B.J.Pol.S. **39,** 323–344 *Copyright © 2008 Cambridge University Press*
doi:10.1017/S0007123408000525 *Printed in the United Kingdom*
First published online 27 October 2008

Friendship Between States

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Although a substantial philosophical literature exists on the concept of 'friendship' and its connections to politics, the possibility that groups such as states could be friends has largely been ignored. This is puzzling since the description of political communities as friends is one that goes back to Thucydides. Moreover, contemporary international politics is replete with references to the concepts of 'friend' and 'friendship'. This article argues that international friendships provide powerful reasons for minimally just states to engage in other-regarding conduct. Drawing on an Aristotelian account of self-interest for inspiration, it is suggested that the same reasons that justify a state's self-regard also justify its regard for other states. These reasons rest on whether the basic institutions of a state – one's own or another's – are minimally just. States, solely because of their character, have reason to enter into different levels of friendship. Those different relationships in turn generate different expectations regarding consultation, security and respect for autonomy.

Since the time of Thucydides, terms such as 'friend' and 'friendship' have been part of the language of interstate politics.[1] Diplomats frequently draw on these words to characterize international agreements.[2] Politicians regularly toast, worry about and aspire to maintain

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[1] The Greek word that is commonly translated as friendship (*philia*) appears in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian Wars* when the Mytileneans disparage their fear-based alliance with Athens by pleading to the Spartans: 'How could we feel any genuine friendship or any confidence in our liberty when we were in a situation like this?' See Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 3.12.1, for the Greek original, and the Penguin edition (1954) for the English translation. See also David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 83, for a fuller discussion of ancient uses of friendship in interstate affairs.

[2] If we take 'amity' as a cognate term for public character of friendship and friendliness between states, the online *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that it first makes its appearance in the late fifteenth century. Perhaps of more relevance is that both amity and friendship are deployed at the beginning of the modern European state system in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. The treaty not only repeatedly mentions amity between the parties, but also notes that they 'shall endeavour to procure the Benefit, Honour and Advantage of the other; that thus on all sides they may see this Peace and Friendship in the Roman Empire, and the Kingdom of France flourish, by entertaining a good and faithful Neighbourhood' (⟨http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/westphal.htm⟩). As with such terms as 'peace' and 'co-operation', 'friendship' repeatedly appears in treaties between a variety of different kinds of regimes. As examples of this diversity, one need only mention the 1763 Treaty of Paris ('The definitive Treaty of Peace and Friendship between his Britannick Majesty, the Most Christian King, and the King of Spain'), the 1786 'Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the United States and Morocco, 1786', the 1939 German/Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty, and the 1955 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Between the People's Republic of Albania, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Hungarian People's Republic, the German Democratic Republic, the Polish People's Republic, the Rumanian People's Republic, the Union of Soviet Union Socialist Republics and the Czechoslovak Republic'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000525 Published online by Cambridge University Press

these kinds of relationships in their public rhetoric.[3] Commentators often assess, challenge and dissect international friendships.[4] Despite the importance of 'friend' and 'friendship' in the practical political vocabulary of state actors and observers, these concepts have received little attention from scholars of international relations.[5] This neglect makes sense if attending to political language in general or attending to these particular elements of language provide us with little insight into interstate politics. However, if reasoning makes a difference to international political action, questions regarding what can or should count as a reason for state action are worth our attention. This article argues that the language of friendship can provide states with a set of other-regarding reasons for action. These reasons stretch state concern beyond their own borders, but not so far as to include all states or all of humanity. In what follows, I consider the meaning, source, standing and potential significance of those reasons.

In the first section, I render an account of what friendship between states means. Unlike ordinary, interpersonal friendships, which are partly defined by a set of emotional commitments, these are relationships enacted by office holders representing institutions and practices that are ontologically incapable of having feelings. Because of their cold-blooded character, international friendships are based either on military/economic advantage or

[3] As in the case of treaties, the language of friendship plays a ubiquitous role in the rhetoric of international politics. Between 4 June 2007 and 4 July 2007, for example, a survey of European news sources shows that numerous nations officially noted or mentioned their friendship for one another: United States and the Czech Republic (Regulatory Intelligence Data, 5 June 2007), Albania and the United States (BBC Monitoring Europe, 6 June 2007), France towards the United States and Russia (Agence France Presse, English, 6 June 2007), China and India (Chinadaily.com.cn, 8 June 2007), China and Nigeria (BBC Monitoring International Reports, 8 June 2007), Iraq and Turkey (Associated Press, 9 June 2007), Sweden and China (Chinadaily.com.cn, 9 June 2007), United States, Estonia and Lithuania (Federal News Service, 14 June 2007), Russia and Macedonia (TASS, 24 June 2007), Russia and the Ukraine (SKRIN Market & Corporate News, 25 June 2007), Brunei and the United Kingdom (Borneo Bulletin, 28 June 2007), the United States and Serbia (BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 28 June 2007), Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom (BBC Monitoring International Reports, 29 June 2007), Kazakhstan and Spain (BBC Monitoring International Reports, 30 June 2007), Oman and the United Kingdom (InfoProd, 1 July 2007), Vietnam and Luxembourg (Thai Press Reports, 3 July 2007), Vietnam and the United Kingdom (Thai Press Reports, 3 July 2007), and China and North Korea (TASS, 3 July 2007).

[4] For example, since Winston Churchill's 'Sinews of Peace' address of 5 March 1946 at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, politicians, analysts and journalists have considered the plausibility, nature and implications of the 'special relationship' between 'the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States'. Commentators have also focused a great deal of attention on the nature of the friendship between Israel and the United States. Since the Johnson Administration, critics and defenders have sought to make sense of the origins and nature of this 'special' relationship. An example of a favourable account of the relationship can be found in Mitchell G. Bard and Daniel Pipe's 1997 article, 'How Special is the U.S.–Israel Relation?' (⟨http://www.danielpipes.org/article/282⟩). An example of a sceptical view of the relationship is John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's 2006 article 'The Israel Lobby' (⟨http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n06/mear01_.html⟩). More generally, questions of international friendship can enter the public domain when democracies seek to strengthen their ties to autocratic regimes. Consider, for example, US congressional debates during the Clinton Administration over granting Most Favoured Nation status to the People's Republic of China. Much of that debate centred on whether friendlier relations made sense given the human rights record of the regime. As Senator Paul Simon said in opposition to granting Most Favoured Nation status to China, 'Here we are cozying up to a dictatorship, and we have a free multiparty system in Taiwan to which we are giving the cold shoulder. I think that does not make sense' (*Congressional Record – Senate*, 19 May 1994, Legislative day of 16 May 1994, 103rd Congress 2nd Session, 140 Cong Rec S 6014 Reference: Vol. 140 No. 63).

[5] Unlike the relationship between friendship and politics at the domestic level, which has been a source of reflection since Aristotle.

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on the character of the regime. In the former case, the friendship reflects the narrowly self-interested, but watery, relationships of alliance and partnership. The terms 'friend' and 'friendship' do not themselves appear to do much work. In contrast, friendships based on regime character raise the possibility that these terms carry independent and substantial weight. Such friendships also generate a series of questions regarding the kinds of reasons that could draw particular types of states together and whether those reasons could motivate actions that push beyond the concerns of narrow self-interest.

To begin to answer these questions, the second section of the article turns to an Aristotelian account of interpersonal friendship developed by Jennifer E. Whiting. In this section, I briefly set out four of the central features of Whiting's position that will eventually be applied to the relationship between states: that the reasons for self-concern and the reasons for concern for one's friends are the same and are based on qualities of character; that, despite the first claim, reasons still exist for according special concern for one's own interests; that all people possessing valued characters compose a pool of impersonal friends; and, finally, that this view of friendship leaves more or less open how we should act towards those outside the circle of friends.

