Toward Perpetual Peace

IMMANUEL KANT

1724–1804

Toward Perpetual Peace

Zum ewigen Frieden

Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited



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INTRODUCTION

Written in 1795, just after Prussia made peace with revolutionary France, *Toward Perpetual Peace* is set out, half ironically, as a draft treaty: articles, supplements and a secret clause.

Its proposals have proved remarkably durable. States should become republics, whose citizens must consent before going to war; free states should join a federation of peace; and every person should enjoy a cosmopolitan right to hospitality abroad. Kant argues that nature itself, through trade and self-interest, pushes humanity toward peace, and that politics must bow to morality.

The essay is often cited as an ancestor of the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the idea that democracies do not go to war with each other.

First Section: The preliminary articles

Six conditions that states must meet now, from no secret reservations in treaties to no standing armies in the long run.

THE INN SIGN

Kant opens with a satirical Dutch inn sign and a disclaimer addressed to practical politicians.

343 Whether this satirical inscription on the signboard of that Dutch innkeeper, on which a graveyard was painted, applies to human beings in general, or in particular to heads of state, who can never have enough of war, or perhaps only to the philosophers who dream that sweet dream—this may be left undecided.[1] The author of the present essay does, however, make one stipulation. The practical politician is accustomed to look down with great complacency on the theoretical one as an academic pedant. The theorist, he thinks, with his ideas empty of content, poses no danger to the state, which must proceed from principles drawn from experience; one can always let him throw all eleven pins at once without the *worldly-wise* statesman needing to pay any attention. That being so, in the event of a dispute with the theorist the statesman must act consistently to this extent: he must not scent danger to the state behind opinions that the theorist has ventured at random and expressed publicly. By this *clausula salvatoria* [saving clause] the author hereby

1 The inscription is the essay's title, "Toward Perpetual Peace": Kant recalls an inn sign that paired those words with a painted graveyard.

wishes to be understood as expressly protecting himself, in the best form, against every malicious interpretation.[2]

FIRST SECTION: THE PRELIMINARY ARTICLES FOR PERPETUAL PEACE AMONG STATES

Kant lays down six prohibitions, from secret reservations in treaties to dishonorable acts of war.

1. "No peace treaty shall be held to be one if it was made with a secret reservation of material for a future war."

For then it would be a mere truce, a postponement of hostilities, not *peace*, which means the end of all hostilities—so that attaching the epithet "perpetual" to it is already a suspicious pleonasm. The peace treaty annihilates all existing causes of a future war, even if they are perhaps not yet known to the contracting parties themselves, however keen the skill of espionage with which they might be picked out of archival documents. 344 — The reservation (*reservatio mentalis* [mental reservation]) of old claims, to be thought up only in the future, which neither party cares to mention for now because both are too exhausted to continue the war, together with the ill will to use the first favorable opportunity for that purpose, belongs to the casuistry of the Jesuits. If one judges the matter as it is in itself, such a reservation is beneath the dignity of rulers, just as readiness to supply such deductions is beneath the dignity of a ruler's minister.[3]

But if, according to enlightened concepts of political prudence, the true honor of the state is placed in the constant enlargement of its power, by whatever means, then of course that judgment will look academic and pedantic.

2. "No independently existing state (whether small or large makes no difference here) shall be acquirable by another state through inheritance, exchange, purchase, or gift."

2 "Throw all eleven pins at once": a skittles image for boasting of an impossible feat, since the game has only nine pins.

3 Mental reservation, the practice of qualifying a statement or promise by an unspoken condition, was associated in Kant's day with Jesuit moral theology.

For a state is not a possession (*patrimonium* [patrimony]), as, say, the ground on which it is located is. It is a society of human beings over which no one but the state itself has to command or dispose. It had its own root, like a trunk; to incorporate it into another state like a graft is to cancel its existence as a moral person and to make that person into a thing. This contradicts the idea of the original contract, without which no right over a people can be conceived.[4] Everyone knows into what danger this mode of acquisition—the prejudice, namely, that states too can marry one another—has brought Europe right up to the most recent times (for the other parts of the world have never known of it). It has served partly as a new kind of industry for making oneself overpowering through family alliances without any expenditure of force, and partly as a way of extending one's territorial possessions.—The hiring out of one state's troops to another against an enemy not common to both also belongs here; for the subjects are thereby used and used up as things to be handled at will.

345 3. "Standing armies (*miles perpetuus* [permanent soldiery]) shall in time be abolished altogether."

For they constantly threaten other states with war by their readiness always to appear armed for it. They spur states on to outdo one another in the number of armed men, which knows no limit. And since the costs devoted to them finally make peace even more oppressive than a short war, they are themselves the cause of wars of aggression, undertaken to be rid of this burden. Add to this that being hired to kill or to be killed seems to involve a use of human beings as mere machines and tools in the hand of another (the state), and this cannot well be reconciled with the right of humanity in our own person. It is quite another matter with the voluntary, periodic training of citizens in arms, by which they secure themselves and their fatherland

4 KANT'S NOTE. A hereditary kingdom is not a state that can be inherited by another state; rather, the right to govern it can be inherited by another physical person. The state then acquires a ruler; the ruler as such (that is, as one who already possesses another realm) does not acquire the state.

against attacks from outside.—The accumulation of a treasure would have the same effect: regarded by other states as a threat of war, it would compel them to preemptive attacks (since of the three powers—the power of an *army*, the power of *alliances*, and the power of *money*—the last might well be the most reliable instrument of war), were it not that the difficulty of discovering its size stood in the way.

4. "No national debt shall be contracted in connection with the external affairs of the state."

There is nothing suspicious about this source of help when it is sought, outside or within the state, for the sake of the national economy (improving roads, new settlements, stocking granaries against anxious years of bad harvest, and so on). But as a machine the powers use against one another, a credit system is a dangerous money power. It consists of debts that grow beyond all foreseeable limit and yet are always secure against present demand (since that demand will not be made by all creditors at once)—the ingenious invention of a commercial people in this century. It is, namely, a treasure for waging war that exceeds the treasures of all other states taken together, and it can be exhausted only by the shortfall of taxes that must one day come (though even this can long be put off by the way the quickening of trade reacts on industry and earnings).[5] This ease in waging war, combined with the inclination of those in power to do so—an inclination that seems to be implanted in human nature—is therefore a great obstacle to perpetual peace. Forbidding it would have to be a [346] preliminary article of perpetual peace all the more, because the national bankruptcy that must finally come after all is bound to entangle many other states in the damage through no fault of their own, and that would be a public injury to them. Consequently, other states are at least entitled to ally themselves against such a state and its pretensions.

5. "No state shall forcibly interfere in the constitution and government of another state."

5 The "commercial people" is Britain, whose system of funded public debt financed its eighteenth-century wars.

For what could entitle it to do so? The scandal, perhaps, that the other state gives to its subjects? On the contrary, that state can serve as a warning, through the example of the great evils a people has brought upon itself by its lawlessness; and in general the bad example one free person gives another (as *scandalum acceptum* [scandal taken]) is no injury to the other.—It would be a different matter, admittedly, if a state split into two parts through internal discord, each of which represented itself as a separate state laying claim to the whole. There, an external state that lent assistance to one of them could not be charged with interfering in the other's constitution (for what exists then is anarchy). But as long as this internal conflict is not yet decided, such interference by external powers would violate the rights of a people that depends on no other and is only struggling with its own internal illness. It would thus itself be a scandal given, and would make the autonomy of all states insecure.

6. "No state at war with another shall permit itself hostilities of a kind that must make mutual trust in a future peace impossible: such as the employment of *assassins* (*percussores*), *poisoners* (*venefici*), *breach of surrender terms*, *incitement to treason* (*perduellio*) in the enemy state, etc."

