. In order to situate this hypothesis in its broader context, I will briefly contextualize this line of argument within republicanism generally and then summarize its main assumptions, problematiques and arguments.

To speak of 'republicanism' is to immediately enter a vast intellectual quagmire. Few political terms are as widely used and theoretically significant, but vaguely defined, as 'republic' and its cognates. John Adams, second President of the United States and author of a major theoretical exposition on the United States Constitution, despairingly declared that republic meant 'anything, everything or nothing'.[12] Over the course of Western history, republican terminology has been used by theorists and practitioners to label a bewildering diversity of phenomena — Plato's picture of a small city-state ruled by a philosopher-king, popular government in city-states, Rome after the Kings and before the Caesars, the European state-system and many contemporary political regimes such as the United States of America, the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran.[13] To further compound the confusion, numerous 'republican' political parties hawk a variety of conflicting agendas.

Given this diversity, 'republic' and its cognates are largely meaningless without extensive qualification, and clear definitions and conceptual taxonomy are vital. Unfortunately, there is no core common to all republicanisms. Rather, there are four main distinctive but overlapping clusters of ideas in which republican terminology appears — *Stoic cosmopolitanism*, *civic humanism*, *modern liberalism*[14] and what I shall refer to interchangeably as *republican security theory* or *security-restraint republicanism*. The relationships among these different bodies of theory are complex, and beyond the scope of this article. But it is fruitless to declare one to be the true or real republican tradition because each has a long and complex lineage. It is also fruitless to try to attempt to synthesize them or demonstrate their essential commonality because they are fundamentally different, despite some obvious overlap in metaphors and vocabularies.

The essential insight of republican security theory is simple. Security from political violence is the *first freedom*, the minimum vital task of all primary political associations, and achieving security requires the restraint of the application of violent power upon individual bodies. Republican security theory is thus *first Liberal*, in that it is logically and historically prior to the arguments of modern Liberalism. Insecurity results from extremes of both

anarchy and hierarchy, both internally and externally, because both are characterized by the absence of restraints. The material context composed of geography and technology defines which powers must be restrained, and which security practices and structures are appropriate for doing so. Thus security problems and solutions are not fixed and immutable, but historically and spatially variable.

Republican security theory extends over 2500 years and includes many major and minor theorists in Greece and Rome, modern Europe and North America. The first major vein of republican security theory was produced by Greco–Roman analysts of the polis mixed constitution and the Roman Republic, most notably Aristotle, Cicero, Livy, Tacitus and Polybius.[15] Early modern revivalists of self-governing city-states mainly in Northern Italy, particularly Florence and Venice, most notably Machiavelli, but also including a firmament of lesser lights, continued and deepened this analysis. In Northern Europe (Holland, Germany, France and most importantly England and Scotland), republican security theory reached critical mass both in practice and theory, and sharply defined itself against oriental despotism,[16] Papal supremacy, Spanish imperialism and French absolutism.[17] Security restraint republicanism reached its conceptual zenith in the 18th century in Montesquieu and the American Founders.

The issues of concern to republican security theory are not confined to the 'domestic', but also address the issues of large-scale or 'international' security governance. Early modern theorists frequently spoke of Europe as a whole as a 'republic', by which they meant both to describe it as a complex system characterized by balances, mixture, separations and limits, and to praise it as a system for constraining violent and centralized power.[18] The most important fruit of 18th century security-restraint republicanism was the United States Constitution of 1787, which its architects understood as a 'compound republic' designed to prevent North America from becoming a Westphalian system of hierarchic units in anarchy. Subsequent 'Liberal internationalist' agendas ranging from binding international law, the League of Nations, world federal union, Atlantic Union and nuclear arms control embody this approach in partial and often unconscious ways.

In reconstructing this argument, I make three interpretative assumptions — republican security theory is a *tradition* that is *practical* and *progressive*. It is a tradition because it was 'handed down' over an extended period of time among theorists and practitioners who were self-consciously building on the ideas and actions of predecessors with whom they shared normative orientations and substantive problematiques. It is practical because it contains a set of generalizations drawn from practical experience, is intended to solve important and recurring problems, is in a continual dialectic with the needs and experiences of practitioners and is valued according to its

practical usefulness. It is progressive because its participants understood themselves as advancing, not toward universal and timeless truths, but toward understandings and solutions that were better able to solve timeless security problems by better adjusting to changing constraints and opportunities.

Republican security theory contains a mixture of normative, scientific and design claims, often combined in complex and obscure ways. Normatively, the security-restraint republican values freedom and opposes tyranny, wants independent actors to self-regulate themselves in order to make centralized control unnecessary, supports centralized political power only where necessary to counterbalance outside threats and jealously watches minimally necessary centralized power. There are three main analytical and scientific parts of security-restraint republicanism — taxonomic categories useful for describing plural, decentralized and complex political orders (including certain types of state-systems); causal propositions about the relationships between political practices and structures, and between such political factors and material contexts. The policy aspects of republican security theory encompass design features for building and operating political orders able to achieve republican goals.

*Main Assumptions, Problems and Arguments of Republican Security Theory*

Five main clusters of assumptions, claims and problematiques give definition and unity to the tradition of security-restraint republicanism, and distinguish it from the other three republican traditions.

First, republican security theory begins with the normative goal of *protecting public freedom and security*. Republicanism is inextricably linked to popular or self-governing political systems, but is not simply synonymous with democracy in the sense of majority or direct majority rule.[19] 'Publicus', a Latin adjective for anything belonging to the people collectively, firmly connects the genuinely republican to the people generally, without indicating any more about the people or public. Arrangements of power restraint can exist without ultimately serving the public affected by them, but they are not republican.

Second, republican security theory focuses most of its energies on achieving security from the application of violent force upon bodies. As such, in contemporary rather than original terms, republican security theory can be thought of as the Realist face or side of Liberalism. Security from violence is understood to be the first and most vital of freedoms, and an individual not politically free is not secure from violence.[20] In contrast to the civic humanist emphasis upon 'positive freedom', particularly political participation, republican security theory is concerned with the conditions

*Figure 1*
Sources of Insecurity

| | Inside | Outside |
|---|---|---|
| Anarchy | Stasis and Civil War | Total War/ Annihilation |
| Hierarchy | Tyranny/ Despotism | Imperial Conquest and Subordination |

necessary for the primary 'negative freedom' of violence avoidance, which has been an immensely strenuous undertaking.[21] Republican security theory analyzes problems and solutions that self-governing political orders employ to deal with the fundamental and recurring problem of violence, both internally and externally. Because it deals with threats to security arising from hierarchy as well as anarchy, republican security theory can lay claim to being a more complete security theory than Realism, which focuses its attention almost exclusively on anarchy.

A simple schema, derived from the *Federalist*, captures the full set of security threats that republican security theory addresses[22] (see Figure 1). The domestic 'inside' side of this tradition, its best known and most studied, has fallen into the domain of comparative politics rather than international theory. The external 'outside' part of the tradition deals with the core issues of international theory and is partly overlapping with contemporary Realist theory and practice (most notably the republican notion of the 'balance of power'). It is here that the federal-republican and democratic peace hypotheses are situated in the matrix of republican security theory.

Third, *restraining violent power requires political structures*. In the absence of restraints on power emerging from the material context, political structural restraints are necessary for security. The 'res' of 'res publica' indicates a political order composed of political structures based upon abstract principles rather than personalistic loyalties.[23] Among the numerous power restraint devices, *balance, separation, mixture, virtue* and *Constitutions* are the most important, but no one has been consistently most important.[24] Combined and employed in different ways in different political orders, these devices play varied roles in such different political orders as small city-states, large federated states and interstate world organizations. As

the volume and velocity of violence available to political actors has grown due to the development of technology, the size of the space within which political structures are needed for security has also grown.