In order to apply Whiting's position to the relationship between states, however, a case must be made for how states can have reasons to be self-interested in a way that is parallel to how individuals can have reasons to be self-interested. In the third section, I argue that in the light of certain assumptions states have reasons to be self-interested only if they are 'minimally just'. The idea of minimally just institutions and basic policies is meant to capture Whiting's notion of character. This view of the state presumes that not all states have good reasons to defend and promote their institutions and policies. More importantly, it suggests that for those states that do have good reasons to be self-interested, those reasons can stretch state concern beyond their own borders.

The remaining sections of the article consider how the four ramifications of Whiting's argument can be applied to the relationship between states. The central idea here is that just as in her account of individual friendships, interstate friendships can be supported by the same reasons that justify a state's self-regard. States have a compelling reason to maintain and advance their own fundamental interests and institutions if those interests and institutions are worthy of respect. Similarly, they have a compelling reason to maintain and advance the fundamental institutions and interests of other states if those states are minimally just. These other-regarding reasons stand independently of reasons for alliances based on security or economic utility. Secondly, this notion of international friendship is compatible with a minimally just state according a degree of priority to its own interests. Thirdly, I argue that while Whiting's idea of a pool of impersonal friends is not directly applicable to states, her argument does raise the possibility that it is reasonable to distinguish between levels or types of friendship. States that appear to be minimally just have good reason to enter into an *entente cordiale*. Such regimes should be willing to consult one another and seek to act in ways that do not undermine the just character of one another's basic institutions. At a deeper level, minimally just states, whose character is more or less stable, have reason not only to consult and be concerned about one another's actions, but also to enter into pacts of mutual security. At the deepest level, and in the light of historical ties, cultural affinities, geographical proximity or past sacrifice, some international friends enter into special relationships in which they have reason to protect one another, not only from external but also from internal threats to the justness of their basic institutional arrangements.

One way to understand this third point regarding the relationship between states within the circle of friends is in terms of the relative versus absolute gains debate. The reasons

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associated with international friendship suggest that the stronger the friendship, the less cause states have to be concerned with the relative gains of their friends. In other words, the vision of international co-operation implied by the idea of friendship stands in sharp contrast to that vision suggested by realists for whom the only reasons that can (and for some realists should) count in a state's foreign policy is whether the resulting actions will further secure or advance its self-interest narrowly understood. Hence, for realists, friendships between states must always be friendships of utility and relative gains must always be a central (although not the sole) concern. In contrast, I argue that international friendships can be supported by reasons that are not different in kind from the reasons supporting narrow self-interest. What constitutes the practical forms of reason available to state actors of minimally just states is far greater than what is suggested by the traditional idea of reason of state.

The final sections of the article focus on the fourth ramification of Whiting's argument and consider how the idea of international friendship bears upon relationships between those within and those outside a circle of friends. Here, I argue that the idea of international friendship supports elements of both pluralism and solidarism. On the one hand, the notion of friendship is largely consistent with norms of international law protecting the autonomy of states. From the pluralist perspective, sustaining order in a diverse international system lacking solidarity requires emphasizing the importance of international rules and norms in reason-guided action. On the other hand, these norms may be tested by the solidarity of interstate friendships that could justify the intervention into the affairs of a close ally facing a significant internal threat. Pluralism underestimates the scope of reasons available for international co-operation even as it may correctly point to the risks to international legal norms that those expanded reasons for co-operation (even amongst friends) may create.

The solidarism implied by international friendship is a partial one. It does not necessarily extend to the whole of international society and hence may be viewed with suspicion by those who hope to bring together the international community of states into a greater solidarity in pursuit of order and justice.[6] The discourse of friendship has more to do with the treatment of those who are friends than with those outside that circle. Unlike the normative thrust of solidarism (or cosmopolitanism), the reasoning associated with international friendship has less to say about bolstering justifications for interventions into unjust regimes. In contrast to realism, pluralism, solidarism and cosmopolitanism, friendship itself provides a set of reasons that can have standing in decision making. These reasons do not necessarily trump reasons of narrow self-interest, human rights, international solidarity or international law, but they are reasons that should carry weight in our deliberations.

RENDERING AN ACCOUNT OF INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP

To theorize international friendship, I will begin by rendering an account of the term. First, in order to make the project manageable, the phrase 'international friendship' solely refers to the relationship between states. States will be understood as sovereign entities

[6] Bull wrote that 'The disparagement of alliances, the international counterpart of Rousseau's disparagement of factions as coming between the individual and the general will, is a feature of the solidarist ideology.' See Hedley Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society' in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, eds, *Diplomatic Investigations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 51–73, at p. 63. In contrast, Linklater and Suganami's notion of 'pockets of solidarism' is closer to the position offered here, but solidarism and international friendship still differ over the possibilities for humanitarian or reform intervention. See Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami, *The English School of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 66.

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governing mutual recognized territories and constituted by institutions and practices. The relationships between states are maintained or lost by people who occupy offices and positions. Although these office holders are flesh and blood individuals who have personal relationships with one another, those personal connections exist alongside their public identities as office holders. In acting on behalf of the state, their corporate roles structure and define what counts as a reason for action.[7] States for which the public realm has become entirely personal are no longer rule-governed institutions but a *res privata*, a private thing with private reasons for action.

In addition, unlike other terms that are part of the (current) vocabulary of international politics ('genocide', 'human rights', 'second-strike'), 'friendship' is a term that has a robust life in ordinary interpersonal discourse. Because state actors are never merely office holders, the use of the word 'friendship' in international politics often includes its interpersonal elements as well. Sometimes, state leaders, diplomats or other international actors declare one another 'friends' in the sense of genuinely liking and trusting one another. Moreover, sometimes those personal relationships play a significant role in the formulation and execution of international decisions and policies. We should, however, be careful to note that whatever the character of friendship that existed between the British former Prime Minister Tony Blair and the American President George W. Bush, our political vocabulary also includes a notion of friendship between the United Kingdom and the United States. Moreover, the latter relationships are not reducible to the former, although they can certainly suffer or flourish in the light of interpersonal relationships. Consequently, clarifying the place of personal relationships can be an important, if understudied, element of international politics, but this article focuses on the latter (perhaps more puzzling) relationship between political associations or states.

It is also important to note that when friendship becomes a part of the practical vocabulary of international politics it sheds its affective connotations: groups, such as states, are ontologically incapable of having feelings.[8] In contrast, one of the central elements of interpersonal friendship is a set of feelings. One may be cool about many things that matter, but to be indifferent to or lack any feelings whatsoever towards one's friends is to misunderstand the relationship. Interpersonal friendships are relationships created and sustained by mutual feelings of attraction, trust and openness.[9]

[7] See Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 22–3.

[8] This assertion is not meant to deny that political associations can have feelings in a distributive sense, i.e., an angry mob is composed of angry individuals; a state acting with good will is a state whose diplomats are willing to negotiate in good faith. It does, however, deny that groups such as political associations could have feelings in a collective or non-distributive sense. To take seriously the idea of a state actually hating, loving, caring or feeling indifferent is to commit a kind of category mistake. For an alternative view, one can consider the work of such thinkers as Trudy Govier, *Forgiveness and Revenge* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 91, and Margaret Gilbert, *Sociality and Responsibility: New Essays in Plural Subject Theory* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), as well as *On Social Facts* (London: Routledge, 1989) and *Living Together: Rationality, Sociality, and Obligation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996).