These are dishonorable stratagems. For some trust in the enemy's way of thinking must remain even in the midst of war, since otherwise no peace could be concluded either, and hostilities would turn into a war of extermination (*bellum internecinum*). War, after all, is only the sad emergency measure, in the state of nature (where there is no court that could judge with the force of law), for asserting one's right by force. In it neither party can be declared an unjust enemy (since that already presupposes a judicial verdict); instead its *outcome* decides on whose side the right lies (as if before a [347] so-called judgment of God). Between states, however, no punitive war (*bellum punitivum*) can be conceived (since there is no relation of superior to subordinate between them).[6] — From this it follows that a war of

6 The "judgment of God" was the medieval trial by ordeal or by combat, in which the result was taken as a divine verdict.

extermination, in which destruction can strike both parties at once and with them all right as well, would allow perpetual peace only in the vast graveyard of the human race. Such a war, then, and consequently also the use of the means that lead to it, must be absolutely forbidden.—That the means named lead to it inevitably is clear from this: those hellish arts, vile in themselves, once they have come into use, do not long confine themselves within the limits of war. They are unlike, say, the use of spies (*uti exploratoribus*), where only the dishonorableness of *others* is exploited (which, after all, can never be rooted out); they would pass over into the condition of peace as well, and so wholly defeat its purpose.

STRICT AND PERMISSIVE LAWS

Some preliminary articles apply at once; others allow their execution to be postponed without losing sight of the end.

The laws cited are objectively, that is, in the intention of those in power, purely *prohibitive laws* (*leges prohibitivae*). Even so, some of them are of the *strict* kind, valid regardless of circumstances (*leges strictae*), which press for abolition *at once* (such as Nos. 1, 5, 6). Others (such as Nos. 2, 3, 4) are not exceptions to the rule of right; but with regard to its *exercise*, owing to circumstances, they *subjectively* widen the authorization (*leges latae*) and contain permissions to *postpone* carrying them out—without, however, losing sight of the end. The postponement of, for example, the *restoration* to certain states of the freedom taken from them under No. 2 is not to be put off to a day that never comes (to the Greek calends, *ad calendas graecas*, as Augustus used to promise), which would amount to non-restoration; delay is permitted only so that restoration does not happen precipitately and so contrary to the very aim. For the prohibition here concerns only the *mode of acquisition*, which is no longer to be valid, but not the *state of possession*. Although that possession lacks the requisite title of right, it was nevertheless held to be lawful by all states in

its time (the time of the putative acquisition), according to the public opinion of the day.[78]

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7 KANT'S NOTE. Whether, besides commands (*leges praeceptivae*) and prohibitions (*leges prohibitivae*), there can also be *permissive laws* (*leges permissivae*) of pure reason has hitherto been doubted, and not without reason. For laws in general contain a ground of objective practical necessity, whereas permission contains a ground of the practical contingency of certain actions. A *permissive law* would therefore contain necessitation to an action to which no one can be necessitated—which would be a contradiction if the object of the law had the same meaning in both respects.—Here, however, in the permissive law, the presupposed prohibition applies only to the future mode of acquiring a right (for example, through inheritance), while the release from this prohibition, that is, the permission, applies to the present state of possession. In the transition from the state of nature to the civil condition, this possession can continue further, according to a permissive law of natural right, as a possession that, though unlawful, is nevertheless *honest* (*possessio putativa* [putative possession]). This holds even though a putative possession, as soon as it has been recognized as such, is forbidden in the state of nature, and likewise a similar mode of acquisition is forbidden in the subsequent civil condition (once the transition has taken place). This authorization to continued possession would not obtain if such a supposed acquisition had occurred in the civil condition; for then, as an injury, the possession would have to cease immediately upon the discovery of its unlawfulness. With this I have wished only to draw the attention of teachers of natural right, in passing, to the concept of a *lex permissiva* [permissive law], which presents itself of its own accord to a reason that divides systematically. I do so especially because use is often made of it in civil (statutory) law—only with this difference: the prohibitive law stands by itself alone, and the permission is not incorporated into that law as a limiting condition (as it should be) but is thrown among the exceptions.—Then it reads: this or that is forbidden, *unless* No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, and so on without end. For permissions are added to the law only contingently, not according to a principle but by groping about among cases as they arise. Otherwise the conditions would have had to be incorporated into the *formula of the prohibitive law*, and it would thereby have become a permissive law at the same time.—It is therefore to be regretted that the ingenious but still unsolved prize question of the wise and acute *Count von Windischgrätz*, which pressed precisely for the latter, was so soon abandoned. For the possibility of such a formula (similar to a mathematical one) is the only genuine touchstone of a legislation that remains consistent; without it the so-called *ius certum* [certain law] will always remain a pious wish. — Otherwise one will have merely *general* laws (which hold *on the whole*), but no universal ones (which hold *universally*), as the concept of a law nevertheless seems to require.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Joseph Niklas, Count von Windisch-Graetz (1744–1802), an Austrian nobleman and writer who in 1785 offered a prize for legal formulas that would admit only one interpretation.

8 The Greek calendar had no "calends" (the first day of the Roman month); Suetonius reports that the emperor Augustus used the phrase for debts that would never be paid.

Second Section: The definitive articles

Republican constitutions, a federation of free states, and a cosmopolitan right to hospitality.

SECOND SECTION: THE DEFINITIVE ARTICLES FOR PERPETUAL PEACE AMONG STATES

The state of nature is a state of war, so peace must be established under a lawful condition.

[348] The state of peace among human beings who live alongside one another is not a state of nature (*status naturalis*). The state of nature is rather a state of war [349] —that is, even if not always an outbreak of hostilities, still a constant threat of them. The state of peace must therefore be *established*. For the absence of hostilities is not yet security against them; and unless one neighbor provides this security to the other (which can happen only in a

lawful condition), the one who has demanded it of the other can treat him as an enemy.[1]

FIRST DEFINITIVE ARTICLE: THE CIVIL CONSTITUTION OF EVERY STATE SHALL BE REPUBLICAN

A constitution founded on freedom, dependence on common law, and equality, where citizens must consent to war.

The constitution established, first, according to principles of the *freedom* of the members of a society (as human beings); second, according to principles of the *dependence* of all on a single common legislation (as subjects); and [350] third, according to the law of their *equality* (*as citizens*)—the only constitution that arises from the idea of the original contract, on which all rightful legis-

1 KANT'S NOTE. It is commonly assumed that one may not proceed with hostility against anyone unless he has already actively *injured* me; and this is entirely correct when both are in a *civil-lawful* condition. For by entering that condition, the one provides the other (by means of the authority that has power over both) with the requisite security.—But a human being (or a people) in the mere state of nature deprives me of this security and already injures me by that very condition, simply by being next to me. He does so not actively (*facto* [by deed]), but through the lawlessness of his condition (*statu iniusto* [by an unjust condition]), by which I am constantly threatened by him. And I can compel him either to enter with me into a common lawful condition or to withdraw from my vicinity. — The postulate underlying all the following articles, then, is this: all human beings who can mutually affect one another must belong to some civil constitution. But every rightful constitution, as regards the persons who stand in it, is 1) one according to the *civil right* of human beings in a people (*ius civitatis*), 2) one according to the *right of nations*, of states in relation to one another (*ius gentium*), or 3) one according to *cosmopolitan right*, insofar as human beings and states, standing in an external relation of mutual influence, are to be regarded as citizens of a universal state of humankind (*ius cosmopoliticum*). This division is not arbitrary, but necessary with reference to the idea of perpetual peace. For if even one of these were in a relation of physical influence on another and yet in the state of nature, the state of war would be bound up with it—and to be freed from that is precisely the aim here.

lation of a people must be based—is the *republican* constitution.[2] As far as right is concerned, then, it is in itself the constitution that originally underlies every kind of civil constitution. And