Given this focus on security and violence control, republican security theory shares many concerns with statist Realism, but republican and statist orders embody fundamentally different approaches to security and restraint.[25] Whereas statist arrangements seek to mobilize and wield power, republican ones seek to restrain, bind and paralyze both the instruments of violence and the actors that might employ them. Seeking to restrain power, republican mechanisms are in perpetual tension with the concentration and employment of power characteristic of states. Thus hierarchic states and republics should be understood, as they often were in early modern times, as fundamentally antithetical political arrangements.[26]

Fourth, republican security contains a sophisticated analysis of the *relationship between material contexts and particular power restraint practices and structures*. The evolution of republican security theory and practice has been intimately connected with changes in the scale and character of viable protection providing units driven by changes in the material context of geography and technology. In short, republican security theory contains 'geopolitical' analysis about material and international contexts, manifest in the extended debate about how to combine particular power restraint devices to obtain public security in different contexts. The arguments of many theorists, most notably Aristotle, Montesquieu and the more liberal global geopoliticans such as John Seeley, Halford Mackinder, Frederick Jackson Turner and H.G. Wells, constitute the lost material-contextual side of republican security theory, the orphan twin of the better-known Realist theories of how material contexts and interstate factors shape state formation.

Fifth and finally, and of most concern here, republican security theory has addressed questions of size and scale.[27] With increases in viable unit size and system scope, republican security theory has sought to address diversity problems that result from the pursuit of restraint on violence in larger size political orders.[28] To cope with increasing size, power restraint arrangements have been combined in increasingly negative ways, for increasingly minimum objectives shared by more diverse groups. The useful application of power restraint devices is not confined to the internal life of popularly governed polities, but extends between them as well. Since the early 18th century, the main innovations in the theory and practice of security-restraint republicanism have concerned the application of power-control mechanisms to increasingly large and diverse settings. Large-scale security-restraint republicanism has proceeded under the name of the balance-of-power systems, extended, federal and compound republics. In a more speculative form, the

innovative analysis of power restraint devices is also scattered throughout the world federalist literature.

## 2. The Iron Laws Of Polis Republicanism

*The Security Problem in City-State Republicanism*

The origins and early development of republican security theory are intimately connected with the city-states that flourished around the Mediterranean prior to the Roman ascendancy, and in Northern Italy during the Renaissance. Because of their dazzling cultural accomplishments and idealized adoration by political theorists, the dominant contemporary understanding of city-state republicanism has neglected a remarkably coherent structural-materialist line of argument about security-from-violence drawn in antiquity and appearing in Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, Livy, Cicero, Sullist and Tacitus, and in modern times by Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Hume, Gibbon, Rousseau and Constant, to name only the better-known authors. This line of argument emphasizes that the fundamental character of city-state republics was defined by the interplay between security requirements, political structures and material contexts.

The overall concern is obsessively focused on eking out physical security in harshly precarious contexts and is pervasively pessimistic. The predicament of the city-state republic was defined by what might be termed two 'iron laws' captured by Montesquieu — 'If a republic be small, it is destroyed by a foreign force; if it be large, it is ruined by an internal imperfection' (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 126). Because republics tended to be small, they were vulnerable, rare and had to be martial to survive. But if they expanded, as did the Roman Republic, then they tended to become despotic monarchies.

Prior to the 18th century, when representation and then federation opened new possibilities, political theorists universally held that self-government was confined to small city-states due to limitations upon communication and transportation. For citizen self-government to be viable, all the citizens had to gather within hearing distance of a public speaker.[29] Small city-state republics were highly vulnerable to conquest by larger neighbors, and their survival was dependent upon geographical circumstances that could compensate for their size-based vulnerabilities. Self-governing city-states survived in Greece where the geography was broken and mountainous, often with a defensible rocky citadel such as the acropolis of Athens. The security of early modern Venice, Holland and Switzerland was also widely seen as dependent upon exceptional geographical situations.[30]

Even when situated in a favorable geographical setting, city-state security was precarious, and city-state republics had to maintain a heavily militarized

posture in order to survive. As Benjamin Constant observed, 'as an inevitable consequence of their narrow territory, the spirit of these republics was bellicose' (Constant, 1988[1819]: 312). Being small meant continuous threats and endemic war, and much of the male citizenry had to be militarily trained. As a result the political life of the republican city-state was heavily conditioned by the basic fact that military viability and the military *virtu* of the citizens were tightly linked.[31] Prior to the gunpowder and industrial revolutions, military effectiveness was closely linked to the *virtu* of warriors, because almost all combat was at close quarters, where individual strength, endurance, bravery and small unit cohesion were critical.[32]

The ancient republican antipathy to commerce is widely seen as a feature distinguishing ancient from modern republics. This antipathy was a side-effect of the precarious security environment of ancient republics, rather than rooted in an intrinsic ancient aversion to wealth and commerce as incompatible with a polity devoted to public participation, as recent civic humanist theorists hold.[33] Given the importance of *virtu* for survival, classical republican theorists viewed wealth and commerce with great suspicion because it sapped martial strength, in contrast to poverty, which bred it.[34] The legendary military strength of Sparta and Rome was thought to derive from their success in maintaining a citizen-body in which the corrupting effects of commerce, wealth and soft-living were systemically suppressed through sumptuary laws and intensive military training.[35]

In addition to mortal foreign perils, city-state republics were seen as tending to fall into intense and often violent internal conflicts (stasis).[36] Echoing Thucydides' influential portrayal, Publius described city-state republics as 'the wretched nurseries of unceasing discord' (Jay et al., 1962[1788]: 73). An intense participatory political existence required a relatively homogeneous citizenry devoted to making extreme sacrifices in military service, and so diversity was perceived to be a threat. Commerce and wealth were further viewed as harmful because they contributed to social stratification and class envy.

### The Expansion and Overthrow of the Roman Republic

Of all the ancient republican city-states, the Roman Republic was the object of the most sustained examination by republican security theorists. In contrast to the almost complete neglect of the Roman Republic by contemporary theorists of the democratic peace,[37] the history of the Roman Republic was seen as the master case study of the strengths and limitations of republican political associations. Its constitution was seen as exceptional due to its elaborate internal structural restraints, and their breakdown was seen as a direct consequence of Rome's successful military expansion.[38]

The constitution of the Roman Republic was seen as an arrangement of governmental bodies and offices empowered with specific and limited authorities and combined in such a way that they could check or limit each other, and thus prevent or moderate extreme internal strife.[39] This arrangement was widely seen as the most institutionally advanced of ancient republican polities.[40] Polybius called it 'the best political order yet realized among men' because it was a mixture of monarchical, aristocratic and democratic elements arranged in such a way that the virtues of each were preserved, and their vices eliminated. Whenever one group 'tries to encroach upon the domain of the others, and assumes more power than is due . . . it is checked by the others' (Polybius, 365) and its schemes are 'counteracted and obstructed by the others' (Polybius, 327) with the result that 'every part remains essentially in its once established position'[41] (Polybius, 321).

The excellence of these internal political arrangements gave Rome great advantages in interstate military conflicts, and according to Polybius' classic account, this constitution 'did most to enable' the Romans to achieve 'the conquest of the whole world' (Polybius, 325). Roman external policy was seen as particularly competent due to the guiding role played by the Senate, composed of many of the most experienced political leaders. Similarly effective was Rome's practice of treating defeated powers in Italy as subordinate members of a hegemonic confederation, by simultaneously allowing nearly complete internal autonomy, prohibiting alliances with any state but Rome and requiring substantial military levies to be employed and commanded by Roman generals.[42]

Despite the virtues of its internal structure, the Roman Republic gave way to the establishment of a monarchical order after a long period of civil war. Many factors were understood to be at work in this revolution, but many analysts in both ancient and modern times believed that the spatial expansion of Roman power was the decisive root cause of the fall of the Roman Republic.[43] Expansion was a possible path to security, but expansion would alter the internal balance of power toward the few at the expense of the many. The political power of the less exclusive classes was exercised in a complex set of voting assemblies. In the first phases of Roman expansion in Italy, it was still possible for all citizens to actually attend the assemblies, but once a diluted form of Roman citizenship was extended, after the 'Social War' (91 BCE), very broadly to substantial numbers of the citizens of former imperial confederal dependent cities, the novel arrangement of citizenship (the entitlement to protection by Roman courts) without voting emerged.[44]

Expansion also weakened the link between membership in the military and active citizen participation, reigniting the peril of stasis in new form, and leading to the eventual military overthrow of the republic and establishment

of the monarchial principate. As the republic's military successes pushed Rome's frontiers further and further away, campaigns became nearly continuous, making it impractical to be both active citizen and soldier. Severed from their farms, the soldiers became the crucial constituency for the generals such as Marius, Pompey and Caesar. Thus, the overall lesson to be drawn from the Roman experience was severely pessimistic.