[9] While interpersonal friendships would become unsustainable if the feelings of affection and trust were bracketed or found missing, those feelings need not accompany all uses of 'friend' at the interpersonal level. Ordinary language allows us to distinguish between 'acting friendly' and 'being friends' and between 'befriending' someone (that is, providing assistance and support) and 'being a friend'. Similarly, it is possible to be a 'friend to' someone (say providing comfort and attention) without necessarily having the feelings of friendship. Using phrases such as 'acting friendly', 'befriending someone', 'being a friend to' do not require either mutuality or the feelings of friendship. Instead, these terms

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When the term 'friendship' is used to describe or recommend a relationship between states or political communities, however, it becomes entirely separable from sentiment.[10] If the basis of international friendship is not sentiment, then what is it? There are two possibilities. The first is utility as expressed in self-interest or mutual advantage, and the second is the character of the state. To the extent that international friendships are a matter of utility, and there is no question that many, if not most, are utility based,[11] then the idea of international friendship amounts to nothing more than what would be found in an alliance of security or economic partnership. In these cases, the work done by the words 'friend' and 'friendship' is no different than these other terms. While attending to the origin, character and demise of these kinds of relationships tells us a great deal about international friendships of utility, 'friend' and 'friendship' become less interesting than how the interests of states are framed, constructed and advanced. Consequently, when international friendships are based on self-interest narrowly understood, then the ideas of 'friend' and 'friendship' themselves matter little in such analyses and explanations. For purposes of clarification, friendships of utility are friendships in a subsidiary, but not unimportant, way.

If international friendships based on self-interest do not raise particularly interesting uses of the word friendship, then one may conclude that there really is not much of interest in the idea of international friendship. But it is also worth considering whether similarities of character can somehow serve as the basis for international friendship. In exploring this possibility, it is important to note that one of the core features of friendship is the notion of choice. As far back as the Greeks, the idea of friendship has been contrasted to other sorts of relationships – primarily tribal or familial relationships – that one did not choose. If choice is to remain a central part of international friendship (and there is no reason to think that this is implausible, unless one believes that state actions are wholly determined by forces having nothing to do with reasons for action), then the appeal to the similarities of character would have to show how those similarities provided reasons for choosing a friendship. For example, within the literature on international alliances, a dispute exists over whether birds of a feather really do flock together. In other

(F'note continued)
are purely or largely behavioural in that they can be successfully deployed with a variety or absence of feelings. Indeed, it is even possible to grudgingly befriend someone that you dislike (although, this may be a rare occurrence). In ordinary usage, this constellation of terms surrounding 'friend' presents a complexity in the connection between the sentiment and the relationship (see Elizabeth Telfer, 'Friendship', in Michael Pakaluk, ed., *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1991), pp. 250–67, at p. 250).

[10] If international friendship is not based on sentiments of affection but rather on a set of reasons that are the same as the reasons supporting national self-interest, then the sharp distinction between 'hard', geo-strategic considerations of national interest and the 'soft', symbolic ties of 'special relationships' becomes untenable. For example, Abraham Ben-Zvi's distinction between a 'special relationship paradigm' largely based on feelings of goodwill and a 'national interest paradigm' based on strategic considerations in considering America's relationship to Israel, establishes a categorial distinction that is dissolved by the view of international friendship presented here. Neither paradigm need be based on sentiment (see Abraham Ben-Zvi, *The United States and Israel: The Limits of the Special Relationship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 15–26). This dissolution of the distinction does not deny that feelings or sentiments are unimportant to international politics. It does deny that minimally just regimes can make a clean, clear distinction between the reason supporting national self-interest and the reasons supporting other minimally just regimes.

[11] 'For people include among friends … those who are friends for utility, as cities are – since alliances between cities seem to aim at expediency' (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1985), p. 215, line 1157a25).

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words, do states with shared ideologies, cultures or significant historical experiences tend to ally with one another more frequently than dissimilar regimes?[12] Without denying the significance of this kind of question or the answers that it has generated, ideology, culture and history cannot serve as the basis for a friendship unless an argument can be made as to why those features or experiences could serve as a reason for a state to associate. This kind of argumentation, of course, is not inconceivable. Ideologies, such as Marxist Leninism, have called for a kind of international solidarity. To get to this point, however, requires assessing whether those ideological reasons are good reasons for friendship between states. This, then, is a final point to emphasize in rendering an account of the meaning of international friendship: namely, we must be able to provide an account of why the association is a chosen one. The rest of the article defends one such account of international friendship that is based on the minimally just character of states.

INTERPERSONAL FRIENDSHIP AND SELF-CONCERN

To set up the argument that follows, I employ Whiting's Aristotelian explanation of individual self-concern and friendship.[13] Whiting argues that individual self-concern is reasonable when it is connected to attributes of one's character that are valuable. What is important to us, she suggests are 'all those characteristics for which a person might be praised and admired – not only the moral virtues, but also things like artistic and athletic

[12] A range of answers has emerged to this question. Very briefly, sceptics argue: 'Ideological considerations may be articulated as the principle determinant of a specific alliance, but the evidence suggests that ideology is at best inadequate in explicating why or how an alliance came into existence' (see Edwin Fedder, 'The Concept of Alliance', *International Studies Quarterly*, 1 (1968), 65–86, p. 86). A somewhat more moderate position is taken by Stephen Walt, who found that in his case study, there is a modest association between ideology and alignment and that, depending on its nature, common ideology could also divide (see Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 181). A stronger relationship is advanced by Suzanne Werner and Douglas W. Lemke, who argued that 'similarities in the political and economic institutions of states are an important determinant of alignment behavior and that such similarities were important regardless of the aligning state's regime type' (see Suzanne Werner and Douglas W. Lemke, 'Opposites Do Not Attract: The Impact of Domestic Institutions, Power, and Prior Commitments on Alignment Choices', *International Studies Quarterly*, 41 (1997), 529–47, p. 530, and J. M. Owen, 'The Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions', *International Organization*, 56 (2002), 375–409, p. 399). A variation on this theme is that ideology only matters in alliance formation after 1945. See also Brain Lai and Dan Reiter, 'Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816–1992', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44 (2000), 203–27, p. 204; Herbert Dinerstein, 'The Transformation of Alliance Systems', *American Political Science Review*, 59 (1965), 589–601, p. 592; Ole R. Holsti, P. Terrence Hopman and John D. Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances* (New York: Wiley, 1973), p. 61; and Randolph M. Siverson and Juliann Emmons, 'Birds of a Feather: Democratic Political Systems and Alliance Choices in the Twentieth Century', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 35 (1991) 285–306.

[13] See, Jennifer E. Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', *The Monist*, 74 (1991), 3–29. Whiting notes, 'I am not, however, primarily concerned to defend Aristotle's view as such, and will not attempt to defend my reading of him as required by or even consistent with everything he says. I am using him – or rather a certain reading of him – shamelessly in the service of my own end, which is to argue that there can be reasons to promote the ends of others the same in *kind* with reasons to promote one's own ends' (p. 4). Similarly, I am less interested in defending Whiting's position and wish to use her account of interpersonal friendship to explore the possibility of interstate friendships. Whether Whiting herself would sanction using her theory in this manner is not clear. For an argument against Whiting's account, see Diane Jeske, 'Friendship, Virtue, and Impartiality', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57 (1997), 51–72, p. 62. See also the discussion in Bennet Helm, 'Friendship', in Edward N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2005 Edition), 〈http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2005/entries/friendship/〉.

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ability, sensitivity to others, patience, industry and so on'.[14] Those kinds of attributes compose one's character and to the extent that our ends and purposes advance and improve our characters they are worthy of promotion. Self-concern ultimately turns on questions of character. Presumably, if we fail to embody the characteristics that we see as important we will have less reason to be concerned with our own projects and interests. This position yields four ramifications, each of which I will apply to the notion of international friendship in later sections.