2 KANT'S NOTE. *Rightful* (hence external) *freedom* cannot be defined, as is often done, as the authorization to do whatever one wants provided only that one does no wrong to anyone. For what does *authorization* mean? The possibility of an action insofar as one does no wrong to anyone by it. So the definition would run: freedom is the possibility of actions by which one does no wrong to anyone. One does no wrong to anyone (do what one will), provided only that one does no wrong to anyone: hence it is an empty tautology. Rather, my external (rightful) *freedom* is to be defined thus: it is the authorization to obey no external laws except those to which I could have given my consent. — Likewise, external (rightful) *equality* in a state is that relation of citizens in which no one can rightfully bind another to anything without at the same time subjecting himself to the law that he, in turn, *can* be bound by the other in the same way. (The principle of *rightful* dependence needs no explanation, since it already lies in the concept of a constitution in general.)—The validity of these innate rights, which belong necessarily to humanity and are inalienable, is confirmed and elevated by the principle of the rightful relations of the human being even to higher beings (if he thinks of such beings); for by the very same principles he also represents himself as a citizen of a supersensible world. For as regards my freedom, I have no obligation even with respect to divine laws, which I can know through reason alone, except insofar as I could myself have given my consent to them (for it is only through the law of freedom of my own reason that I form a concept of the divine will in the first place). As regards the principle of equality in relation to the most sublime being in the world other than God that I might happen to conceive (a great *aeon*), there is no reason why, if I do my duty in my post as that aeon does in its own, it should fall to me merely to obey and to it the right to command. — The reason this principle of *equality* does not (as that of freedom does) also fit the relation to God is that this being is the only one for whom the concept of duty ceases. But as for the right of equality of all citizens as subjects, the answer to the question whether *hereditary nobility* is admissible turns solely on this: whether the *rank* granted by the state (of one subject above another) must precede *merit*, or merit precede rank. — Now it is obvious that if rank is tied to birth, it is quite uncertain whether merit (skill and fidelity in office) will follow as well. It is therefore just as if rank were granted to the favored person without any merit at all (the rank of commander)—and the general will of the people in an original contract (which is, after all, the principle of all rights) will never resolve on that. For a nobleman is not thereby straightaway a *noble* man. As for the *nobility of office* (as one might call the rank of a higher magistracy, which has to be earned through merit), here rank does not attach to the person as property but to the post, and equality is not thereby violated: for when that person lays down the office, he lays down the rank at the same time and steps back among the people. —

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. In Gnostic and Neoplatonist speculation, an aeon is one of the exalted spiritual beings emanating from God.

now the only question is whether it is also the only one that can lead to perpetual peace.

[351] Now, besides the purity of its origin—having sprung from the pure source of the concept of right—the republican constitution also offers the prospect of the desired result, namely perpetual peace. The reason for this is as follows. — If (as cannot be otherwise in this constitution) the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether there shall be war or not, then nothing is more natural than that they will think very carefully before beginning so bad a game. For they would have to decree upon themselves all the hardships of war: doing the fighting themselves; paying the costs of the war out of their own belongings; laboriously repairing the devastation it leaves behind; and finally, to crown the evil, taking upon themselves a burden of debt that embitters peace itself and can never be paid off (because of new wars always close at hand). By contrast, in a constitution where the subject is not a citizen, and which is therefore not republican, war is the least questionable thing in the world. For the head of state is not a fellow member of the state but its owner; he loses not the least bit of his banquets, hunts, pleasure palaces, court festivities, and the like through war. He can therefore decide on it as a kind of pleasure party for trivial reasons, and, for propriety's sake, indifferently leave its justification to the diplomatic corps, which is always ready for the task.

REPUBLIC AND DEMOCRACY

Kant distinguishes forms of sovereignty from forms of government and argues that only representative government is rightful.

So that the republican constitution is not confused with the democratic one (as commonly happens), the following must be noted. [352] The forms of a state (*civitas*) can be divided either according to the difference of the persons who hold the supreme power in the state, or according to the *way of governing* the people by its head, whoever that may be. The first is properly

called the form of *sovereignty* (*forma imperii*), and only three such forms are possible: either only *one* person, or *some* bound together among themselves, or *all* those together who make up civil society possess the ruling power (*autocracy*, *aristocracy*, and *democracy*: the power of a prince, the power of a nobility, and the power of the people). The second is the form of government (*forma regiminis*). It concerns the way, based on the constitution (the act of the general will by which the multitude becomes a people), in which the state makes use of its plenary power, and in this respect it is either *republican or despotic*. *Republicanism* is the political principle of separating the executive power (the government) from the legislative power. Despotism is the principle of the state's high-handed execution of laws it has itself given; it is thus the public will insofar as the ruler handles it as his private will. — Of the three forms of state, *democracy*, in the proper sense of the word, is necessarily a *despotism*. For it establishes an executive power in which all decide about one, and if need be even against one (who therefore does not agree), so that all, who are nevertheless not all, decide. This is a contradiction of the general will with itself and with freedom.

For every form of government that is not *representative* is, properly speaking, a *non-form*, because the legislator cannot at the same time, in one and the same person, be the executor of his will (any more than, in a syllogism, the universal in the major premise can at the same time be the subsumption of the particular under it in the minor premise). The other two constitutions are always defective insofar as they leave room for such a way of governing. Even so, it is at least possible for them to adopt a way of governing in keeping with the *spirit* of a representative system, as when Frederick II at least *said* that he was

merely the highest servant of the state.[3] The democratic constitution, by contrast, [353] makes this impossible, because in it everyone wants to be master.[4] — One can therefore say: the smaller the personnel of state power (the number of rulers), and the greater, by contrast, their representation, the more the constitution accords with the possibility of republicanism, and it can hope to rise to it at last through gradual reforms. For this reason it is already harder in an aristocracy than in a monarchy to arrive at this one perfectly rightful constitution, and in a democracy it is impossible except through violent revolution. The people, however, care incomparably more about the way of governing[5] than about the form of the state (although a great deal also depends on how well or poorly the latter suits that

3 KANT'S NOTE. The lofty titles often bestowed on a ruler (God's anointed, the administrator of the divine will on earth and its representative) have often been criticized as crude flattery that turns heads; but, it seems to me, without reason.— Far from making the sovereign arrogant, they must rather humble him in his soul, if he has understanding (which one must, after all, presuppose) and reflects that he has taken on an office too great for a human being: namely, to administer the holiest thing God has on earth, the *right of human beings*. He must always be anxious lest he has in some respect offended against this apple of God's eye.

4 Frederick II ("the Great"), King of Prussia 1740–1786, who called himself the "first servant of the state."

5 KANT'S NOTE. Mallet du Pan boasts, in his language that sounds full of genius but is hollow and empty of substance, that after many years of experience he has at last become convinced of the truth of *Pope*'s well-known saying: "For forms of government let fools contest; / Whate'er is best administer'd is best." If this is meant to say that the best-administered government is the best administered, then, in Swift's phrase, he has cracked a nut that rewarded him with a maggot. But if it is meant to say that it is also the best way of governing, that is, the best constitution, it is utterly false; for examples of good governments prove nothing about the way of governing. Who ever governed better than a *Titus* or a *Marcus Aurelius*? And yet the one left a *Domitian*, the other a *Commodus*, as his successor. This could not have happened under a good constitution, since their unfitness for the post was known early enough, and the ruler's power was also sufficient to exclude them.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Jacques Mallet du Pan (1749–1800), Genevan journalist and critic of the French Revolution. The couplet is from Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733–34), quoted here in Pope's own words; Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) was the Anglo-Irish satirist.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Roman emperors: Titus (r. AD 79–81) was succeeded by his brother Domitian, and Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180) by his son Commodus, both remembered as tyrants.

end). But the way of governing, if it is to accord with the concept of right, requires the representative system. In it alone is a republican way of governing possible; without it, the way of governing is despotic and violent (whatever the constitution may be).—None of the ancient so-called republics knew this system, and so they were bound to dissolve into despotism, which, under the supreme power of a single person, is still the most bearable of all.

SECOND DEFINITIVE ARTICLE: THE RIGHT OF NATIONS SHALL BE BASED ON A FEDERALISM OF FREE STATES

States should form a pacific federation that preserves their freedom, since a state of peoples would contradict itself.

354 Peoples, as states, can be judged like individual human beings who, in their state of nature (that is, in their independence from external laws), already injure one another by their mere being side by side. For the sake of its security, each of them can and should demand of the other that it enter with it into a constitution similar to the civil one, in which each can be assured of its right. This would be a *federation of peoples*, which, however, would not have to be a state of peoples. That, however, would involve a contradiction. For every state contains the relation of a *superior* (the one who legislates) to an *inferior* (the one who obeys, namely the people); but many peoples in one state would make up only one people. And this contradicts our presupposition, since we have here to consider the right of *peoples* in relation to one another, insofar as they make up so many different states and are not to be fused into one state.

We look with deep contempt on the attachment of peoples living without a state to their lawless freedom—their preference for brawling incessantly rather than submitting to a lawful coercion they would themselves constitute, and so for preferring mad freedom to rational freedom—and we regard it as crudeness, coarseness, and a brutish degradation of humanity. Just so, one would think, civilized peoples (each united into a state for itself) would have to hurry to escape from so depraved a condi-

tion, the sooner the better. Instead, each *state* places its majesty (for "majesty of the people" is an absurd expression) precisely in not being subject to any external lawful coercion at all. And the splendor of its head consists in this: without his needing to put himself in any danger, many thousands stand at his command to let themselves be sacrificed for a cause that does not concern them.[6] And the difference between the lawless peoples of Europe and those of America consists chiefly in this: while some tribes of the latter have been entirely eaten by their enemies, the former know how to make better use of those they have conquered than to consume them. They prefer to use them to increase the number of their subjects, [355] and hence also the quantity of instruments for still more extensive wars.