## *Montesquieu on Size and Regime Type*

The core ideas of ancient and early modern republican security theory regarding the relationship between size and political regime types are presented most clearly and synthetically by Montesquieu in his sprawling compendium of Enlightenment political science, the *Spirit of the Laws*. Widely hailed as the greatest of Enlightenment political scientists, Montesquieu's works were well known to the American Founders and debates about his actual views were salient enough in the American debates over the Constitution of 1787 to warrant detailed treatment by Publius.[45] Montesquieu is still widely recognized by political theorists as a pivotal figure in the development of republican and Liberal thought, but most recent commentators make only passing, often embarrassed, reference to his many sophisticated and complex arguments about geopolitical factors such as climate, topography, soil fertility, maritime accessibility, population density and, most importantly here, size.[46] One of Montesquieu's most neglected but interesting arguments concerns how variations in size and speed rooted in material circumstances exert a powerful influence upon political regime types. This argument combines in one simple schema the conclusions of ancient and early modern republican security theory.

The starting point of the argument is the central role of security from outside threat. Montesquieu observes that political orders exhibit a pro-portionality between their size, the velocity of military power and the degree of concentration necessary for military viability:

> To preserve a state in its due force, it must have such an extent and magnitude, as to admit of a proportion between the quickness with which it may be invaded, and that with which it may render the invasion abortive. As an invader may instantly appear on all sides, it is requisite that the state should be able to make on all sides its defense; consequently it should be of a moderate extent, proportioned to the degree of velocity that nature has given to man in order to move from one place to another. (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 129–30)

The 'velocity that nature has given' varies, and produces three different size units — the absence of natural hindrances (on great plains) produces large regimes; moderate natural hindrances (such as early modern Europe)

produces moderately sized units; and great natural hindrances (such mountainous or insular terrains) produces small units. Like other early moderns, Montesquieu attributed Europe's fragmented political system, its absence of a 'universal monarchy,' to its topographical fragmentation (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 278–9). With region-wide empire impeded, the political units were smaller, and constitutional monarchies and city-state republics were thus possible in Europe. The prevalence in Europe of republics and monarchies over large empires moderates the parts and thus the stability of the system, because Montesquieu believed that despotisms are more addicted to expansion and war than republics and monarchies.

Because of scale effects, different sized units will tend to have different internal structures (see Figure 2). As Montesquieu succinctly puts it, 'It is, therefore the natural property of *small* states to be governed as a *republic*, of *middling* ones to be subject to a *monarch*, and of *large empires* to be swayed by a *despotic* prince' (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 122; my emphasis).[47] Specific regime types are appropriate to specific spatial sizes, and if a regime is founded with a mismatch to its size, Montesquieu says it will evolve according to defined paths. A large empire must have despotic authority because 'it is necessary that the *quickness* of the prince's resolutions should supply the *distance* of the places they are sent to' (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 122; my emphasis). Only concentrated absolute power can overcome the centrifugal effects of great distance. By the same logic, a monarchy in a large unit would fall apart (or become despotic) because distance diminishes authority (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 121). At the low end of the spectrum, republics occur in 'a single town' because the concentrated power of a monarchy or a despotism in such close quarters would be oppressive, stimulating a revolt which a sole ruler would lack additional resources to suppress (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]:120). Each of the three regime types is based on a proportion between size, speed and concentration that is a functional adaptation to a particular material context, and when one variable changes the others will as well.[48] If a republic becomes large, it will tend to become a monarchy and ultimately a despotism, but if a despotism should shrink to the size of a city, it would tend to become a republic.

Montesquieu's simple schema relating size to regime type unmistakably conveys the generally pessimistic tenor of early republican security theory — competitive military pressures are a background assumption. Republics are by nature small. Because they are small, republics are only viable in exceptional geographic contexts. The human desire for political liberty and security might be universal, but early republican security theorists believed that nature, and the limits of the arts of politics, condemned most of

*Figure 2*
Montesquieu on the Relation of Size to Regime Type

|  | Republic | Limited Monarchy | Despotism |
|---|---|---|---|
| Large |  |  | X |
| Medium |  | X |  |
| Small | X |  |  |

humanity to live in non-free states. At the same time, this schema provides a benchmark to measure the implications of emerging early modern republican innovations of representation and federal union.

As a first step in moving beyond the iron laws of polis republicanism, Montesquieu also registers the first of the two modern innovations (representation) that make possible the extension of republican governance to the size previously only matched to monarchic government. In his famed discussion of the English constitution, he refers to England as a republic hiding in the form of a monarchy (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 151–162). Here Montesquieu is but a brief and incomplete summary of a rich body of 18th century analysis, most notably David Hume's 'The Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth'.[49] Continuing the materialist and systemic contextual line of argument, British authors offer numerous and sophisticated arguments about the role of insularity and navalism in frustrating the early modern

absolutist monarchical project and the victory of a 'republican' Parliamentary regime.[50]


## 3. *Federal Union and Republican Security Theory*

*Confederation, Federal Union and Republican Security*

Having summarized the assumptions and problematics of republican security theory and early analyses of the severe security consequences of republican dwarfdom, we are prepared to appreciate the revolutionary potential of the innovation of federal union that enabled republics to combine popular sovereignty with great size. Since I have addressed at length elsewhere the specifics of the American federal union (Deudney, 1995), I will confine myself here to a brief summary of main points.

The idea that numerous small republics could and should band together to form alliances and confederations, or 'leagues', is a feature of both republican theory and practice since antiquity.[51] But the main view of these arrangements, based on the limited successes and many weaknesses of historical leagues of republics, was not encouraging. In conclusions consonant with contemporary neorealist alliance theory, alliances and confederations were seen as prone either to suffer severe collective action and authority problems, or to slide into hegemonic and imperial forms when led by an energetic and more powerful member (Athens and the Delian League; Rome and its many allies).[52]

In order to overcome these problems, the American arrangement of federal union attempted to combine executive capability with mechanisms of popular accountability for a grouping of polities that were not city-states but rather as large and thus potentially powerful as a European nation-state, and that together would be as large as a continental despotic empire.

Publius advances the argument that federal union could simultaneously contribute to addressing all four of the security problems. First, ending anarchy between the republican units would address the problem of competitive security conflicts between the units. Second, civil war and stasis within the units would be less likely because militia from surrounding states could be mobilized to maintain order. Civil war and stasis in the overall union would be inhibited by the collective action difficulties of coalition building in an extended and diverse population. Third, extremes of hierarchy would be avoided in the union government because the large size of the union would obviate the need to mobilize and concentrate high percentages of the overall population and wealth of the country in military activities. Fourth, the overall size of the union would be sufficient to sustain political independence against foreign threats.[53]

*Federal Union in the Global-Industrial Anarchic State-System*

Thus far, the analysis has focused on the history and logic of federal union in republican security theory and practice, in effect putting one feature of the American founding in sharper theoretical and historical perspective. After the American founding, analysis of federal union moves from the theoretical and hypothetical into the practical and the historical. Despite the overwhelming focus of recent Liberal scholarship on those elements of 19th century Liberal thinking resonant with contemporary concerns (most notably the pacific effects of commerce and political democracy), the 19th century produced an explosion of interest in federal unions.

Reflection on the American Union and its implications for world politics was particularly widespread and theoretically interesting in the late 19th century, as the effects of the industrial revolution on world politics were first being significantly experienced. A brief examination of some of these arguments helps capture the full practical and theoretical relevance of the federal-republican security hypothesis, because it is largely in the last century and a half that the story of both federal republics and almost all of the cases analyzed by democratic peace theorists has taken place.