First, this argument not only gives us reasons to be concerned for ourselves, but it also gives us reasons to be concerned for others (although not necessarily the only reasons for concern for others). To the extent that others embody the forms of excellence that we value, we have reason to be concerned for their interests and projects. The attributes referred to by these reasons are worthy of being promoted, whoever happens to possess them – others or oneself. What is especially striking about her view is that it calls into question rational egoism. While the rational egoist is liable to argue that concern for others is justified only to the extent that it is like concern for oneself, Whiting argues that concern for oneself 'is justified because it is like concern for another'.[15] As noted above, what should matter in our concern for others is whether they embody the forms of excellence that we value. Similarly, what should matter in our concern for ourselves is whether we embody those same characteristics. The reasoning is the same. The fact that *these* interests just happen to be *my* interests does not carry any independent weight. Her position 'involves rejecting the importance traditionally attached to the distinction between self and other and focus[es] on the character of *whomever* – oneself or another – is the intended object of concern'.[16]

A second ramification is that even though her position results in the rejection of rational egoism, it does not preclude the possibility that one may have special reasons to secure and advance the interests of oneself and one's closest friends. Whiting argues that special concern for oneself is pragmatically necessary in order for people to be agents and epistemologically warranted by the fact we may know ourselves fairly well.[17] What counts in establishing this special concern is not that we see ourselves as unique, but that we are 'persons of a certain sort', who happen to know ourselves better than we know many others.[18] One admires, understands and fully appreciates those (including oneself) who have admirable characters that one knows the best. Because of such special knowledge one may have good reason, *ceteris paribus*, to prioritize securing the ends of those whom one admires over those one does not admire, one's known friends over the members of the pool of impersonal friends (see below), and oneself and one's closest friends over more distant friends.

A third consequence of this argument is that all people of good character compose a pool of what Whiting calls 'impersonal friends'. The pool of impersonal friends, of course, may be larger than anyone's ability to befriend all of them. Consequently, Whiting writes:

At this point, contingent and non-justifying factors may enter into determining (and hence explaining) which of the many deserving candidates I in fact befriend. The fact that x has blue

[14] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 4.
[15] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 5.
[16] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 6.
[17] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 21.
[18] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 22.

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eyes (which I happen to like) may help to explain (without providing any *additional justification* for) the fact that I befriend x rather than the apparently equally deserving y.[19]

In some sense, the friends who are most worth having are the ones who embody the characters that we most admire. These character friendships based on forms of excellence give us a reason for seeing the friend like (as opposed to 'as') another self. On Whiting's account, such friendships grow out of a sense of good will and affection to those who possess such virtues and are ultimately instantiated through a set of contingent events or features that actually bring such people together.

A final ramification of Whiting's position is that it leaves somewhat open how we should respond to those who lack the kinds of characters that we value – those who lie outside the pool of impersonal friends. Given the Aristotelian tenor of the argument one could easily imagine this position being compatible with seeing the central purpose of law and social policy to be the cultivation of virtue and character. There is no doubt that an educative conception of the state may license different forms of restrictions and interventions to engender the virtues. The fact that it is reasonable to be concerned with maintaining and promoting particular kinds of characters implies that it is not reasonable to advance others. Nevertheless, Whiting's formulation of the argument does not by itself give licence to hinder or actively intervene in the projects of others in order to 'make them' be more virtuous. As I understand her argument, friends based on character are friends precisely because they already share a sense of what is good or excellent. The fact that something is a virtue for me is not, by itself, enough to try to promote it for others. It is when I come across others who already recognize the same excellences that I recognize, that Whiting's argument comes into play.[20] Moreover, relationships of friendship do not tell us whether we should be civil to those outside the circle of friends, although there is nothing inherent in a friendship that requires incivility to others. They do not tell us very much about our duties of charity or justice to those outside the circle of friends, although it is not unreasonable to suppose that all other things being equal friendships may weigh in decisions to fulfil those duties. Friendship is an important part of our ethical life, but it is not the whole. As we shall see below, when this part of the argument is applied to state interaction, it raises the question of respect for state autonomy and military reform intervention.

STATE SELF-REGARD

Before turning to how the four ramifications of Whiting's argument could be applied to the relationship between states, it is first necessary to clarify how her individualistic

[19] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 7. Later, Whiting writes, 'I may regard *all* of my impersonal friends (even those whom I will never encounter) as equally worthy of my concern, while coming as a matter of fact to display differential and apparently personal concern for only *some* (even among all those I have in fact encountered). Which some of these are will be largely a function of historical and psychological accident' (p. 23).

[20] Suppose Carol highly values musical abilities and, somehow, detects such capacities in Ted even though he never really had an opportunity to develop them and, moreover, is uninterested in developing them. My interpretation of Whiting's argument is that Carol has no reason to promote those latent capacities in Ted as long as they remain latent and he is uninterested in developing them. But suppose Bob, who is a close friend of Carol and a great musician (and understands himself as such), now feels that music is no longer of interest. He cannot stand playing it. He cannot tolerate listening to it. As a friend, Carol may have standing to question Bob about his decision and feelings and perhaps wonder whether he should just take a breather, but further intervention (whatever that may entail) would not be justified. Depending on the centrality of music to their friendship, Bob's loss of interest may lead to a diminution of the friendship itself, i.e., they no longer talk as frequently, attend weekly concerts together, discuss the latest releases, and so on.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000525 Published online by Cambridge University Press

argument could apply to states. This problem raises a basic question of whether states, as such, can have or be bearers of coherent, overriding interests. One way around this difficulty is simply to presume that, in this regard, states are like individuals and hence can be self-interested actors. Within the social sciences, for example, this presumption is usually justified by its intuitive appeal or by its utility in explaining state behaviour. To those who would call into question the realism of this presumption, however, social scientists usually reply that the presumption is only as good as its ability to account for state behaviour better than competing models. In other words, a defence of the self-interested actor model is its role as a heuristic and not whether it accurately describes a state's intentions or identity.[21]

From the perspective of international ethics, however, the general problem with the social scientific presumption of state self-interest is that it closes off a fundamental question: is it reasonable or even rational for states to seek to preserve themselves? Raising this question shifts our attention away from explaining or describing state behaviour and directs it towards questions of justification, reason-giving and the quality of the choices that state actors make. Self-interest need not be taken as a fact of nature and if it is not so taken, then we can ask whether a compelling account can be given in support of self-interested action.[22] Absent such an account, the actor (in this case, a state) may lack a sufficient reason to advance its own interest. Alternatively, the presence of such an account may extend the rational nature of concern beyond the borders of one's own state.

Now we are back to our initial question: how are we to make sense of the state as having interests in a manner that is analogous to individual interests? Once again, an easy answer may be at hand if we can defend an organic conception of the state or argue that the state is itself an independent source of value. In either case, state self-concern becomes analogous to individual self-concern. In the light of the troubling ontological claims of the former and the anti-individualistic ramifications of the latter, I will bracket these positions and presume that at most the state is an indispensable condition of value.[23] This approach assumes that the sources of value for individuals and groups are to be found either in the individual or civil society and that these values cannot be protected and advanced without the basic coercive, administrative and welfare institutions that have come to define the state. While there may be some individuals or groups in the world that either seek to self-insure what they value (perhaps certain criminal or terrorist organizations, non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations and the super rich) or have been pushed outside the state (refugees,

[21] The success in side-stepping these criticisms rests, of course, on settling the traditional problems associated with the nature of explanation and the realism of one's assumptions. There is no need to take up these issues here.

[22] One could, as John Rawls does, make a distinction between the *reasonable* and the *rational*. States could be understood as rational actors to the extent that they pursued power and influence in the international system. Alternatively, states could be understood as reasonable to the extent that they were willing to advance rules of co-operation and were willing to abide by those rules if others did the same. Consequently, the rational pursuit of self-interest may prove to be unreasonable. In contrast, the position offered here takes up the possibility that the 'rational' pursuit of power and influence by a state must itself be based on a compelling set of reasons in order to be rational. Absent those reasons, the application of the notion of rationality would imply a kind of reification of institutions (see John Rawls, *Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 28–9.

[23] The clearest formulation of this position is set out in Robert E. Osgood and Robert W. Tucker, *Force, Order and Justice* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), pp. 282–3. Also, see Peter Digeser and Ross Miller, 'Realism, Morality and Liberal Democracy', *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 29 (1995), pp. 331–49.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000525 Published online by Cambridge University Press

enemy non-combatants), few entities, for good or for ill, are fully beyond the purview of some state. Moreover, the role of the state as an indispensable condition of value is historically conditioned. There was a time when the state did not play such a role and there may be a time in the future when it will not do so again. The argument presented here, then, rests upon a number of assumptions that need not, and perhaps will not, hold into the distant future.