Given the depravity of human nature, which can be seen undisguised in the free relations of peoples (whereas in the civil-lawful condition it is heavily veiled by the coercion of government), it is surprising that the word *right* has not yet been entirely banished from the politics of war as pedantic, and that no state has yet been bold enough to declare itself publicly for this latter view. For *Hugo Grotius*, *Pufendorf*, *Vattel*, and many others[7] (sorry comforters all) are still always cited in good faith to *justify* a military attack, even though their code, whether composed philosophically or diplomatically, has not the slightest legal force, nor can it have any (since states as such do not stand under a common external coercion). Yet there is no example of a state ever having been moved to abandon its plan by arguments armed with the testimony of such important men.[8] — This homage that every state pays to the concept of right (in words,

6 KANT'S NOTE. Thus a Bulgarian prince gave this answer to the Greek emperor, who good-naturedly wanted to settle their dispute by single combat: "A smith who has tongs will not take the glowing iron out of the coals with his hands."

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The "Greek emperor" is the Byzantine emperor.

7 Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694), and Emer de Vattel (1714–1767) were the leading early modern theorists of natural law and the law of nations.

8 "Sorry comforters" echoes Job 16:2, where Job calls his friends "miserable comforters."

at least) nevertheless proves that there is to be found in the human being a still greater moral predisposition, though at present dormant, to become master one day of the evil principle in him (which he cannot deny), and to hope the same of others. For otherwise the word *right* would never come into the mouths of states that want to make war on one another, unless merely to mock it, as that Gallic prince declared: "It is the advantage that nature has given the stronger over the weaker, that the weaker should obey him."[9]

The way states pursue their right can never be a lawsuit, as before an external court, but only war; yet war and its favorable outcome, *victory*, do not decide right. A *peace treaty* does indeed put an end to the present war, but not to the state of war (in which a new pretext can always be found); nor can this state simply be declared unjust, since in it each is judge in his own cause. At the same time, what holds by natural right for human beings in a lawless condition—that they "ought to leave this condition"—cannot hold in quite the same way for states under the right of nations. For as states they already have a rightful constitution internally, and so they have outgrown the coercion of others to bring them under [356] a wider lawful constitution according to those others' concepts of right. Meanwhile reason, from the throne of the highest morally legislating power, absolutely condemns war as a procedure for establishing right, and makes the state of peace, on the contrary, an immediate duty—and this state cannot be established or secured without a contract among peoples. — Given all this, there must be a federation of a special kind, which can be called the *pacific federation* (*foedus pacificum*). It would differ from the *peace treaty* (*pactum pacis*) in that the latter seeks to end merely *one* war, whereas the former seeks to end all wars forever.[10] This federation aims at acquiring no power of the state whatsoever, but solely at preserving and securing the *freedom* of a state for itself and at the same time that of the other

9 Probably Brennus, the Gallic chieftain who sacked Rome around 390 BC; Plutarch has him say something similar about the law of the stronger.
10 *Foedus pacificum*, Latin for "pacific federation"; *pactum pacis*, "peace pact."

allied states—without these states having, on that account, to subject themselves (as human beings in the state of nature must) to public laws and to coercion under them.—The feasibility (objective reality) of this idea of *federalism*, which is to extend gradually to all states and so lead to perpetual peace, can be demonstrated. For if fortune so ordains that a powerful and enlightened people can form itself into a republic (which by its nature must be inclined toward perpetual peace), this republic provides a focal point of federative union for other states to join. They can thereby secure the condition of freedom of states in accordance with the idea of the right of nations, and, through several alliances of this kind, extend it further and further, little by little.

That a people should say, "There shall be no war among us; for we mean to form ourselves into a state, that is, to set over ourselves a supreme legislative, governing and judicial power that will settle our disputes peacefully"—this is intelligible.—— But if this state says, "There shall be no war between me and other states, although I recognize no supreme legislative power that secures my right to me and whose right I secure," then it is not at all intelligible on what I would base my confidence in my right—unless it is the surrogate of the civil social union, namely free federalism. Reason must necessarily connect this federalism with the concept of the right of nations, if there is to be anything left to think in that concept at all.

Under the concept of the right of nations understood as a right to go to war, nothing at all can properly be thought. For it would be a right to determine what is right not by universally valid external [357] laws that limit the freedom of each individual, but by one-sided maxims, through force. Unless, that is, it is taken to mean that it serves people so disposed quite right when they wear one another down, and so find perpetual peace in the vast grave that covers all the horrors of violence together with their authors. — For states in their relations with one another there can be, according to reason, no other way out of the lawless condition, which contains nothing but war, than this: that,

just like individual human beings, they give up their wild (lawless) freedom, accommodate themselves to public coercive laws, and so form a *state of peoples* (*civitas gentium*)—one that would, admittedly, keep on growing—which would finally encompass all the peoples of the earth.[11] But since, given their idea of the right of nations, they absolutely do not want this, and so reject *in hypothesi* what is correct *in thesi*, then in place of the positive idea of *a world republic* only the negative surrogate of a federation that averts war, endures, and keeps expanding can (if all is not to be lost) hold back the torrent of the hostile inclination that shies away from right—though with the constant danger of its breaking out (*Furor impius intus—fremit horridus ore cruento. Virgil*) [Within, godless Rage … roars, hideous, with bloody mouth].[12][13]

THIRD DEFINITIVE ARTICLE: COSMOPOLITAN RIGHT SHALL BE LIMITED TO CONDITIONS OF UNIVERSAL HOSPITALITY

Strangers have a right to visit, not to settle, and European colonial conquest violates this right.

Here, as in the previous articles, we are concerned not with philanthropy but with right. And here *hospitality* (hospitableness) 358 means the right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility by another on account of his arrival on the other's soil. The other

11 *Civitas gentium*: Latin, "state of peoples."

12 KANT'S NOTE. After a war has ended, at the conclusion of the peace treaty, it might not be unfitting for a people to proclaim, after the festival of thanksgiving, a day of repentance, on which to call upon heaven, in the name of the state, for mercy for the great sin of which the human race is still guilty: its unwillingness to submit to any lawful constitution in its relations with other peoples, preferring instead, proud of its independence, to use the barbaric means of war (by which, after all, what is sought—namely each state's right—is not settled). — The festivals of thanksgiving held during a war for a *victory* won, and the hymns sung (in good Israelite fashion) to the *Lord of Hosts*, stand in no less stark contrast to the moral idea of the Father of humankind. For besides indifference to the way in which peoples seek their mutual right (which is sad enough), they bring in a joy at having annihilated a great many human beings or their happiness.

13 *In thesi* / *in hypothesi*: "in the general proposition" / "in the particular case." The verse is from Virgil's *Aeneid* 1.294–296.

may turn him away, if this can be done without causing his destruction; but so long as he conducts himself peacefully where he is, the other may not meet him with hostility. It is not a *right to be a guest* that the stranger can claim (for this a special beneficent agreement would be required, making him a member of the household for a certain time), but a *right to visit*. This right belongs to all human beings: the right to present themselves for society, by virtue of the right of common possession of the surface of the earth. Since this is the surface of a sphere, they cannot scatter themselves across it without limit, but must finally tolerate one another's nearness; and originally no one has more right than anyone else to be at any given place on earth. — Uninhabitable parts of this surface, the sea and the sandy deserts, divide this community, yet in such a way that the *ship* or the *camel* (the *ship* of the desert) makes it possible to approach one another across these ownerless regions, and to use the right to the *surface*, which belongs to the human species in common, for possible interaction. The inhospitality of sea coasts (for example, of the Barbary Coast) in robbing ships in nearby seas or enslaving shipwrecked sailors, or that of the sandy deserts (of the Arab Bedouins) in regarding the approach of strangers to the nomadic tribes as a right to plunder them, is therefore contrary to natural right. This right of hospitality, however—that is, the authorization of foreign arrivals—extends no further than to the conditions of the possibility of *attempting* interaction with the original inhabitants.—In this way distant parts of the world can enter peacefully into relations with one another, relations that eventually become publicly lawful and so can finally bring the human race ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution.