As noted earlier, material contextual factors were an integral feature of republican security theory's effort to conceptualize the kinds of security problems that republics had to cope with and the kinds of solutions deemed appropriate in meeting them, with particular focus on the problem of size needed to survive in interstate systems. Material-context arguments loom particularly large in late 19th century reflections of the implications of the American federal union, and these analyses are interwoven throughout an extremely large and diverse corpus of writings, largely invisible to contemporary international theory, known generally as 'global geopolitics'.[54]

The key insight, shared by virtually every writer of every ideological and theoretical orientation, was that the industrial revolution had generated a fundamentally new material environment with far-reaching implications for security. The collapse of space was widely regarded as the most important feature of the new era.[55] In terms of the overall security problem, two main realities loomed largest. First, there was the emergence of a global scope state system in which the actors were interacting as intensively as had European nation-states. Second, there was the shift in the minimum size of a militarily viable unit to continental size.

A particularly lucid and influential analysis of federal union in this new international systemic and material context was provided by John Seeley, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, in his widely read *The Expansion of England*.[56] Seeley observed that the general tendency of the time was to 'bring together what is remote', a trend which 'favors large

political unions' (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 204). These developments were made possible by science and technology which 'has given to the political organism a new circulation, which is steam, and a new nervous system, which is electricity' (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 62). 'Distance is abolished by science' (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 63). These trends were most visible in the United States and to a lesser degree in Russia.

For the existing Great Powers of Europe, Seeley drew the lesson in stark terms:

> For the same inventions which make vast political unions possible tend to make states which are on the old scale of magnitude unsafe, insignificant, second rate. If the United States and Russia hold together for another half century, they will at the end of that time completely dwarf such old European States as France and Germany and depress them into a second class. Russia and the United States will surpass in power the states now called great as much as the great country states of the sixteenth century surpassed Florence. (Seeley, 1971[1883]:62)[57]

Within this context, Seeley addresses the federal union as an innovation in republican security practice. Seeley summarizes the traditional republican view, that large regimes would inevitably be despotisms and that republics were possible only in domains not significantly larger than the city-states of ancient Greece or Renaissance Italy. Citing the large empires of the Persians, the Romans, the Mongols and the Spanish, he argued that 'large political organisms were only stable when they were of a low type' in which 'the individual is crushed, so that he enjoys no happiness, makes no progress and produces nothing memorable' (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 62). In contrast, self-governing regimes allowing more extensive forms of personal liberty were inevitably small, since intensive communication and assembly were deemed necessary for effective self-government. Free regimes were thus rare, relegated to the geographic nooks and crannies of those exceptional state systems where small polities could survive. Then the representative system had made possible the extension of liberty to polities the size of England. To this British innovation the United States had added federalism, permitting the further spatial extension of the high type of organization. Representation and federalism, combined with the new transportation and communication technologies, had enabled the United States to solve 'a problem substantially similar' to that which the old British colonial system 'could not solve'[58] (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 62), namely large-scale emigration and expansion without either despotism or fission. The success of the American founding meant that, for the first time 'full liberty and solid union may be reconciled with unbounded territorial expansion' (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 187). This fundamentally new type of political association, mixing freedom with size, had unprecedented survival potential (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 135). Polities

*Figure 3*
Republican Viability in Different Interstate Systems

| Scope of the State System | Size of Militarily Viable Unit | Security Viable Republican Form |
|---|---|---|
| Global (late 19th, early 20th centuries) | Continental (USA, USSR) | Federal Union |
| Continental (Europe in early modern era) | Sub-continental (France, Spain, Austria, Britain, Prussia, Sweden) | Representative Republic |
| Sub-continental (ancient Greek and Renaissance Italy) | City-State (Athens, Sparta, Milan, Florence, Venice) | Participatory Democracy |

with self-government and extensive individual liberty could now vie for a more prominent place in world politics, and the great majority of the human race, once condemned to live under despotisms by the relentless imperatives of material conditions, could eventually enjoy a way of life previously available only to those fortunate to live in exceptional geographic settings. Moving from historical analysis of the United States to policy prescription for Great Britain, Seeley proposed that a federation be established between Great Britain and the 'white settler colonies' within the British Empire, a move which alone would give Britain the viability to survive in the emerging global scope international system.[59]

By way of summing up the importance of federal union within republican security theory and practice, it is useful to modify the classical typology of regime type and size synthesized by Montesquieu and situate it in interstate systems of varying scopes (see Figure 3). If republics are governed by directly participating and assembling citizens, they are limited to a city-state size, and are only likely to be militarily viable in a system whose scope is limited to a space approximating that of a modern European nation-state. The two major historical cases that fit this pattern are the classical Greek city-state system and the Italian Renaissance city-state system. Both were

extinguished as a result of the expansion in the scope of the interstate system, and the size of the viable unit within it. With the innovation of representation, republics could be as large as European nation-states, and are thus potentially militarily viable in a system with continental scope. The first major modern example, Great Britain, Montesquieu's republic hiding in the form of a monarchy, was thus security viable in the Europe-wide state-system of early modern Europe. Then Britain, along with any other European nation-states that might achieve republican government, were dwarfed as the interstate system expanded to a global scope, and were destined to either elimination, subordination or marginalization. With the innovation of federal union, republics reach at least continental scope, the size that Montesquieu assigned uniquely to despotic empires, and thus become potentially security viable in a global scope state-system. The first (and so far only) federal union, the American Union, Madison's 'compound republic', was able to expand to continental scope and achieve security viability in the competitive global state system that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

It is this three-step sequence of security-centered and material context driven innovations which is axial for the overall project of political freedom. Against this backdrop, modern liberalism, in all its splendid florescence, is largely the privileged, if forgetful, child of republican security theory.

## 4. Federal Republican Security and Kantian Democratic Peace

### Publius and Kant Compared

The overall contributions of American federal unionism to republican security theory which warrant its claim to centrality in this tradition can be highlighted by comparing the arguments of Publius and Kant and then briefly assessing the fit between the historical record and federal-republican security and democratic peace hypotheses.

Having brought the republican security problematiques into sharper focus, these arguments can be readily compared and contrasted with those of Immanuel Kant, the Prussian philosopher and ethicist, whose celebrated pamphlet *Perpetual Peace* is now widely seen as the source of contemporary Liberal international theory's most powerful argument. Because Kant's core arguments are widely known by contemporary international theorists, there is no need to summarize them here. Publius and Kant differ in seven important ways (see Figure 4).

Regarding sources and cases there is a striking difference between Publius and Kant. The ideas of numerous ancient and early modern theorists (Polybius, Plutarch, Blackstone, Hume and Montesquieu) are referenced directly by Publius. The security experience of numerous historical republics

*Figure 4*
Publius and Kant Compared

|  | Publius | Kant |
|---|---|---|
| Sources | Numerous ancient and early modern | Early republican security theory almost absent |
| Cases | Greece, Rome, Venice, Holland, Britain, etc. | None |
| Stasis | Driving concern | Barely mentioned |
| Vulnerability to Conquest | Driving concern | Noted |
| Relations among Republics | Potentially violently competitive | Pacific |
| System-Level Structures | Federal Union (negarchic) | Anarchic (with alliances and amity treaties) |
| Role of Material Factors | Detailed analysis | 'Nature's secret plan' |

(the Amphictyonic and Achaean Leagues, the Roman Republic, modern Britain, Scotland, the Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland and the Holy Roman Empire) are employed and referenced by Publius, with the Roman Republic being mentioned 11 different times.[60] In contrast, Kant never

mentions most of the ancient Greek or Latin authors, nor any of the ancient or early modern polities. This silence is particularly notable, given that Kant was fluent in Latin, and drew very heavily upon Roman Stoic cosmopolitan ethical theorists (most notably Cicero, Seneca and Marcus).[61] Of modern theorists, Kant's extensive engagement with Hobbes is accompanied by a nearly complete silence on Machiavelli, British constitutional theory, Montesquieu and the American Founders.

Kant was a theorist of ethics, not politics — he repeatedly asserted the primacy of the 'ought' of ethical right over the 'is' of political realities, and he sought in *Perpetual Peace* to describe a set of political arrangements congruent with his ethical system. In contrast, the Publius argument draws heavily upon historical experience for practical lessons and self-consciously situates itself as a better solution to the problems animating prior republican political theorists.

