
Preface

This book stems from a sense of unease with the current state of theory and research in international relations. It is rooted in a conviction that knowledge in this area must be judged by two criteria: its scholarly soundness and its policy relevance. The conviction stems not so much from a sense of social obligation as from a feeling that the study of international relations and foreign policy implies, by its nature, relevant knowledge, and that scholarship explicitly seeking to be relevant is likely to be good (perhaps better) scholarship. This is not a fashionable position, but it is entirely defensible. A failure to see this, we believe, is grounded in an unacceptably emaciated conception of relevance, in an overly simplistic view of how relevant knowledge is produced and conveyed, and in a misconceived notion of the scholarly merits of relevant knowledge. We hope that this volume may lead to the revision of some flawed assumptions and encourage greater academic receptivity to work that is both useful and sound.

The project took shape in a panel at an annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. Since then, it has occupied much of our time and thinking. As is always the case with such projects, we have benefited from the interest and advice of a number of colleagues. We would like, in particular, to thank Alexander George, who recently rekindled the profession's interest in the issue of relevant scholarship. Bruce Jentleson, a fine example of professor-practitioner, has been a friend and source of advice to

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Beyond the Ivory Tower