The first of these assumptions is that as an indispensable condition of value, the value of the state rests upon its capacity to protect more or less successfully what people and groups living under its authority hold dear. A second assumption is that in the modern state, the interests and rights of individuals and groups will inevitably come into conflict with one another. A central value that all members of a state have, then, is that the basic institutions of the state (such as its constitutional arrangements, economy, educational system) seek to balance those competing claims in a fair manner. States and the institutions that compose them are important to us when they establish just processes or just outcomes to the collisions that occur in modern life. When these conditions are met, it is reasonable for individuals and groups to promote and maintain those institutions because they are just or minimally so. If it is reasonable for individuals to promote and protect just institutions, then it is also reasonable for states to be self-concerned assuming that they are fairly balancing competing claims and protecting and securing the values of the individuals within the state. The reasonableness of self-interest at the level of the state rests upon the character of the state itself.

A third assumption is that it is reasonable for members of a state to promote their institutions despite the fact that they are not fully just and may only imperfectly protect their interests and values. For the most part, this discussion will focus on 'minimally and not fully just' states. This is a plausible way to proceed, particularly given a fourth assumption that even the best governments remain works in progress; that is, it is not clear that we fully understand the best way to reflect and accommodate all reasonable values and interests. We do not fully understand what justice necessarily requires in all circumstances or what the best institutional system for fulfilling the demands of justice would look like. Pure procedural justice is rare and perfect procedural justice is rarer still. The state as an indispensable condition of value can be understood as a great experiment that is orientated towards justice. This understanding does not mean that we know nothing of what justice requires or the kinds of institutions and policies that are compatible with that pursuit. For example, the rule of law, respect for human rights, political accountability and representation appear to be central to a minimal conception of justice. For the concerns of this article, we can bracket the precise nature of those institutional arrangements and presume that there exist certain broad parameters that permit us to judge when states are failing to live up to the demands of justice. We have certain settled judgments regarding what is unjust, but no government has a lock on what the best institutional structures entail or what a complete vision of justice would mean.[24]

NOT YOUR USUAL RATIONAL ACTOR MODEL

The argument that states can have interests in maintaining and promoting their fundamental institutions and that those interests depend on the quality of those institutions

[24] State self-concern is reasonable if the state is minimally just vis-à-vis its own citizens. As a starting point, we can begin with the perspective of citizens and thereby derive the perspective of the state. Once the perspective of the state has been established the claim is that the reasonableness of state self-concern has implications for the reasonableness of concern for other states.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000525 Published online by Cambridge University Press

opens the possibility that what is important is the character of institutions, whoever happens to possess them. As Whiting frames it, the perspective here is *ethocentric* and not *ethnocentric*. A state's concern for itself is justified because it is like concern for another regime. Our state should see other regimes as admirable, worthy of our concern and, perhaps, emulation, because they are good regimes. What should matter (although not the only thing that should matter) to our own regime in protecting and promoting other regimes is whether the basic institutions of foreign states embody the characteristics that we hold in high regard. Similarly, what should matter to our own government is whether it embodies those same or similar attributes. The relevant question is whether the object of concern is minimally just. The fact that the institutions are the state's own, by itself, carries no independent weight. The traditional distinction between one state and another, then, becomes less important than the character that the regime possesses. As we saw above, this was the first ramification of Whiting's position as it applied to individuals.

A second ramification of her position is that even though it calls into question rational egoism, it is still possible to accord special priority to one's own interests. As we saw, Whiting argues that special priority can be justified at the individual level because it is pragmatically necessary in order for people to be agents and because it is epistemologically warranted. Holding off the applicability of the agency claim to states, there are at least two epistemological reasons to prioritize one's own state institutions. First, states need to be sensitive to how the contingencies of history, culture, religion and language can affect the ability of institutions to balance off rights or accommodate interests and values. These contingencies help explain why differences may exist in attempting to discern what constitutes a minimally just society. Secondly, if all governments are works in progress and no state has in hand the definitive understanding of what just institutions may entail, then special concern is justified by the local, experimental nature of all institutional structures. In other words, states just happen to be in a better position to know the nature of their circumstances and the character of their on-going experiments in justice. Self-interest hinges upon self-worth, and special concern for one's self hinges upon understanding how what is worthy applies to a particular context.

The epistemological argument creates a presumption in favour of self-concern, but not an absolute right on the part of states to autonomy and independence. It simply claims that states happen to be more familiar with their own circumstances than outsiders and, consequently, should be permitted to accord some priority to maintaining and promoting their own institutions. In response, it could be argued, that this is not a particularly strong defence of the priority thesis or autonomy and that in the light of the conception of the state as an indispensable condition of value, stronger arguments can be brought to bear on the problem. I wish to consider and respond to two such arguments along these lines. The first is that states have a special responsibility to protect and promote their own institutions simply because the justification of the state is that it serves as an indispensable condition of value for *its* citizens and not to foreigners. In effect, by protecting and promoting itself, the state is able to protect, promote and balance the interests of its own members. The second argument is that one of the core interests that citizens could have is to place the vital interests of their own state ahead of other regimes and peoples. From this perspective, protecting the interests of its own citizens will of necessity grant priority to the state's own interests.

The first argument is not without merit. In its clearest formulation it asserts that the 'first duty of a government is to protect its own people. After that it can try to help

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whomever else it can.'[25] What a state may do in the process of protecting its own people may be moderated by claims of justice, but priority should unquestionably be granted to one's own. Seen in this light, because its first duty is to protect its own people, the state has a pretty strong reason to protect itself. In contrast, the view of the state offered here is somewhat different. As an indispensable condition of value, the state's first duty is not to protect its own people *tout court*, but to provide a minimally just set of institutions and policies that protect the values and fairly resolve the disputes of the people and groups living under its domain. If protecting one's own people is not synonymous with protecting institutions that are worthy of respect (as when the state is unjust), then the reasons for the state to protect itself fall away.[26] To formulate the position a bit more strongly, it is the duty of the state to establish and protect minimally just institutions not because they happen to protect this or that group of people, but because they are minimally just. The weight of the argument hinges less on the specific interests of a group of people living in a territory, and more on the character of the regime. The self-concern of the state is justified by the character of the state institutions. As we have seen, this does not preclude self-concern, but it does point to the claim that protection of one's own need not be the starting point.

To sharpen the point, suppose that a state is presented with a choice of either further advancing the interests of its own people or protecting and promoting the just institutions of another state. Even under the relatively thin defence of the priority thesis offered here, states have reason to give priority to the interests of their own people. Nevertheless, because of the general character of reasons surrounding justice they also have reason to support foreign minimally just institutions. A state's responsibility to its own citizens does not disappear in the light of its justifiable concern for other minimally just regimes and vice versa. It should both protect the interests of its own citizens and be concerned with the institutional interests of other minimally just regimes. If those concerns are in conflict, it is not the case that one should necessarily trump the other. At times advancing the vital interests of another minimally just state may outweigh the protection of domestic interests. The possibility that a state may place the lives of its own citizens at risk in order to defend another minimally just state would be the extreme example of this balancing act.

The second argument bolstering the claim of state self-interest is that citizens can themselves have a fundamental interest in placing their own state ahead of any other. The nationalist or patriotic variation of this argument is that a particular set of institutional arrangements and practices themselves have value solely because they belong to a given group. History, culture, religion and language can be reflected in a set of institutional structures that should be objects of self-concern in and of themselves and not simply for the formal reason that they serve as an indispensable condition of value. Consequently, it is reasonable for a group of people to hold a set of institutions as valuable merely because they value them or see them as their own. Any given nation-state does have an overriding interest in preserving its institutional structures against any other state – even another state that is eminently just.