The third, fourth and fifth set of differences relate to how the security problems of republican units are characterized. As we have seen, republican security theory culminating in Publius was centrally concerned with internal stasis, the lethal symbiosis of internal Caesarism and external competitive militarism, and external vulnerability rooted in size constraints. In contrast, Kant largely drops or ignores these major problems and lines of argument that had centrally animated previous republican security theory. He is largely silent on the perils of factional stasis and says little about the perils of Caesarist coups. On the topic of central concern here, Kant says little about how democratic republics come into existence, reach sufficient size to be viable and become numerous enough to substantially populate a state-system.[62]

Publius and Kant also differ strikingly in their views of interstate system issues. Where Publius held that republics would tend toward violent conflict with each other because of the competitive dynamics of anarchy, Kant held that unit-level constraints in democratic republics would pacify relations among republics. From these radically different starting points in their understanding of the security problem emerge the great differences in the substantiality of their system-level authority structures — Kant's thin 'pacific union' composed of treaties of friendship is enough for a world already filled with stable democratic republics,[63] while for Publius an anarchy-replacing states-union is necessary to pacify relations among democratic republics.

Finally, there are great differences in the role played by material contextual factors in their arguments. Publius builds on a long analysis of how various material factors such as topography and land–sea interactions shape the security problem confronting republican polities. In contrast, Kant is thunderingly silent on the material contextual dimensions of the mainstream

of republican security theory, with the exception of his cryptic allusion to 'nature's secret plan'.[64]

Overall, it is as if Publius and Kant live in different worlds, or at least radically different historical periods.[65] For Publius, the fundamental fact is the fragility, rarity and vulnerability of republics. Kant seems to leap over these problems and his argument largely begins with a world where the problems animating Publius have disappeared or been solved. Haunted by the image of city-state republican states, Publius held that autonomous republican polities were prone to self-destructive tendencies that could be remedied by extension. In contrast, Kant is altogether silent on the perils of factional stasis, and thus is content to leave republican nation-states in systemic anarchy. Having posited a state-system populated by democratic republics, Kant is silent on how such polities arise and survive, while Publius begins with the historical reality of acute republican vulnerability, and advances federal union as a means for republics to achieve the size, and thus security, previously only available to monarchic states and despotic empires. Kant's posited world of democratic republics had safely leaped beyond the harsh and interlocking realpolitik dynamics of Caesarian coups and militarized internal competition, but Publius grappled directly with them: anarchy between republican units would undermine republican government within them. Only by leaving anarchy could unit-level republics be preserved.

### The Historical Record: Federal Republican Security Before Democratic Peace

Publius and Kant wrote over two hundred years ago, and so there is now a substantial historical record against which the accuracy of the federal-republican security and democratic peace hypotheses can be assessed. It is important to note that these hypotheses are not logically contradictory. It is possible that both may be true. In speaking of 'Publius before Kant' my aim is to draw attention to the question of which is more significant in the historical development of liberal democratic republics, and thus more deserving axial status in the tradition of Liberal international theory.

Assessment of these contrasting hypotheses is hampered by the fact that the number of qualifying candidates in the total population of states in the last two centuries is very small. For the federal-republican hypothesis, only one unit (the United States of America) qualifies as a federal union, with a second possible candidate (Great Britain) being an unwilling and probably infeasible federal union. The fact that there is only one candidate to assess the federal-republican security hypothesis is mitigated by the fact that this hypothesis is monadic (rather than dyadic like the democratic peace hypothesis) and the number of possible global great powers is inherently limited to a handful.

The core claim of the federal-republican hypothesis is that republican polities could overcome their chronic security vulnerabilities through federal union. The American founding occurred on the eve of the industrial revolution whose main external security consequence was to increase sharply the scope of the state-system and the size of viable units within it. As the 'age of contending states' unfolded in the century between 1890 and 1990, a handful of continental-sized units and plausible aspirants to world great power status were locked into a series of mortal combats of worldwide scope. The only reason that republican polities could plausibly survive, let alone prevail, in this harsh interstate environment was that the United States of America had combined republican government with empire-like size via federal union. All other democratic republics were implausible candidates for survival in the global-industrial era, except as allies of the United States.

In the World War II phase of the struggle, democratic republics at the Western core (already shrunk to a handful in northwestern Europe due to Depression-fueled stasis) were either overrun by Nazi German armies (Holland, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, and France), neutrals vulnerable to assured eventual conquest by Germany (Switzerland and Sweden) or snatched from conquest by massive American aid and Hitler's quixotic grand strategy (Britain).[66] Outside the European core, democracies were few, scattered and weak. They were spared immediate Axis conquest only by their remoteness and American assistance (Australia and New Zealand), or their proximity to the United States (Canada).[67]

After the defeat of Axis imperialism, primarily by American and Soviet arms, liberal democracies faced another mortal peril from communist Russia and China and the survival, reconstruction and expansion of democracy in the second half of the 20th century vitally depended upon American military and economic power. American arms shielded the shattered democracies at the Western core, American occupation forces and assistance reconstructed western Germany and Japan as liberal democracies and the American-led NATO alliance thwarted Soviet domination of Western Europe.[68] As Tony Smith observes, 'it is difficult to escape the conclusion that since World War I, the fortunes of democracy worldwide have largely depended on American power' (Smith, 1994: 10).

Looking at the overall pattern of world politics during the era of contending states, it is difficult to imagine how any liberal democracies would have survived had it not been for the fact that the American union was large and strong enough to prevail against aggressive anti-democracies and to protect and nurture smaller national democratic states. Thus the historical record of the global-industrial era provides a strong first approximation vindication of the federal-republican security hypothesis.

Kant's democratic peace hypothesis has been subject to extensive empirical testing, but opinion is sharply divided over whether the evidence is supportive, with questions of when which states qualify as democracies accounting for much of the disagreement.[69] There is, however, agreement that the number of states appropriately viewed as democracies is relatively small, with the number increasing greatly over the last half century.

Viewed from the perspective of systemic international theory, however, it seems that there has only recently, mainly in Western Europe and the North Atlantic area, been a state-system sufficiently populated by republican democracies to constitute an overall potentially telling case to test Kant's hypothesis.[70] Prior to the last half of the 20th century, democracies have been sufficiently rare, lacking in geographic contiguity, generally precarious and sufficiently subject to predation by non-democracies that the lack of war between such states is easily explained by other factors.[71] Confining the cases to democratic states that had the minimum security enjoyed by great powers, only the American–British dyad is potentially interesting. But these two states were both essentially status quo powers, driven into alliance by mortal threats from aggressive revisionist states. Furthermore, Great Britain systematically appeased American demands in the late 19th century, not primarily out of democratic solidarity, but rather from a combination of fear of rising American power, and the hope that the United States would become Britain's ally against the rising and threatening power of Germany.

Over the last half century, power among democratic states has been so concentrated in American hands as to make war unlikely and other democracies have looked to the United States for protection from predatory communist states in both Europe and East Asia. Not only has the United States been the senior partner in a defensive alliance protecting vulnerable democracies, but American-led institutions have systematically dampened conflictual tendencies among democracies and encouraged a wide range of cooperative activities that have further diminished violent encounters.

In sum, pre-World War II democracies were too rare, precarious and non-contiguous to provide much evidence for Kant's claim, while post-World War II democracies have had their relations determined by the twin structural forces of American hegemony and bipolar competition with the Soviet Union, suggesting that Kant's hypothesis remains untested in a compelling way. Looking at the overall pattern, two facts stand out — without American power, there probably would not be any democracies at the end of the 20th century,[72] and those democracies which have behaved so impressively pacific toward one another have been junior allies of the United States in a very hostile and competitive interstate environment.

## Conclusions, Implications and Speculations

### The Tradition Re-Centered

Looking at the emergence of the contemporary pacific and liberal-democratic core region and comparing it with the historical experience of republican polities beginning in antiquity and stretching through the 20th century, what is perhaps most striking is not the emergence of peace among democracies, but rather that the fuller range of security problems have been so successfully addressed — republics are no longer rare and precarious, no longer subject to lethal predation and violent turmoil. A crucial piece of this progressive development of republican theory and practice is the federal union, without which there probably would be no contemporary liberal-democratic republican ascendancy.