If we compare with this the *inhospitable* conduct of the civilized states of our part of the world, especially the commercial ones, the injustice they display in visiting foreign lands and peoples (which for them amounts to the same thing as *conquering* them) goes to terrifying lengths. America, the lands of Africa, the Spice Islands, the Cape and so on were, when dis-

covered, lands that belonged to no one, as far as they were concerned; for they counted the inhabitants as nothing. Into East India (Hindustan), under the pretext of merely intending to set up trading posts, they brought foreign troops, and with them the oppression [359] of the native inhabitants, the incitement of its various states to far-reaching wars, famine, rebellion, treachery, and whatever else the litany of all the evils that weigh on the human race may contain.[14]

14 The Spice Islands are the Moluccas, in present-day Indonesia; the Cape is the Cape of Good Hope.

China[15] and Japan (*Nippon*), having made trial of such guests, have therefore acted wisely. China has allowed them access but not entry; Japan has allowed even access to only a single European people, the Dutch, and even they are excluded, like prisoners, from community with the native inhabitants. The worst of this (or, seen from the standpoint of a moral judge, the best) is that they do not even get any joy from this violence. All these trading companies are on the verge of collapse. The Sugar Islands, that seat of the cruelest and most calculated slavery, yield no real profit; they serve only indirectly, and for a not very laudable purpose—namely, training sailors for war fleets, and so, in turn, for waging wars in Europe. And they do this for powers that make a great show of piety and, while they drink

injustice like water, want to be regarded as the elect in matters

15 KANT'S NOTE. To write the name of this great empire as it calls itself (namely *China*, not Sina or some similar sound), one need only consult *Georgii Alphab. Tibet. pag.* 651–654, especially *Nota* b below. Strictly speaking, according to the remark of Professor *Fischer* of St. Petersburg, it has no fixed name by which it calls itself. The most usual is still the word Kin, meaning gold (which the Tibetans express as Ser); hence the emperor is called king of *gold* (of the most splendid land in the world). Within the empire itself this word may well sound like Chin, but the Italian missionaries may have pronounced it like Kin (because of the guttural letter). — From this one can see that the land the Romans called that of the *Seres* was China, and that silk was brought to Europe by way of *Greater Tibet* (presumably through *Lesser Tibet* and Bukhara, over Persia, and so on). This leads to many reflections on the antiquity of this astonishing state in comparison with that of Hindustan, in connection with *Tibet* and, through it, with Japan; whereas the name Sina or Tschina, which the neighbors are said to give this land, leads nowhere.—— Perhaps the ancient, though never well-known, community of Europe with Tibet can also be explained from what *Hesychius* has preserved for us about it, namely the cry *Κονξ 'Ομπαξ* (*Konx Ompax*) of the hierophant in the Eleusinian mysteries (see *Travels of the Younger Anacharsis*, part 5, p. 447 ff.).—For according to *Georgii Alph. Tibet.*, the word Concioa means *God*, which has a striking resemblance to *Konx*; Pah-cio (ibid. p. 520), which the Greeks could easily have pronounced like *pax*, means *promulgator legis* [promulgator of the law], the deity distributed throughout all of nature (also called Cencresi, p. 177).—Om, however, which La Croze translates as *benedictus, blessed*, can, applied to the deity, hardly mean anything other than the *one praised as blessed*, *p.* 507. Now since Father *Franciscus Horatius*, who often asked the Tibetan *lamas* what they understood by God (Concioa), always received the answer *"It is the assembly of all the saints"* (that is, of the blessed souls that, through lamaic rebirth, after many wanderings through all kinds of bodies, have finally returned into the deity and been transformed into *Burchane*, that is, beings worthy of worship, *p.* 223), then that mysterious word *Konx Ompax* is presumably meant to signify the *holy* (*Konx*), *blessed* (Om) and *wise* (*Pax*) supreme being spread everywhere through the world (nature personified). Used in the Greek *mysteries*, it probably indicated *monotheism* for the epopts, in contrast to the *polytheism* of the common people—although Father *Horatius* (loc. cit.) scented atheism in it.—How that mysterious word came to the Greeks by way of Tibet can, however, be explained in the above manner; and conversely, this also makes probable Europe's early interaction with China by way of Tibet (perhaps even earlier than with Hindustan).

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Kant cites Antonio Agostino Giorgi's *Alphabetum Tibetanum* (Rome, 1762). Johann Eberhard Fischer (1697–1771) was a historian of Siberia at the St. Petersburg Academy.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Hesychius of Alexandria (5th century AD) compiled a Greek lexicon. The Eleusinian mysteries were secret initiation rites of ancient Greece, led by a priest called the hierophant.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The *Travels* are Jean-Jacques Barthélemy's *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* (1788). Mathurin Veyssière de La Croze was a French orientalist; Francesco Orazio della Penna was a Capuchin missionary in Tibet.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. *Burchane* is the Mongolian *burkhan*, "Buddha." The epopts were initiates admitted to the highest grade of the mysteries.

of orthodoxy.[16]

360 Now since the (narrower or wider) community among the peoples of the earth, which has become universally prevalent, has gone so far that a violation of right in *one* place on earth is felt in *all*, the idea of a cosmopolitan right is no fantastic or exaggerated way of conceiving right. It is a necessary supplement to the unwritten code of both the right of a state and the right of nations, completing it into a public right of human beings in general, and so into perpetual peace. Only under this condition may we flatter ourselves that we are continually approaching it.

16 The Sugar Islands are the plantation colonies of the Caribbean.

First Supplement: The guarantee of perpetual peace

Kant argues that nature itself pushes humanity toward peace.

FIRST SUPPLEMENT: ON THE GUARANTEE OF PERPETUAL PEACE

Nature, the great artist, uses war to spread human beings across the earth and force them into lawful relations.

What furnishes this *assurance* (guarantee) is nothing less than the great artist *nature* (*natura daedala rerum*) [nature, the artificer of things]. From her mechanical course purposiveness visibly shines forth: to let concord arise through the discord of human beings, even against their will. For this reason she is called *fate*, when regarded as the compulsion of a cause whose laws of operation [361] are unknown to us; but when her purposiveness in the course of the world is considered, she is called

providence,[1] as the deep-lying wisdom of a higher cause, directed toward the objective final end of the human race and predetermining this course of the world. [362] We do not, strictly speaking, *know* this providence in these artful arrangements of nature, nor even *infer* it from them; rather (as in every relation of the form of things to ends in general) we can and must only *add it in thought*, in order to form a concept of their possibility by analogy with the acts of human art. But to represent to ourselves their relation to, and harmony with, the end that reason immediately prescribes to us (the moral end) is an idea which, though extravagant in a *theoretical* respect, is in a practical respect (for

example,[2] with regard to the concept of duty concerning *perpetual peace*, in order to make use of that mechanism of nature

for it) dogmatic and well founded as to its reality.—Moreover, when, as here, we are dealing merely with theory (not with reli-

2 The Latin phrase is from Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 5.234.

gion), the use of the word *nature* is more fitting for the limits of human reason (which, with respect to the relation of effects to

their causes, must keep within the bounds of possible experience), and *more modest*, than the expression of a *providence*