[25] Jackson, 'The Political Theory of International Society', in Ken Booth and Steven Smith, eds, *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 110–28, at p. 122, cited in Linklater and Suganami, *The English School of International Relations*, p. 235.

[26] One could argue that an unjust state has a good reason to protect itself from an even more unjust state, say, for example a genocidal regime. But even in this case, the argument rests on a judgement of the comparative justness (or unjustness) of the regimes in question and not solely on protection.

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The reason why the nationalist argument has any leverage in shoring up a national priority thesis, however, is because it assumes that the state's function is to protect and promote the interests of individuals and groups living within its borders. An individual's nationalist preferences piggyback on the interests of a state that themselves piggyback on an original set of citizen preferences regarding the state's ability to preserve and promote the interests of its members. If these connections did not exist, then citizens could prefer to have 'their own' institutions even if those institutions failed to promote or fairly balance their own individual preferences to prefer their own institutions. But such a position would be self-defeating: a 'nationalist regime' that was unaccountable or non-representative would not see itself as bound or responsible to take into account the nationalist preferences of the citizenry. At some level, the nationalist argument rests on a regime that is reflective and protective of the interests of the people.[27]

So, the strongest version of the priority thesis associated with the nationalist argument is that the state and its institutions are not only 'theirs' (reflecting their culture, language and so on), but that they are minimally just. If this is a plausible nationalist argument, it is not clear how it differs from the defence of the priority thesis already offered – namely, that a state should give priority to itself because it is in the best position to understand the circumstances needed to advance minimally just institutions. The plausible version of the nationalist thesis suggests that states would still have to be minimally just in order to ensure and advance the interests that people have in their national way of life: in short, simply having a set of institutions that are 'theirs' is not sufficient to support a claim of priority. If those institutions are both 'theirs' and minimally just, then we have a set of reasons up and running that support self-concern. The claim being advanced here is that those reasons can now themselves be linked to other-regarding reasons.

THE POOL OF FRIENDS

Turning to the third ramification of Whiting's conception of friendship, we have seen above that it generates a pool of impersonal friends out of which we befriend some small subset for contingent reasons. There are various explanations why not all those who compose the pool of impersonal friends become actual friends at the individual level. According to Whiting, members of that pool are deserving of our friendship, but because the world is large and our acquaintances are few, we may not even be aware of who is in that pool. In addition, we can speculate that of those people with whom we have some acquaintance, we may not know them well enough to say whether they have characters we admire. Finally, we may know that someone is part of that pool of impersonal friends, but simply lack the time, energy or emotional commitment to befriend him or her. Even though individuals may recognize each other as having the kinds of characters that they value this does not necessarily mean that they will be friends. They become character friends 'with reciprocal experience, time, and intimacy'.[28] Prior to this point, impersonal friends have good will towards one another ('what Aristotle calls *eunoia*') insofar as they recognize and value the characteristics a particular individual, even a

[27] The fact that nationalist preferences can be cultivated through state policies does not evade the question of whether or why such policies should be enacted in the first place. Are they, for example, being used to further encourage the development of respectable, just institutions or are they in the service of discouraging such development?

[28] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 20.

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stranger, possesses.[29] All recognized members of the pool of impersonal friends are deserving of good will because they are all worthy and merit our respect. Perhaps what this means is that when we hear of such people we should admire them. When we come to learn of their goals and purposes, we should wish them well. When they cross our paths we should be well disposed and friendly towards them. What Whiting does not establish between members of the pool of impersonal friends is a positive obligation to befriend each other and make the other's project their own. Perhaps if there is a positive obligation involved, it is one of good will and civility. While the pool of impersonal friends is not composed of friends as such, they should certainly be friendly to one another.

Because we are talking about the relationship between states and not specific individuals, all international friendships are, in a sense, impersonal. States, I have asserted, do not have the kinds of affective capabilities that are ordinarily needed for friendship: states can make many kinds of commitments, but emotional ones are not an option. On the one hand, this means that friendship between states will be but a pale imitation of interpersonal friendships. On the other hand, it means that states do not have the same sort of emotional limitations that restrict the scope of interpersonal friendships. In addition, unlike individuals, there are far fewer states in the world and it is easier to obtain information about the character of institutions than about the character of specific individuals who may be complete strangers to us. Finally, states have far greater opportunities for contact and co-operation than individuals do in a large impersonal society. To the extent that contact and co-operation (or doing things together) are preconditions for friendship, then this condition is more easily satisfied in the case of states than of individuals in large societies. All of this means that Whiting's idea of an impersonal pool of friends is not directly translatable to the relations between states.

Nevertheless, her distinction between a pool of impersonal friends and actual friendships points to the possibility of distinguishing between different levels of interstate friendships. At a level that most closely resembles Whiting's pool of impersonal friends, one could argue that all states that *appear* to have admirable characters should at least be friendly towards one another. This pool of friends includes not only stable, on-going minimally just regimes, but also governments that possess admirable institutions but whose stability or durability is questionable. If states have reason to be concerned with preserving other states whose domestic arrangements are minimally well ordered, then the level of concern should be a function of the durability or stability of those domestic institutions. Just as at the individual level, the determination of character must meet the test of time: no one is courageous, just or temperate merely by adopting the intention to be so; the same may be said of a regime. The presumption here is that knowing the character of a regime and whether it is durable also requires passing a test of time. Of course, 'durability' is a matter of degree. In broad terms it refers to the regular and peaceful transference of power, respect for the rule of law, and the protection of basic rights and liberties. The question of durability is a significant one in so far as not all fledgling democracies emerging from authoritarian rule succeed. Institutions that at first appear to be fair and impartial may ultimately serve as the cover for emerging oligarchs.

Despite the tentativeness of some minimally just regimes, all apparently admirable states have good reason to work out their differences in a manner that does not put at risk

[29] Whiting, 'Impersonal Friends', p. 20.

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the institutional arrangements that they mutually value and are trying to maintain. Consequently, they should respect their particular projects in pursuing justice, be willing to learn from other states what arrangements will advance that pursuit and have reason to consult one another in times of crisis or war. At minimum, mutual respect for independence and justice means that these states have reason to avoid acting in ways that cripple or prevent the ability of their friends to protect the interests of their citizenry or balance competing claims in a fair manner. The monetary policies, trade imbalances, import restrictions, patent requirements, judicial procedures and forms of punishment of one state may have implications for another state's ability to enact policies of distributive justice, property protection, health care or criminal law. The familiar litany of the effects of globalization and interdependency create responsibilities to be attentive to the significance of those effects upon the minimally just institutions of one's friends. For one state within this pool to establish policies that threaten to undermine the pursuit of justice by another state should be cause for concern and consultation. Apparent, minimally just regimes have good reason, simply because of what they are aspiring to achieve, to enter into an *entente cordiale*.

The broadest conception of international friends includes both tested and untested admirable regimes. A stronger, and one could say deeper, form of international friendship emerges if the character of the regime proves to be durable. Stable, minimally just regimes have reason to extend their commitment to preserve and protect the institutions and orientation towards justice that they mutually hold dear. Here, the norms of international friendship go beyond a willingness to work out differences in a peaceful manner, a presumption of being consulted on matters of mutual concern, a respect for independence of action, a readiness to learn from and not harm each other's institutional achievements and minimally just institutions (norms that define the *entente cordiale*) and include an honesty and frankness in communication, a willingness to share information, a sense of mutual trust and reciprocity without the expectation of a *quid pro quo*, and a willingness to commit resources in the name of mutual defence. The central expectations of international friendship are ones of mutual aid and collective security.[30] Once again, the central idea here is that the reasons for self-defence – namely that a state is worthy of being defended – argue for defending regimes that possess a similar character. All minimally just regimes have good reasons to defend themselves and therefore have good reasons to defend one another.