Given this, it is appropriate to revise our view of what is most axial in the Liberal international tradition. The tradition of republican security theory begins in classical antiquity, not the modern Enlightenment, and its central concerns differ significantly from modern Liberalism. Republican security practice and theory is obsessively focused on eking out physical security in harshly precarious contexts and is pervasively pessimistic. These differences are rooted in the fact that republican security theory is grappling with issues that are more intrinsically fundamental and more historically original than those animating modern Liberalism.

In the currently dominant formulation of the neoclassical Liberal tradition, Enlightenment theorists posit a world where commerce is extensive and democratic republics are numerous enough to populate state-systems and then make optimistic predictions about their potential to pacify interstate relations. In contrast, republican theorists began at the beginning, with a much more realistic state of nature in which free associations were rare, precarious and subject to debilitating internal maladies, and then draw pessimistic prognoses for republics. They sought to explain why republics are rare and precarious and to identify the extraordinary circumstances that make them minimally viable. And most importantly, they sought to offer practical political solutions to overcome their limits and weaknesses.

As such, republican security theory is closer in substance and spirit to 20th century Realism (its other main descendant) than to the post-security agendas and relentless optimism of contemporary Liberalism. Republican security theory should be seen as the foundational part of the more general tradition of international Liberalism that deals directly with the concerns of Realism, but without succumbing to the Realist embrace of a tragic worldview. Security problems are real and difficult to solve, but they can be effectively mastered with the appropriate set of political practices and

structures. Optimism is warranted, so long as optimism does not obscure the real and inescapable problems that must be addressed.

By viewing the republican project from its beginnings, contemporary Liberals can gain a much needed sense of sobriety and caution. In contrast to the casual 'end of history' triumphalism prevalent in contemporary Liberal thinking, the long and strenuous history of republics grappling with the security problem can remind us that the current ascendancy of free states was not the result of some inevitable historical process, but was a 'close run thing' that could have turned out very differently.

### The Tragedy of American Global Diplomacy?

A return to the heavily conditioned optimism of republican security theory also may provide useful guidance in managing the emerging issues of sustaining the pacific zone of peace after the Cold War. There is widespread agreement, from both Realists and Liberals, that the liberal core of the international system has brought more peace, prosperity and freedom to more people than ever before in history. But there is a wide divergence of expectations about the sustainability of this situation. For Liberals, this order seems so deeply rooted that *nothing needs to be done*, while for Realists it is so fragile and so the product of the fleeting historical post-World War circumstances that *nothing can be done*. This combination of Liberal complacency and Realist pessimism produces a vacuum of serious policy initiatives to sustain and deepen the liberal zone of peace. A return to the problematics and approaches of republican theory can help fill this gap, providing both a set of strong, historically based reasons for thinking more needs to be done and a set of historically tested approaches for actually doing something.[73]

Recognition of the axial developments in republican security theory also draws our attention away from Athens and the Peloponnesian War and toward the Roman Republic and its fate of constitutional failure from external success. The increasingly credible characterization of the United States as having an empire[74] invites us to examine more closely the transformations which this costly ascent and the routinization of imperium has had and will have upon the American domestic federal-republican constitution. With a swollen and increasingly swaggering national security apparatus, a widening gap between an elite enjoying the fruits of economic globalization and a sinking middle class and a cultural life marred by spectacles of extreme violence, there is ample evidence of corruption and deformation. Although the circumstances of ancient Republican Rome and the contemporary United States are vastly different in many regards, further

reflection on parallels may add some sobering perspective on the current American trajectory.

The recent American turn from leadership in the project of liberal internationalism and multilateralism toward a posture of strident and belligerent opposition to international law and organization is also cast in a new light. The original animating logic of American internationalism was to 'make the world safe for democracy' by transforming the internal constitutions of other states away from predatory hierarchies toward liberal constitutional democracies and to abridge interstate anarchy with international authorities. Although often cast in progressive terms, this project was in its animating motive profoundly conservative — to protect the republican constitution from deformations necessitated by external competition with hierarchies in anarchy. In the wake of a century of hard choices, the United States is now much more able, in relative power and authority, to realize this agenda than at any point in its history. But rather than push ahead to its culmination, the United States has swerved from leadership into opposition (Ikenberry, 2003). At the root of this recent reversal is what might be termed the *tragedy of American global diplomacy*. In amassing enough power to secure itself and its friends in a harshly competitive system, the United States has had to mobilize and concentrate power in the hands of a national security state which no longer is interested in systematically reducing state power and abridging international anarchy.

*Back to the Future?*

Finally, recalling the central republican security project of achieving security by simultaneously avoiding the extremes of anarchy and hierarchy at different scales and scopes as dictated by the brute realities of shifting material contexts may also offer the basis for a fuller and more effective understanding of the full implications of the attacks of 9/11 and their aftershocks. More than anything else, these attacks are important because they give credibility to the threat of non-state use of weapons of mass destruction. This threat stands starkly outside the comforting verities of deterrence theory which have underpinned American postures toward nuclear explosives and arms control over the last several decades. If in fact achieving security from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction requires a universal regulation of these capacities, not simply encompassing states, but also small criminal gang size groups, then security may increasingly require the penetration of government surveillance and control to totalitarian levels, applied universally. These deeply sobering prospects suggest, on the one hand, that liberal democracy is increasingly a historical anachronism, returning us back to the world of early republican pessimism.

Or, more hopefully, these dire prospects may stimulate a fourth, and (for this planet) final, expansion of the scope of securing federal-republican governance. Either the republican project will be terminated or completed. Our hopes, realistically limited, for an outcome favorable to liberty can only be enhanced by recognizing that we face not an unprecedented problem, but a new version of essentially the same problem which our predecessors, through a combination of luck, design and sacrifice, were able to solve.

## *Notes*

Harry Gould, David Hendrickson, Nicholas Onuf and Peter Onuf offered valuable comments to earlier versions of this article.

1. The fullest statement is Doyle (1997: 205–311).
2. For discussions see Kegley (1993) and Brinkley (1997).
3. Bush's call for the democratization of the Middle East is described in Sanger (2003) and the counters of post-9/11 American grand strategy are discussed in Rhodes (2003).
4. Knutsen's lengthy author and topic index contains no reference to Madison or the *Federalist*, and references to federalism are only to proposals for European federations (Knutsen, 1992). Boucher's index contains no reference to Madison, the *Federalist*, or the topic of federalism (Boucher, 1999). Doyle cites Madison several times for minor points and quotes him once at length on the need for a distinct American identity to sustain American independence (Doyle, 1997).
5. Challenging even the appropriateness of attributing the origin of the 'democratic peace' hypothesis in Enlightenment international theory to Kant, Thomas Walker compellingly demonstrates that the revolutionary agitator and publicist Thomas Paine clearly articulated this idea, and many associated ideas, before Kant. He also suggests that Kant probably had access to Paine's work, but did not cite him (Walker, 2000).
6. These origins are discussed in de Sauvigny (1970).
7. I treat Publius as one voice and as the authoritative understanding of the Constitution of 1787. For the emergence and components of the Constitution as 'Grand Compromise' see Anderson (1993).
8. For purposes of this analysis, I treat 'Kant' as equivalent to the arguments of 'democratic peace' which many trace to 'Perpetual Peace'. The question of whether this is actually Kant's argument is more potentially problematic than this simple identification allows.
9. This proposition is clearly related to the recent 'democratic advantage' arguments which hold that democracies have a competitive advantage in interstate conflict because they are able to sustain greater levels of popular support, and thus mobilize more power (Reiter and Stamm, 2002). To the extent such a pattern exists, it deepens the puzzle of why such regimes have been so rare and generally vulnerable. In combination with the greater size afforded by federal union, the democratic mobilization advantage helps explain the particular success of the United States over the last century.

10. In one of the few recent attempts to develop a distinctively 'republican' position distinct from communitarianism and historical exegesis of earlier thinking, Phillip Pettit emphasizes republican opposition to 'domination' as opposed to liberal opposition to 'interference', but neglects to mention anarchy, within which domination and coercion occur unchecked, or any aspect of international security (Pettit, 1997).