we call (divine) *providence* in general, and insofar as it is placed at the *beginning* of the world, we call it *founding* providence (*providentia conditrix*; *semel iussit, semper parent* [he commanded once; they obey forever], *Augustine*). Insofar as it maintains the *course* of nature according to universal laws of purposiveness, we call it *governing providence* (*providentia gubernatrix*); further, insofar as it leads toward particular ends that human beings cannot foresee but only conjecture from the outcome, *guiding providence* (*providentia directrix*); and finally, insofar as it posits particular events as divine ends, we call it no longer providence but *dispensation* (*directio extraordinaria*). To want to recognize a dispensation as such, however, is foolish presumption on the part of human beings, since it in fact points to miracles, even though the events are not called that. For to infer from a single event a particular principle of the efficient cause (that this event is an end, and not merely a natural-mechanical by-product of some other end wholly unknown to us) is absurd and full of self-conceit, however pious and humble the language about it may sound. — In the same way, the division of providence (considered *materialiter* [as to its matter]), as it bears on *objects* in the world, into *general* and *particular* providence is false and self-contradictory (as when it is said, for example, that it does make provision for preserving the species of creatures but leaves individuals to chance). For it is called general precisely so that no single thing is thought of as exempt from it. —Presumably what was meant here is the division of providence (considered *formaliter* [as to its form]) according to the manner in which its purpose is carried out: namely into *ordinary* providence (for example, the yearly dying and reviving of nature with the change of the seasons) and *extraordinary* providence (for example, the bringing of wood by ocean currents to icy coasts where it cannot grow, for the inhabitants there, who could not live without it). Here, although we can explain the physical-mechanical cause of these phenomena well enough (for example, by the wooded banks of the rivers of temperate lands, into which those trees fall and are then carried further, perhaps by the Gulf Stream), we must nevertheless not overlook the teleological cause either, which points to the provision of a wisdom that commands nature.—Only the concept, customary in the schools, of a divine *assistance* or cooperation (*concursus*) in an effect in the sensible world must be dropped. For to want to pair what is dissimilar (*gryphes iungere equis*) [to yoke griffins with horses], and to let him who is himself the complete cause of changes in the world *supplement* his own predetermining providence during the course of the world (which would therefore have had to be deficient)—for example, to say that *next to God* the physician cured the patient, and so was present as an assistant —is, *first*, self-contradictory. For *causa solitaria non iuvat* [a sole cause does not merely assist]. God is the author of the physician together with all his remedies; and so, if we are going to ascend all the way to the highest original ground, theoretically incomprehensible to us, the effect must be ascribed to him *entirely*. Or we can also ascribe it *entirely* to the physician, insofar as we trace this event, as explicable according to the order of nature, in the chain of worldly causes. *Second*, such a way of thinking also deprives us of all determinate principles for judging an effect. But in a *moral-practical* respect (which is thus directed entirely toward the supersensible)—for example, in the faith that God, if only our disposition was genuine, will make up for the deficiency of our own righteousness even by means incomprehensible to us, so that we should not slacken in our striving for the good—the concept of a divine *concursus* is entirely fitting and even necessary. It goes without saying, however, that no one must try to *explain* a good action (as an event in the world) on this basis; that would be a pretended theoretical cognition of the supersensible, and so absurd.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The saying is in fact Seneca's (*On Providence* 5.8), not Augustine's.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The Latin image of griffins yoked with horses echoes Virgil, *Eclogues* 8.27.

straps on the wings of Icarus in order to draw nearer to the mystery of its unfathomable purpose.

Before we determine this guarantee more precisely, it will first be necessary to look into the condition that nature has arranged for the persons acting on her great stage—the condition that ultimately makes her securing of peace [363] necessary;—and only then the way in which she provides it.

Her provisional arrangement consists in this: 1) she has taken care that human beings are able to live in all regions of the earth; 2) by war she has driven them everywhere, even into the most inhospitable regions, in order to populate them; 3)—by the same means she has compelled them to enter into more or less lawful relations.—That in the cold wastes by the Arctic Sea moss still grows, which the *reindeer* scrapes out from under the snow so that it may itself become food, or else the draft animal, of the Khanty or the Nenets; or that the salty sandy deserts still harbor the *camel*, which seems as it were created for traveling through them, so that they should not go unused—this is already admirable.[3] But the purpose shines out even more clearly when one notices how, besides the fur-bearing animals on the shores of the Arctic Sea, there are also seals, walruses and whales, which provide the inhabitants there with food in their flesh and fuel in their oil. Most admirable of all, however, is nature's provision in the driftwood that she brings (without anyone really knowing where it comes from) to these barren regions. Without this material they could make neither their boats and weapons nor their huts to live in; and there they have enough to do with their war against the animals to live peacefully among themselves.—— But what *drove* them *there* was presumably nothing other than war. The first *instrument of war*, however, among all the animals that human beings learned to tame and domesticate during the time the earth was being populated, is the *horse* (for the elephant belongs to a later time, namely to the luxury of already established states). Likewise the art of cultivating certain kinds of

3 Kant uses the older outside names "Ostyaks" and "Samoyeds" for these Siberian peoples.

grass, called *grain*, whose original character we can no longer recognize, as well as the multiplication and refinement of *kinds of fruit* by transplanting and grafting (in Europe perhaps from only two species, the crab apple and the wild pear), could arise only in the condition of already established states, where secure property in land existed. This came after human beings, previously in lawless freedom, had advanced from the life of *hunting*,[4] fishing and herding to the life of *agriculture* [364] , and after *salt* and *iron* had been discovered—perhaps the first articles of trade among different peoples to be sought far and wide. Through these, peoples were first brought into a *peaceful relationship* with one another, and so into understanding, community and peaceful relations even with more distant peoples.

Now, in having taken care that human beings *could* live everywhere on earth, nature at the same time despotically willed that they *should* live everywhere, even against their inclination—and without this "should" presupposing a concept of duty that would bind them to it by means of a moral law. Instead, to reach this end of hers, she chose war. — We see, for example, peoples whose unity of language makes the unity of their descent recognizable: the *Nenets* on the Arctic Sea on one side, and on the other a people of similar language two hundred miles away in the *Altai* Mountains. Between them another people, a Mongol one, mounted and therefore warlike, has pushed in, and so scattered that part of their stock far from the other, into the most inhospitable icy regions, where they would certainly not

4 KANT'S NOTE. Of all ways of life, the hunting life is without doubt the most contrary to a civilized constitution. For the families, which must live apart from one another there, soon become strangers to one another and then, scattered in vast forests, soon *hostile* as well, since each needs a great deal of space to obtain its food and clothing.—The *Noachic prohibition of blood*, Genesis 9:4–6 (which, often repeated, was later even made a condition by the Jewish Christians for the newly admitted Christians from paganism, though with a different consideration in mind, Acts 15:20, 21:25), seems originally to have been nothing other than the prohibition of the *hunting life*. For in that life the case of eating meat raw must often occur, so that in forbidding the latter one forbids the former as well.

have spread of their own inclination.[5] Likewise the *Finns* in the northernmost region of Europe, called *Sámi*, are separated from the *Hungarians*, now just as far away but related to them in language, by Gothic and Sarmatian peoples who pushed in 365
between them. And what else could have driven the *Inuit* (perhaps ancient European adventurers, a people wholly distinct from all the other Indigenous peoples of America) to the north of America, and the *Pesheräs* in the south of America as far as Tierra del Fuego, if not war, which nature uses as a means to populate the earth everywhere?[6] War itself, however, needs no particular motive. It seems to be grafted onto human nature, and even to count as something noble, to which human beings are inspired by the drive for honor, without self-interested incentives. So *martial courage* is judged (by the Indigenous peoples of America as much as by the Europeans of the age of chivalry) to be of immediate great worth not only when there is war (as is fair), but also in order that there be war; and war is often begun merely to display that courage. Thus an inner *dignity* is placed in war itself—so much so that even philosophers deliver a eulogy on it, as a certain ennobling of humanity, forgetting the saying of that Greek: "War is bad in that it makes more wicked people than it takes away."—So much for what nature does *for her own end* with respect to the human species as a class of animals.

5 KANT'S NOTE. One might ask: if nature willed that these icy coasts should not remain uninhabited, what will become of their inhabitants if one day (as is to be expected) she no longer brings them any driftwood? For it is to be believed that, as culture advances, the residents of the temperate zones will make better use of the wood that grows on the banks of their rivers, and will not let it fall into the rivers and so be washed away into the sea. I answer: the people living along the *Ob*, the Yenisei, the Lena and so on will bring it to them by trade and in exchange obtain the products of the animal kingdom in which the sea off the icy coasts is so rich—once she (nature) has first forced peace among them.

6 Kant used older outside names for these peoples; they are given here by their own names: the Nenets, the Sámi and the Inuit. The Pesheräs were the Indigenous people of Tierra del Fuego, so named by European travelers.

HOW NATURE GUARANTEES PEACE

Through self-interest, language, religion and the spirit of commerce, nature pushes states toward right and peace.

