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## THE CONTRIBUTORS

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## ABSTRACTS

### COUNTERFACTUALS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

By JAMES D. FEARON

Scholars in comparative politics and international relations routinely evaluate causal hypotheses by referring to *counterfactual cases* where a hypothesized causal factor is supposed to have been absent. The methodological status and the viability of this very common procedure are unclear and are worth examining. How does the strategy of counterfactual argument relate, if at all, to methods of hypothesis testing based on the comparison of actual cases, such as regression analysis or Mill's Method of Difference? Are counterfactual thought experiments a viable means of assessing hypotheses about national and international outcomes, or are they methodologically invalid in principle? The paper addresses the first question in some detail and begins discussion of the second. Examples from work on the causes of World War I, the nonoccurrence of World War III, social revolutions, the breakdown of democratic regimes in Latin America, and the origins of fascism and corporatism in Europe illustrate the use, problems and potential of counterfactual argument in small-N-oriented political science research.

### SOVIET FEDERALISM AND ETHNIC MOBILIZATION

By PHILIP G. ROEDER

Central among recent changes in the Soviet Union is an expanding and increasingly public politics of federalism. The Soviet developmental strategy assigned federalism and the cadres of national-territorial administration a central role in its response to the "nationalities question." This strategy offers a key to three questions about the rise of assertive ethnofederalism over the past three decades: Why have federal institutions that provided interethnic peace during the transition to industrialization become vehicles of protest in recent years? Why have relatively advantaged ethnic groups been most assertive, whereas groups near the lower end of most comparative measures of socioeconomic and political success have been relatively quiescent? Why have major public demands—and the most important issues of contention between center and periphery—focused to such a large degree upon the details of the Soviet developmental strategy and upon federalism in particular?

### EXPLAINING THIRD WORLD ALIGNMENT

By STEVEN R. DAVID

Many argue that balance of power theory is as applicable to the Third World as it is to other states. Without substantial modification, however, balance of power theory cannot explain Third World alignments, because it ignores key characteristics of Third World states that determine alignment. The author develops a theory, "omnibalancing," that is relevant to the Third World and that repairs these defects. Rather than balance of power's emphasis on states seeking to resist threats from other states, omnibalancing explains Third World alignments as a consequence of leaders seeking to counter internal and external threats to their rule. The superiority of omnibalancing over balance of power in making Third World alignments understandable is related to the Third World in general and to the alignment decisions of two key Third World states in particular. The author concludes by discussing why an understanding of the Third World, including Third World alignment, is central to the study of international relations.

### THE SECURITY PROBLEMATIC OF THE THIRD WORLD

By MOHAMMED AYOUB

This article reviews some recently published volumes on the subject of Third World security and, in the light of the analyses presented in these books, attempts to discuss a series

of major issues in the field of Third World security studies. These include (1) the applicability of the concept of security as traditionally defined in the Western literature on international relations to Third World contexts; (2) the domestic variables affecting the security of Third World states; (3) the impact of international systemic factors on Third World security; (4) the effect of late-twentieth-century weapons technology on the security of Third World states; and (5) the relationship between the security and developmental concerns of Third World states. The author concludes that while international and technological factors have important effects on the security of Third World states, the major variables determining the degree of security enjoyed by such states at both the intrastate and interstate levels are related to the twin processes of state making and nation building that are at work simultaneously within Third World polities.

## REFORM AND THE REDEFINITION OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT UNDER GORBACHEV By JANINE LUDLAM

The concept of "social contract" is useful in understanding the process of reform currently under way in the Soviet Union. The social contract "concluded" by Khrushchev and Brezhnev provided the population with economic guarantees but deprived it of any political power. Their contract was geared primarily toward less educated, blue-collar workers. During the past seventy years Soviet society has become industrialized, urbanized, and educated. Gorbachev has understood that the well-being of the Soviet economy will in the future rest on the labor and know-how of skilled and educated professionals. He must therefore conclude a new contract that will be advantageous to this sector of society in order to ensure its participation in his efforts to reform the economy.