11. Pocock's magisterial work on the problem of change in early modern republicanism almost completely neglects the violence-from-security, international and material-contextual aspects of theory in this period, and has a conception of republicanism essentially civic humanist in character (Pocock, 1975). The single most important and substantial treatment of the relationship between republicanism and international theory conceives of republicanism in civic humanist and communitarian terms, and does not address security, structural or material arguments (Onuf, 1998). In the ocean of literature on the American Founding and the *Federalist*, one work stands out as a balanced treatment of internal and external security issue (Dietze, 1960). The best explication of the problematiques of security and size in the *Federalist* is Stourzh (1970). Manicas' treatment of the relationship between war and democracy stretching from the ancients through the early moderns, Marxism and the totalitarian challenge is full of interesting insights on these topics (Manicas, 1989). Particularly useful for the federal union in the context of and in comparison to Enlightenment thinking on international law is Onuf and Onuf (1993). David Hendrickson provides a particularly rich treatment of the intellectual foundations of the American Founding regarding security and federal union (Hendrickson, 2003). Rahe's immense and elegant treatment contains an outstanding analysis of the centrality of war and stasis in shaping the ancient city-state republic, but this line of argument largely disappears in the bulk of the volume, devoted to early modern republican theory. His discussion of the ancients centers upon Athens and Sparta, to the almost complete neglect of Rome (Rahe, 1992). In addition to his outstanding analysis of Kant and the commercial liberals, Doyle provides extended analysis of Machiavelli and Rousseau. Both these figures, seminal for political theory generally, are archaic and retrograde in the overall development of republican security theory, a claim whose defense is beyond the scope of this article (Doyle, 1997: 93–119, 137–60).

12. (Adams, 1850–56: 378). For the ways in which Adams' 'Defense of the Constitutions of the Governments of the United States' missed the central innovations of the founding, see Wood (1969: 567–92).

13. Ian Shapiro notes that of 170 countries existing in 1987 113 contain the term 'republic' or one of its cognates in their formal names (Shapiro, 1990: 184).

14. There is wide agreement that the long dominance of republican political vocabularies in Western politics rapidly faded in the early 19th century and that Liberal vocabularies became ascendent. But there is little agreement about the relationship between republicanism and liberalism. Some see a sharp break from republicanism (understood to be centered on the public good and virtue) to Liberalism (understood to be centered on individualism and private interest).

Others see modern Liberalism largely as a more coherent and focused development of themes present in republicanism. My view is that republican security theory is best thought of as *first Liberalism* because it deals with the primal issues of security-from-violence and political structure which modern and contemporary Liberals either ignore, take for granted or cede to Realism. For the strongest version of the oppositional view see Onuf (1998).

15. For a survey of the ancients see von Fritz (1954).

16. From the beginning of Western political theory, the image of 'oriental despotism' (most notably the Persian Empire in antiquity, the Ottoman and Chinese Empires in the early modern era and Russian-Soviet totalitarianism in the 20th century) has served as the defining 'other' in the republican worldview. For a lively critique of the 'ethnocentrism' of these images see Springborg (1992).

17. For detailed analyses of how parts of early modern republicanism were shaped by their opposition to hierarchical and imperial projects see Bouwsma (1966) and Hulliung (1976).

18. For this usage and its legacies see Deudney (2003).

19. The foundation of republics is thus popular sovereignty, with sovereignty understood as the ultimate and indivisible source of legitimate political authority. Thus characterized, popular sovereignty entails constraints on majoritarian or simple 'democratic' rule. For further elaboration see Deudney (1995). Alternatively, if 'sovereignty' means an ultimate concentrated authority, then republics are antithetical to this as an organizing principle. For a succinct overview of the second position see Lakoff (1994).

20. Montesquieu defined 'political liberty' as 'a tranquillity of mind arising from the opinion each person has of his own safety' (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]: 151). Also see Sklar (1989). For a nuanced treatment of this security theme in early modern proto-liberal and constitutional theory see Holmes (1995).

21. The security-centered alternative to 'civic humanism' has been best explicated by Quentin Skinner, who argues that the republican tradition in both ancient Rome and Renaissance Italy was concerned with citizen virtue as a means to protect liberty from its own excesses and to enable free political orders to cope with collective threats rather as a desirable end in its own right, and about how government consistent with a maximum of individual liberty could 'in practice be established and kept in existence' (Skinner, 1990: 303). A lucid presentation of this perspective is provided by Viroli (2000).

22. For more extended discussion of the four-fold conceptualization of the security problem see Deudney (1995).

23. William Everdell observes that the republican is a 'maker of labyrinths. More Byzantine than the Byzantine monarchy are his structures for dividing sovereignty . . . Republicanism is a kaleidoscope of institutions, all with the one purpose of preventing rule by one person. This seemingly simple objective has continually demanded the most bewilderingly complex of means' (Everdell, 1983: 12). For additional analysis of mechanism and device in early modern thought see Foley (1990) and Mayr (1986).

24. For an outstanding treatment of the historical evolution of internal or 'constitutional' power restraint practices see Gordon (1999).

25. In order to help more clearly conceptualize this difference between statist hierarchical political arrangements and republican ones, I have elsewhere coined the term *negarchy* as a label for a third structural ordering principle, alongside hierarchy and anarchy, thus creating a triadic or triangular conceptualization to supplant the deponent neorealist dyadic formulation, long central to Realist theory and now most associated with Kenneth Waltz's neorealist theory (Deudney, 1995). For criticism see Buzan and Little (1996).

26. Maurizio Viroli observes that ' "state" [*stato*] and "republic" were used in some instances as mutually exclusive concepts. . . . The art of the state and the art of the republic aim at establishing and preserving two alternative arrangements of public life . . . the two ideologies competed in the Italian scenario as fundamental enemies' (Viroli, 1992: 3 and 5). In contrast, Nicholas Onuf, building from an Aristotelian conception of politics, emphasizes that republics are a species of hierarchy (Onuf, 1998: 7).

27. The questions of unit size and system scope are also central to Realist analyses of anarchy, but have been neglected with the recent emphasis on systemic rather than system theory. For an exegesis of historical Realist theory and the formulation of a set of hypotheses paralleling this analysis of republics see Deudney (2000a).

28. One of the few recent treatments of democratic size concludes that size does not matter, but participatory, representative and federal forms are all treated as democracies, effectively assigning this core problematic to invisibility (Dahl and Tufte, 1973).

29. The city-state of Athens was approximately the size of contemporary Luxembourg (Ehrenberg, 1969: 27–8). Aristotle prescribes a citizen population of between ten and a hundred thousand (Aristotle, 1946: 132b).

30. The pessimistic tenor of Rousseau's political philosophy stemmed from his realization that the opportunities for the re-establishment of city-state self-governance in modern Europe was limited to a few isolated locations, such as Corsica.

31. 'Like all ancient cities, but perhaps to a greater extent than any other, Rome was a community of warriors. . . . In this system the Roman is first and foremost a warrior, or rather a soldier' (Nicolet, 1980: 89 and 91).

32. For powerful statements on the pervasiveness of war in the classical experience see Rahe (1992), Hanson (1989) and Finley (1983).

33. For extended treatment of the anti-commerce theme in republicanism see Pocock (1985).

34. A major strand of ancient republican geopolitics is thus concerned with the relationship between wealth-producing and *virtu* sapping arable land, and security. For analysis see Deudney (1999b).

35. Concerned with expansion, which needed wealth, Machiavelli recommends locating cities in relatively agriculturally fertile places, and then socially

restraining the militarily enervating effects of wealth (Machiavelli, 1970[1543]: 102–3).

36. For the prevalence of ancient concern for internal conflicts see Manicas (1982) and Lintott (1982).

37. Even the few 'democratic peace' theorists who venture into antiquity do not focus on Rome. In part this is attributable to the dominant view in 20th century Latin classical scholarship that the substantial democratic features of the Roman republican constitution were a facade behind which an 'aristocratic' elite ruled. Recent scholarship has begun to re-emphasize the great political significance of democratic elements (Millar, 1999, and Lintott, 1999).