Now comes the question that concerns what is essential in the aim of perpetual peace: What does nature do toward this aim with respect to the end that a human being's own reason makes a duty for him, and hence for the furtherance of his *moral purpose*? And how does she guarantee that what human beings *ought* to do according to laws of freedom, but do not do, they *will* do—secured, without prejudice to this freedom, even by a constraint of nature? And this in all three relations of public right: the right of a *state*, the right of *nations*, and *cosmopolitan* right. — When I say of nature that *she wills* that this or that should happen, this does not mean that she imposes on us a duty to do it (for only practical reason, free of coercion, can do that). It means rather that she *does* it herself, whether we will it or not (*fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt*) [the fates lead the willing and drag the unwilling].[7]

1. Even if a people were not compelled by internal discord to submit to the coercion of public laws, war from outside would do it. For, according to the arrangement of nature mentioned earlier, every people finds next to it another people pressing upon it, against which it must form itself internally into a *state* in order to be [366] armed as a *power* against it. Now the *republican* constitution is the only one that is fully suited to the right of human beings, but it is also the hardest to establish, and harder still to maintain—so much so that many assert it would have to be a state of *angels*, since human beings, with their selfish inclinations, are incapable of a constitution of such sublime form. But now nature comes to the aid of the general will grounded in reason—revered, but powerless in practice—and does so precisely through those selfish inclinations. Thus it is only a matter of a good organization of the state (which is certainly within

7 The Latin line is from Seneca, *Letters* 107.11, after the Stoic Cleanthes.

human power): of directing the forces of these inclinations against one another so that one holds back the others in their destructive effect, or cancels them. The result for reason is then the same as if neither were there at all, and so the human being is compelled to be a good citizen, even if not a morally good human being. The problem of establishing a state, hard as it may sound, is soluble even for a people of devils (if only they have understanding). It runs as follows: "To order a multitude of rational beings, all of whom together require universal laws for their preservation but each of whom is secretly inclined to exempt himself from them, and to arrange their constitution in such a way that, although in their private dispositions they strive against one another, these dispositions hold one another back so that in their public conduct the result is just the same as if they had no such evil dispositions." Such a problem must be *soluble*. For the task does not call for knowing about the moral improvement of human beings, but only about the mechanism of nature: how it can be put to use on human beings so as to direct the conflict of their unpeaceful dispositions within a people in such a way that they compel one another to submit to coercive laws, and so must bring about the condition of peace in which laws have force. One can see this also in states that actually exist, though still very imperfectly organized: in their external conduct they already come very close to what the idea of right prescribes, although the inner element of morality is certainly not the cause of this (just as a good constitution is not to be expected from morality; rather, conversely, the good moral education of a people is first to be expected from a good constitution). Hence the mechanism of nature, working through selfish inclinations that naturally also counteract one another externally, can be used by reason as a means to make room for
[367] its own end, the precept of right, and thereby also, as far as the state itself can, to promote and secure both internal and external peace. — Here, then, we can say: nature irresistibly *wills* that right should in the end gain supremacy. What one neglects to do here will in the end come about by itself, though with

much inconvenience.—"Bend the reed too hard and it breaks; and whoever wants too much wants nothing." *Bouterwek*.[8]

2. The idea of the right of nations presupposes the *separation* of many neighboring states independent of one another. And although such a condition is in itself already a condition of war (unless a federative union among them prevents the outbreak of hostilities), even this is better, according to the idea of reason, than their fusion by one power that overgrows the others and passes into a universal monarchy. For laws lose ever more of their force as the range of government expands, and a soulless despotism, after it has rooted out the seeds of good, finally lapses into anarchy. Nevertheless, it is the desire of every state (or of its head) to put itself into a lasting condition of peace in this way—by ruling, if possible, the whole world. But *nature wills* otherwise.—She uses two means to keep peoples from intermingling and to separate them: the difference of *languages* and of *religions*.[9] This difference does carry with it the propensity to mutual hatred and pretexts for war; yet with growing culture and the gradual approach of human beings to greater agreement in principles, it leads to understanding in a peace that is produced and secured not, like that despotism (in the graveyard of freedom), by weakening all forces, but by their equilibrium in the liveliest competition.

[368] 3. Just as nature wisely separates the peoples that the will of each state—and indeed even on grounds of the right of nations—would gladly unite under itself by cunning or force, so, on the other hand, she also unites, through mutual self-interest, peoples whom the concept of cosmopolitan right would not have secured against violence and war. It is the *spirit of com-*

8 Friedrich Bouterwek (1766–1828), German philosopher, critic and poet.

9 KANT'S NOTE. *Difference* of *religions*: an odd expression! Just as if one also spoke of different *moralities*. There can indeed be different *kinds of faith*—historical ones, belonging not to religion but to the history of the means used to promote it, which falls within the field of scholarship—and likewise different *religious books* (Zend-Avesta, Vedas, Qur'an, etc.). But there is only one single *religion*, valid for all human beings and in all times. The former, therefore, can contain nothing other than the vehicle of religion, which is contingent and can differ with differences of time and place.

merce, which cannot coexist with war and which sooner or later takes hold of every people. For since, among all the powers (means) subordinate to the power of the state, the *power of money* may well be the most reliable, states find themselves compelled (admittedly not exactly by incentives of morality) to promote noble peace and, wherever in the world war threatens to break out, to avert it by mediation, just as if they were in a permanent alliance for this purpose. For great alliances for war can, by the nature of the case, only very rarely come about, and still more rarely succeed. ——In this way nature guarantees perpetual peace through the mechanism of human inclinations themselves—with a certainty, admittedly, that is not sufficient to *predict* its future (theoretically), but that is enough for practical purposes and makes it a duty to work toward this (not merely chimerical) end.

Second Supplement: A secret article

States should consult philosophers on war and peace.

SECOND SUPPLEMENT: SECRET ARTICLE FOR PERPETUAL PEACE

States armed for war should consult the maxims of philosophers and let them speak freely.

A secret article in negotiations of public right is objectively, that is, considered in terms of its content, a contradiction. Subjectively, however, judged by the quality of the person who dictates it, there may well be a secret in it: namely, that this person finds it questionable for its dignity to announce itself publicly as the article's author.

The only article of this kind is contained in the proposition: *The maxims of philosophers on the conditions of the possibility of public peace shall be consulted by states armed for war*.

It seems belittling, however, for the legislative authority of a state, to which one must naturally ascribe the greatest wisdom, to seek instruction from *subjects* (the philosophers) about the principles of its conduct toward other states; and yet [369] it is very advisable to do so. So the state will *invite* the philosophers to this *tacitly* (thus by making a secret of it). This amounts to saying: it will *let* them *speak* freely and publicly about the universal maxims of waging war and establishing peace (for they will do that of their own accord, provided only that they are not forbidden to). Nor does the agreement of states with one another on this point require any special arrangement among them for the purpose; it lies already in the obligation imposed by universal (morally legislating) human reason.—This does not mean, however,

that the state must give the principles of the philosopher precedence over the pronouncements of the jurist (the representative of the power of the state), but only that the philosopher be *heard*. The jurist, who has made the *scales* of right his symbol, and alongside them the *sword* of justice, commonly uses the latter not merely to keep all outside influences away from the former, but, when one pan will not sink, to throw the sword into it as well (*vae victis*) [woe to the vanquished]. The jurist who is not at the same time a philosopher (in morality too) is under the greatest temptation to do this, because his office is only to apply existing laws, not to investigate whether these themselves might need improvement. And he counts this actually lower rank of his faculty among the higher ones, because it is accompanied by power (as is also the case with the other two).[1] — The philosophical faculty stands on a very low rung beneath this allied power. Thus it is said of philosophy, for example, that she is the *handmaid* of theology (and the same is said with respect to the other two).—But it is not quite clear "whether she carries the torch before her gracious ladies or bears their train behind."

That kings should philosophize, or philosophers become kings, is not to be expected, nor is it to be wished: for the possession of power inevitably corrupts the free judgment of reason. But that kings, or kingly peoples (peoples that rule themselves according to laws of equality), should not let the class of philosophers disappear or fall silent, but let it speak publicly, is indispensable to both for shedding light on their business. And because this class is by its nature incapable of forming factions and club alliances, it is above suspicion when slandered as a *propaganda*.[2]

1 *Vae victis*: the words Livy (5.48) gives to the Gallic chief Brennus as he threw his sword onto the scales. In German universities of the time, theology, law and medicine were the "higher" faculties, philosophy the "lower."

2 Kant alludes to Plato, *Republic* 473c–d. A "propaganda" here means an organized society for spreading doctrines, as the revolutionary clubs of the 1790s were accused of being.

Appendix I: Morals and politics disagree

Kant contrasts the moral politician with the political moralist.

APPENDIX I: ON THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN MORALITY AND POLITICS WITH RESPECT TO PERPETUAL PEACE

Kant argues that morality and politics cannot truly conflict, and contrasts the moral politician with the political moralist.