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERNAL THREATS

International friendships based on the mutual recognition of the worthiness of the parties' domestic institutions are sufficient to support claims of collective security. But regimes also have reason for defending themselves against domestic threats that could fundamentally alter their just character. A minimally just government facing a *coup d'état*, civil unrest, natural or man-made disaster may have overwhelming reasons to do what is necessary to preserve itself in the face of those risks. Do international friendships also

[30] These norms and expectations can compose a kind of practice of international friendship. As a practice, international friendships would be recognizable to both the participants and to other regimes. Subscribing to a particular friendship would require the exercise of judgement and statecraft and consequently could be done more or less skilfully. The norms of international friendship would not be algorithms that yielded necessary conclusions, rather they would be a bundle of expectations and rules that could be met and followed adroitly or clumsily.

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provide reasons for protecting other minimally just states from internal threats? This question, of course, simply goes away if one assumes that once a regime is minimally just it will always be so. Alternatively, it is easily answered if the state that is in trouble or is sliding into anarchy or tyranny asks for outside support to shore up its institutions. The more difficult problem arises if all states are in principle corruptible and may not necessarily ask for outside support. Under these conditions, can the norms associated with international friendship override claims of autonomy even when no outside assistance is being requested?

The argument against a permission to intervene in order to save a state from itself could start with the earlier argument that states happen to be in a better position to understand the nature of their own circumstances and the character of their on-going experiments in justice than outside regimes. The notion that minimally just states have a special relationship to their own interests implies that outsiders, even ones with the best of intentions, do not have a permission to intervene to save a regime from itself. To further support the case against intervention, one could note that international friendships exist only if the friends remain independent states. A permission to violate the autonomy of one's friend whenever a domestic threat appeared on the horizon would seriously undermine that independence. The recognition of the admirable qualities of another regime may yield reasons for defence against external, but not internal, enemies.

The response that international friendship is trumped by autonomy rests on the force of the special relationship that states have to their own institutions and interests. It is conceivable, however, that within the pool of states that participate in a practice of international friendship some states may be closer than others. Just as Whiting argues that contingent events and desires may bring certain people out of the pool of impersonal friends and into true friendships, it is possible that a set of contingencies can draw minimally just states together into a special relationship of friendship. For example, the historical sacrifice of blood and treasure for another minimally just state may intensify concern for and trust of that state. The sense of the investment in the relationship may strengthen a sense of loyalty and generate a different and deeper level of concern and connection that goes beyond the norms and expectations of collective security. Alternatively, familiarity due to geographical proximity or cultural similarity may increase the mutual understanding of two states' pursuit of just institutions and the obstacles that they face and seek to overcome. In the light of these kinds of contingencies, it is reasonable for minimally just states to show differential concern for some admirable states over others. Within the pool of international friendships closer and looser ties may exist.

What is the nature of these special relationships that can be established between minimally just states? As with all international friendships, these relationships would be characterized by the expectations and pitfalls mentioned above (i.e., frankness in communication, a willingness to engage in collective security and provide mutual aid, a presumption that the friends will be consulted on matters of mutual importance, an almost unreasonable willingness to support one's partner's projects and interests, a willingness to learn from each other, and a mutual trust and reciprocity without the expectation of a *quid pro quo*). It may also be characterized by a common legal, religious or cultural heritage and understanding of the institutions and policies that define the pursuit of justice. More importantly, special relationships are ones in which a foreign state is seen like another self. The significance of this relationship is twofold. In its more useful and benign formulations it suggests that another regime can serve as a kind of mirror for oneself. All minimally just

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states should be able to learn from one another, but nations in a special relationship can provide a more adequate account of how one is doing in one's attempt to secure minimally just institutions and policies.[31]

In addition, the character of a special relationship intensifies the strength of concern for the other regime. My government should pursue its vital interests because it has the kind of character that is worthy of respect. It has a special relationship to its own interests because it understands its institutions and orientation towards justice in a way that few other states may understand. To the extent that my state has a special relationship to your state, it also has reason to be concerned about the vital interests of your government, not because those interests advance the interests of my government narrowly understood, but because they are the interests of a regime that is minimally just and because we possess a close friendship. In this kind of relationship, the claims of attachment are strengthened and the claims of autonomy are correspondingly weakened. States within a special relationship, because they see the friend like another self, have reasons to be attentive to, address and, possibly, intervene to thwart internal threats to the other regime.[32] To preserve the friendship, however, any such intervention would have to be done with the aim of restoring the admirable qualities of the regime as well as its independence. This feature of special relationships also intensifies the moral risk associated with loyalty and increases the potential for disputes over how the parties respect and balance the demands of autonomy, justice and friendship. The moral risk here, of course, is that intervening into the internal affairs of a friend increases the chance of conflict, misunderstanding, and the destruction of the friendship. A special relationship therefore stands in opposition to legal and ethical positions that grant a near absolute status to the autonomy of states that are not engaged in aggression or massive violations of human rights.

INSIDE THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS: ABSOLUTE VERSUS RELATIVE GAINS

The previous two sections have been exploring how Whiting's concept of a pool of friends could be applied to an understanding of the relationship between states. I have suggested that Whiting's concept, which delineates levels or kinds of friendship, can be translated into three different forms of international friendship. Another way to understand the relationship between states within the pool is in terms of how to view the goods and advantages accrued by friends. At the level of individuals, the gain of a friend is, in many respects, like one's own gain. At the level of states, this question raises the debate surrounding the importance of absolute versus relative gains. The reasoning associated with international friendship suggests that whether and how the gains of other states matter can depend on the character of the regimes and the character of their relationships. The stronger the international friendship (i.e., the closer it comes to a special relationship), the less reason states have to be concerned for the relative gains of their friends. That a gain may not be evenly distributed between friends is less important than that the friendship ensures that some gain is had by the friends. In this way, international friendship is in

[31] This possibility was suggested to me by Albert Weale.

[32] At the individual level, I had suggested that when one friend disavows a form of excellence that has drawn the friends together, the level of intervention may extend no further than questioning a friend's decision. In the case of special relationships, the possibility of intervening into a regime that is slipping below the threshold of minimal justice is justified not only by the known wrongs that unjust regimes commit upon their own people, but by the shared sense of culture, history or tradition that may provide the friend some insight into the problem of how to restore minimally just institutions.

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accord with the view that absolute gains can matter more than relative gains depending on the context.[33]

In contrast, Joseph Grieco argues:

> Realism's identification of the relative gains problem for cooperation is based on its insight that states in anarchy fear their survival as independent actors. According to realists, states worry that today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy in war, and fear that achievements of joint gains that advantage a friend in the present might produce a more dangerous *potential* foe in the future. As a result states must give serious attention to the gains of partners.[34]

In contrast, the idea of international friendship implies that not all partners are the same because state leaders have reasons to treat them differently. International friendship provides reasons for states to co-operate that stretch state interest beyond a narrow conception of self-interest and survival. Minimally just states have less to fear from other minimally just states simply because they are minimally just. This is not because such states are inherently less belligerent vis-à-vis one another (although the democratic peace literature points in that direction), but because they can recognize the already existing positive reasons to defend and promote the basic institutions and interests of the circle of friends. To be clear, this mapping out of the notion of international friendship shows that from within the reasons supporting state self-interest, one can also find arguments for other-regarding state action. Whether states actually take advantage of those reasons is an empirical question that is not addressed by this discussion of international friendship. I am not seeking to explain current state behaviour, but to expand the possibilities for rational state action – possibilities that are already implicit in self-interested action. This focus does not mean that Grieco's claim is unimportant. As intentional actors, capable of being motivated by reasons, minimally just states need to be aware that all present partners are potential foes. This warning may be particularly compelling if minimally just states do not recognize reasons to support one another or if their minimally just character is unstable. This adjustment to the realist's reasons for action is merely another way of saying that relative gains matter less as the friendship becomes deeper.

OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS: PARTIAL SOLIDARISM

A fourth and final ramification of Whiting's character-based conception of friendship involves how we respond to those who are outside the pool of impersonal friends. As with an interpersonal friendship, an international friendship serves as a reason to prioritize the claims of one's friend over the claims of non-friends, all other things being equal. As we have seen, this does not mean that the claims of international friendships always trump all other claims (for all other things are rarely equal), but that the claims of such friendships are defensible and legitimate. For example, it may very well be the case that the reasons for providing humanitarian aid to a corrupt, but destitute, regime outweigh the reasons for using those funds to support one's friends. Nevertheless, if the claims of

[33] David L. Rousseau, 'Motivations for Choice: The Salience of Relative Gains in International Politics', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46 (2002), 394–426. See also Robert Powell, 'Review: Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate', *International Organization*, 48 (1994), 334–8.

[34] Joseph Grieco, 'Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism', *International Organization*, 42 (1988), 485–507, p. 487. See also Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 105.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000525 Published online by Cambridge University Press

both regimes are similar in relevant respects, then the ties of friendship should be given their due.

Can the reasons associated with international friendship do more than prioritize the interests of friends? Do those reasons have implications for the treatment of regimes that fail to live up to the minimal standards of justice? One way to frame the issue is by asking whether the reasons that support international friendship also license reform or humanitarian intervention. To begin to answer this question, it should be clear that international friendship does entail the following position: if the quality of a state's institutions provides the basis of concern for preserving and promoting a regime, then the absence of that character implies the absence of an important (and perhaps the central) reason for its preservation and promotion. Can we say more? Is the absence of a reason for preserving and promoting a set of institutions the same as the presence of a reason for acting in a manner to reform or transform those institutions? At the domestic level, the answer to this question is 'yes'. Citizens who are facing institutions that fail to qualify as minimally just institutions do have reasons to change them. The absence of reasons for institutional self-concern is part and parcel of a positive reason to reform or replace those institutions. The existence of these reasons does not determine the means that are going to be used to engage in that transformation. For example, having a reason to change the basic institutions of society may not be enough to legitimize the use of violence and the loss of innocent life. Instrumental rationality and claims of proportionality could make a great deal of difference to how a citizenry replies to unjust institutions. It should be noted that this argument is not the same as claiming that people have an obligation to change their institutions, but it may be enough to support a right to revolution. In any case, the unreasonableness of institutional self-defence vis-à-vis the citizenry is sufficient for the reasonableness of a permission for attempting to improve things.

Does a similar argument apply to international intervention? Is the right to revolution simultaneously a right to engage in reform intervention? If a state lacks reasons for self-concern, then it is also unreasonable for it to defend or protect itself from changes that may lead to a more just state of affairs, even if those changes may emanate from outside itself. But the absence of a moral right to self-defence does not imply that outsiders have a moral permission to intervene into the affairs of a state that lacks such a right, particularly if that intervention would involve the use of military force. However imperfect international law may be, it can, at least in part, be understood as an attempt to regulate the level and scope of violence in the international system. Restricting the justifications for the use of force or establishing a set of institutional mechanisms to regulate the occasions for war can be read as attempts to control violence. Those inside and outside the circle of friends may still participate in a global international society partly constituted by laws and norms that seek to mitigate the breadth and nature of harm caused by the use of force. The circle of friends may have good reason to respect prevailing international norms in their treatment of those outside the circle. In other words, international friendship may be compatible with a pluralist respect for the international law of non-intervention.

Nevertheless, as was noted earlier, international friendship is not entirely compatible with pluralism insofar as the existence of a special relationship (the strongest form of international friendship) could provide a reason for intervention that would not be permitted under current international law. The solidarity of friendship can result in state action beyond what pluralism would deem desirable. In this respect, international friendship appears compatible with solidarism. But the comparison is complicated by the fact that the distinction between pluralism and solidarism can be formulated in different

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ways. On one formulation, the difference rests on an empirical assessment of the level of international solidarity to enforce the law.[35] Pluralists believe that there is only enough solidarity for minimal shared international purposes, while solidarists believe in a much deeper reservoir of shared norms and expectations. In contrast to this formulation, international friendship could stand in opposition to both pluralism and solidarism. The partial solidarity of friendship could undermine the impartial enforcement of the law. Perhaps the deeper the international friendship, the stronger the reasons may exist for advancing the interests of one's friends over the law. The problem becomes enormously complicated when one adds that minimally just regimes may act aggressively or occasionally violate human rights. While friendship is not synonymous with blind loyalty at either the international or interpersonal levels, the expectations of support that are part and parcel of friendship can be enacted by standing 'shoulder to shoulder' or by speaking freely, providing frank advice, and respectfully disagreeing. In either case, the reasons of friendship themselves exert a pull that may not support prevailing international norms.

The distinction between pluralism and solidarism, however, can also be formulated in the light of the question of humanitarian intervention. Very generally, 'pluralism is concerned solely with the minimum goal of inter-state coexistence, whereas solidarism is concerned with the higher goal of the welfare of individual human persons living in separate states'.[36] Solidarism, then, offers a justification for the collective use of force against governments that violate the 'cardinal rules and norms of the society of states' or that fail to protect the fundamental human rights of their members.[37] As should be evident from what has been said, a favourable attitude towards intervening in the internal affairs of unjust regimes in order to transform them into just regimes is not directly derivable from a relationship of international friendship. More strongly, international friendship does not even require that those states falling outside the circle of friends be considered enemies. Alliances of economic gain and military security with unjust regimes are not precluded by the idea that minimally just regimes have good reasons to support one another. Not all those with whom a nation has friendly relations are relations of friendship. The idea of international friendship does not necessarily generate a Manichean or Schmittean view of the world that is divided into friends and enemies. The position, of course, precludes unjust states from entering into the circle of international friendship, but it does not license making the world safe for democracy. To some degree this parallels an argument that could be made at the individual level. We do not have an obligation or a right to transform those individuals who lack the characters we admire. We are not obliged to be friends with everyone or to make them into the kinds of beings with whom we could be friends.

These last comments, however, suggest one way in which international friendship could be fully compatible with solidarism: Hedley Bull noted that solidarism entails the 'solidarity, or potential solidarity of the states comprising international society'.[38] In a world in which all governments were minimally just and hence had reason to promote one

[35] See Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', p. 52, and Linklater and Suganami, *The English School of International Relations*, p. 60.

[36] Linklater and Suganimi, *The English School of International Relations*, pp. 71–2 and p. 261. This is interpretation of the pluralism/solidarism distinction is attributed to Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*.

[37] Nicholas Wheeler and Timothy Dunne, 'Hedley Bull's Pluralism of the Intellect and Solidarism of the Will', *International Affairs*, 72 (1996), 91–107, p. 95.

[38] Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', p. 52.

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another's fundamental institutions and policies, then international friendship would be synonymous with international solidarity. There is nothing in the theory of international friendship that guarantees or rules out realizing such a possibility. However, short of a world composed of minimally just states, international friendship implies a kind of partial solidarity. International friends share a conception of minimal justice that has consequences for how they treat their own citizens and one another. Solidarity of this sort need not be universal.

CONCLUSION

Unless one stipulates that all self-regarding state action is reasonable, it is always possible to ask whether such regard is defensible. I have suggested that a defence is possible for minimally just states which are serving as indispensable conditions of value. In effect, self-regarding action may be reasonable, but for only certain kinds of states. A more surprising implication of this position, however, is that if Whiting's account of friendship can be transferred to the international level, then this defence of self-regard also makes it reasonable to be concerned with other states that possess a similar character. The nature of that concern can be expressed in the form of an *entente cordiale*, a collective security arrangement, or as a special relationship. With these kinds of relationships come different expectations regarding consultation, security and respect for autonomy. What supports the reasonableness of self-regard also supports the reasonableness of regard for others. Minimally just states have reason to be concerned for one another apart from reasons of economic or military advantage. While this view does not license reform intervention vis-à-vis unjust regimes, it does mean that it is reasonable to give priority to the interests of friends of the right sort.

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