38. The primary ancient source on this event is Livy (1960). For a brief summary see Everdell (1983: 44–68).

39. For discussion of the complexities, uncertainties, evolutionary development and historical debates surrounding the Roman republican constitution see Kunkel (1973).

40. Part of Machiavelli's attempt to boldly reverse this view of the Roman Republic was to see the 'tumults' as engineered by the elite for purposes of foreign expansion.

41. For Polybius' sources, arguments and biases see von Fritz (1954) and Walbank (1972). This account marks the first clear formulation of the nature of negarchic political arrangements, a decisive advance from the Greek and Aristotelian conceptualization of the 'mixed constitution' as a blend.

42. The security advantages of Rome's pattern of hegemonic alliances was vividly demonstrated in the climatic struggle with Carthage for control of the western Mediterranean, the Second Punic War, when Hannibal was unable to evoke significant defections from Rome's Italian 'allies', while Scipio was able to evoke widespread rebellion of the tribal groups in Carthaginian dominated eastern Spain. For historical description and analyses see Livy (1965), Gordon (1999: 86–114), Errington (1972: 4–5 and 62–90) and Crawford (1992: 31–56). The contrast between the recent treatment in international theory of Roman confederal hegemony and the Athenian Delian League is as glaring as it is unjustified.

43. For a brief synthesis of ancient and modern views that emphasizes the central role of expansion see Deininger (1980). For a detailed account see Pocock (2003).

44. This argument appears prominently in Montesquieu (1968[1734]). Speaking of both the Hellenistic states and the Roman world, Sheldon Wolin observes, 'The concept of the political community had been overwhelmed by the sheer number and diversity of the participants' (Wolin, 1960: 77).

45. Many 'anti-federalist' opponents of the Constitution of 1787 cited Montesquieu's analyses of size and confederation as grounds for believing the Articles of Confederation were sufficient, requiring Publius to address these questions at length (Spurlin, 1940).

46. This absence is notable in the otherwise exemplary essay by Judith Sklar (1987).

47. The only treatment of Montesquieu in recent international theory I have encountered is Wesson (1978: 207–11).
48. '. . . in order to preserve the principles of the established government, the state must be supported in the extent it has required, and with that the spirit of this state will alter in proportion as it contracts or expands its limits' (Montesquieu, 1949[1748]:122).
49. (Hume, 1994[1752]: 221–33). For Hume's influence on Madison, the classic remains Adair (1964).
50. The 'maritime whig' arguments emphasizing the importance of Britain's insularity in explaining its avoidance of absolutism is extensively developed by John Millar (1812). Due to the British custom of referring to 'republics' as antithetical to monarchies, the discourse concerning the British political order eschews republican terminology.
51. Useful surveys on republican confederations are Lister (1999) and Weart (1998).
52. The limitations of confederations are discussed at length in *Federalist* nos 17–20, with detailed discussion of historical cases. These arguments are similar to those advanced by Rousseau in his analysis of confederal proposals for Europe. Confederation appears in a more positive light in Rousseau's *Government of Poland*, but the center of Rousseau's scheme to save Poland from dismemberment and annexation is his program for civic education and religion.
53. For more extended treatment of this argument see Deudney (1995). For the logic of federal union see Forsyth (1981) and Ostrom (1987). For the importance of fear of European predation, see Marks (1983). For the interstate conflicts and issues, see Onuf (1983). For struggles between the states and the union government see McDonald (2000).
54. For an overview of this large and now largely ignored literature see Parker (1985). For a theoretical reconstruction that incorporates republican as well as statist elements see Deudney (2000b).
55. For the ubiquity of this type observation see Kern (1983).
56. Seeley's book, based on a public lecture series at Cambridge, sold 80,000 copies in its first year, and he was described as having altered 'the general political thinking of a nation' more than any previous historian. Seeley's influence is described in Gross (1971).
57. For further discussion see Toynbee (1948). Prophecies of the emergence of America and Russia as a new class of power had been made earlier. In 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville had announced that Russia and America appear 'marked out by the will of Heaven to sway half the globe' (Tocqueville, 1945[1835]: 452). Friedrich List also predicted the inevitable eclipse of Britain by the United States (List, 1856: 487–8). See also discussion in Betts (1979). In Germany such thinking contributed to the widespread senses that the Reich created by Bismark was insufficient for survival in the new era, and that an aggressive program of expansion was required. For discussions of German *weltpolitik* thinking see Dehio (1960), Fischer (1967) and Smith (1986).
58. 'These political and technological inventions made conceivable a different

outcome of the American War for Independence which ended the First British Empire. It is notable that Edmund Burke, in his defense of the right of the American colonists to realize independence, had cited distance as an insuperable barrier to representative government' (Seeley, 1971[1883]: 62). Burke's speech is found in Burke (1839). For analysis of the international dimensions of the American Revolution see Tucker and Hendrickson (1982).

59. For a more extended analysis of imperial federation schemes and rationales, with particular attention to assessing claims about material and international systemic factors, see Deudney (2001).

60. This list is derived from the index of Clinton Rossiter's edition of the *Federalist* (1962).

61. For extended analysis of Kant's knowledge and use of Roman Stoic ethical theory, see Nussbaum (1997).

62. Kant does briefly note the possibility of a 'Great Republic' aiding smaller republican states, but says nothing about how such a great republic could come into being. He also briefly discusses the role of the militia in republican states as a deterrent to invasion (Kant, 1970).

63. As Doyle observes, 'Kant's states continue to live in international anarchy, in the sense that there is no world government, but this anarchy is tamed and made subject to law rather than to fear and threat of war . . . he develops no systematic organizational embodiment of this theory, presumably because he does not find institutionalization necessary' (Doyle, 1997: 254 and 258). Kant's second article (*foderus pacis*), commonly rendered 'pacific union', is more appropriately described as a 'zone of peace'. The interstate agreements embodying peaceful intentions are closer to the Kellogg–Briand Pact of 1928 than organized international alliances such as NATO.

64. This phrase is from Kant's 'Idea for a Universal History With a Cosmopolitan Purpose', which contains fragments of a sweeping philosophy of history in which the interaction between the rising costs of war and the growth of 'enlightenment' moves humanity toward an end state of peace. The relationship between these sweeping ideas and the 'democratic peace' hypothesis is unclear. It is perhaps the case that all processes which lead to the end state of 'perpetual peace' are encompassed in Kant's argument, in which case it encompasses federal union, as well as a wide array of phenomena examined by Realist theorists.

65. It should be noted that prior to two decades ago, the dominant view interpreted Kant as holding that peace, *realized in rather than caused by* a system populated by republican democracies, was the inevitable result of the long working out of 'nature's secret' plan in history, thus giving primacy to 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', over 'Perpetual Peace'. For major statements of the earlier reading, see Friedrich (1948) and Hinsley (1963).

66. For the best overall narrative of World War II emphasizing the possibilities of alternative outcomes, and the importance of Hitler's grand strategic mistakes, see Overy (1995).

67. This argument entails a counterfactual claim. For analysis of the importance and features of such arguments see Tetlock and Belkin (1996).

68. In the very large and high quality literature on these topics, the best overall thematic account is provided by Smith (1994).

69. A partial listing of book-length treatments favorable to Kant's argument includes Elman (1997), Owen (1997), Mandelbaum (2002), Ray (1995), Rummel (1975), Rummel (1997), Russett (1993) and Weart (1998).

70. In an argument similar to the one advanced here, William Thompson argues that peace must be present in a region before democratization can be successful, as illustrated in the cases of Japan and Scandinavia (Thompson, 1996).

71. For criticisms of the 'democratic peace' hypothesis, see Cohen (1994), Gowa (1999), Gleditsch (1995), Layne (1994), Oren (1995) and Spiro (1994).

72. American foreign policy has not been unambiguously pro-democratic, particularly in relations with smaller states in the Western hemisphere where American economic interests were seen as threatened by populist democratic movements, and during the Cold War, when ostensibly 'democratic' socialist movements in the Third World were seen as potential Soviet allies. For sustained treatment on these points see Gilbert (1999).

73. For further analysis along these lines see Deudney (1999a).

74. Among major recent treatments are Bacevich (2002, 2003) and Newhouse (2003).

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