370 Morality is already in itself a practice in the objective sense, as the sum of unconditionally commanding laws according to which we *ought* to act; and it is an obvious absurdity, after granting this concept of duty its authority, to want to say that one nevertheless cannot do it. For then this concept drops out of morality of its own accord (*ultra posse nemo obligatur*) [no one is obligated beyond what he can do]. Hence there can be no conflict between politics, as applied doctrine of right, and morality, as the same doctrine but theoretical (and so no conflict between practice and theory)—unless, that is, one understands by morality a general *doctrine of prudence*, that is, a theory of the maxims for choosing the most suitable means to one's purposes calculated for advantage; that is, unless one denies that there is any morality at all.

Politics says: *"Be wise as serpents"*; morality adds (as a limiting condition): *"and without guile as doves."* If the two cannot coexist in one command, then there really is a conflict between politics and morality; but if the two must by all means be united, then the concept of the opposite is absurd, and the question of how that conflict is to be settled cannot even be posed as a problem. Although the proposition *Honesty is the best policy* contains a theory that practice, unfortunately, very often contradicts, the

equally theoretical proposition *Honesty is better than any policy* is infinitely above all objection—indeed, it is the indispensable condition of the former.[1] The boundary god of morality does not yield to Jupiter (the boundary god of force); for Jupiter still stands under fate. That is, reason is not enlightened enough to survey the series of predetermining causes that would allow us to foretell with certainty, according to the mechanism of nature, the happy or bad outcome of human actions and omissions (though it does let us hope for it in accordance with our wishes). But as to what one has to do in order to stay on the track of duty (according to rules of wisdom), and thereby toward the final end —for that, reason lights our way everywhere brightly enough.[2]

371 Now the practitioner (for whom morality is mere theory) actually bases his cheerless dismissal of our good-natured hope (even when *ought* and *can* are granted) on this: he claims to foresee from human nature that human beings *will* never *will* what is required to bring about that end which leads to perpetual peace. — Admittedly, the willing of *all individual* human beings to live in a lawful constitution according to principles of freedom (the *distributive* unity of the will of *all*) is not sufficient for this end. What is further required is that *all together* will this condition (the *collective* unity of the united will)—the solution of a difficult problem—so that a whole of civil society may come into being. And since, therefore, over and above this diversity of the particular willing of all, a uniting cause of it must be added in order to produce a common will, which none of them all can do: then in the *execution* of that idea (in practice) no other beginning of the rightful condition can be counted on than one by *force*, on whose coercion public right is afterward founded. This, of course, leads one to expect in advance great deviations from that idea (the theory) in actual experience—since in any case one can count little here on the legislator's moral disposition:

1 Matthew 10:16. The German *Politik* means both "politics" and "policy," which lets Kant play on the English proverb.

2 The Roman boundary god Terminus was said to have refused to yield his place on the Capitol even to Jupiter.

that, after uniting the unruly multitude into a people, he will now leave it to them to bring about a rightful constitution through their common will.

Then it is said: whoever once has power in his hands will not let the people prescribe laws to him. A state that is once in possession of standing under no external laws will not make itself dependent on the judgment seat of other states with regard to the way it is to seek its right against them. And even a continent, if it feels itself superior to another that is otherwise not in its way, will not leave unused the means of strengthening its power by plundering or even ruling the other. And so all the plans of theory for the right of a state, the right of nations and cosmopolitan right dissolve into empty, impracticable ideals; whereas a practice founded on empirical principles of human nature, which does not consider it too base to draw instruction for its maxims from the way things go in the world, could alone hope to find a secure foundation for its edifice of political prudence.

[372] Certainly, if there is no freedom and no moral law grounded on it, but everything that happens or can happen is mere mechanism of nature, then politics (as the art of using this mechanism to govern human beings) is the whole of practical wisdom, and the concept of right is an empty thought. But if one nevertheless finds it indispensably necessary to connect this concept with politics, and even to raise it to the limiting condition of politics, then the compatibility of the two must be conceded. Now I can indeed think of a *moral politician*, that is, one who takes the principles of political prudence in such a way that they can coexist with morality; but I cannot think of a *political moralist*, who forges a morality to suit whatever the statesman's advantage finds useful.

The moral politician will make it his principle that, once defects are found in the constitution of a state or in the relations among states that could not have been prevented, it is a duty, above all for heads of state, to consider how they might be remedied as soon as possible and brought into conformity with natural right, as it stands before our eyes as a model in the idea

of reason—even if this should cost their self-interest some sacrifices. Now, to tear apart a bond of political or cosmopolitan union before a better constitution is ready to take its place runs counter to all political prudence that agrees here with morality. So it would indeed be absurd to demand that such a defect be altered at once and violently. But it can at least be demanded of whoever holds power that the maxim of the necessity of such an alteration dwell deep within him, so that he keeps continually approaching the end (the constitution that is best according to laws of right). A state can already *govern* itself in a republican way even if, under its present constitution, it still possesses despotic *sovereign power*—until the people gradually becomes capable of being moved by the mere idea of the law's authority (just as if it had physical force), and so is found fit for its own legislation (which is originally grounded on right). And if, through the violence of a *revolution* produced by a bad constitution, a more lawful constitution were attained by unlawful means, it would then no longer have to be held permissible to lead the people back to the old one—although during the revolution anyone who took part in it by violence [373] or by cunning would rightly have been subject to the penalties due to a rebel. As for the external relations of states, however, a state cannot be required to give up its constitution, even though despotic (which is, after all, the stronger one in relation to external enemies), so long as it runs the risk of being swallowed up at once by other states. Hence, even where that resolution exists, delay in carrying it out until a better opportunity must also be permitted.[3]

3 KANT'S NOTE. These are permissive laws of reason: to let a condition of public right that is afflicted with injustice continue for as long as it takes until everything has either ripened of itself for a complete overturning or been brought close to ripeness by peaceful means. For some *rightful* constitution, even one that is right only to a small degree, is better than none at all; and that latter fate (anarchy) is what a *precipitate* reform would meet. — Political wisdom, therefore, in the condition in which things now stand, will make it a duty to carry out reforms in keeping with the ideal of public right. But where nature itself brings about revolutions, it will use them not to gloss over a still greater oppression, but as a call of nature to bring about, through thorough reform, a lawful constitution grounded on principles of freedom, as the only lasting one.

So it may well be that despotizing moralists (those who fall short in practice) offend against political prudence in many ways (through measures adopted or recommended too hastily). Yet experience must gradually bring them, through these very offenses against nature, onto a better track. The moralizing politicians, by contrast, do all they can to make improvement *impossible* and to perpetuate violations of right, by glossing over principles of state that are contrary to right on the pretext that human nature is not *capable* of the good as reason prescribes it in the idea.

Instead of the practice these politically prudent men boast of, they deal in *practices*. They care only about flattering the power that now rules (so as not to miss out on their private advantage), and thereby sell out the people and, if possible, the whole world —in the manner of true lawyers (lawyers by trade, not in *legislation*) when they climb as high as politics. For since their business is not to reason subtly about legislation itself but to carry out the present commands of the law of the land, whatever lawful constitution now exists must always be the best for them— and, if it is changed higher up, whichever one follows; everything is then in [374] its proper mechanical order.[4] But suppose this knack of being at home in every saddle gives them the delusion that they can also judge the principles of a *constitution* in general according to concepts of right (hence *a priori*, not empirically); suppose they make much of knowing *people* (which is to be expected, since they deal with many), without knowing *the human being* and what can be made of him (for which a higher standpoint of anthropological observation is required); and suppose, equipped with these concepts, they set about the right of a state and the right of nations as reason prescribes it: then they can make this crossing-over only in a spirit of chicanery. They follow their usual procedure (a mechanism according to coercive laws despotically given) even where the concepts of reason call for a coercion that is lawful only accord-

4 Kant plays on *Praxis* (practice) and *Praktiken* (practices in the sense of schemes or intrigues).

ing to principles of freedom—the coercion through which alone a constitution that endures by right first becomes possible. The would-be practical man believes he can solve this task empirically, bypassing that idea: from experience of how the constitutions that have lasted best so far, though mostly contrary to right, were set up.

THE MAXIMS OF THE POLITICAL MORALIST

Kant lists the sophistical maxims of power politics: act and excuse, deny, divide and rule.

— The maxims he uses for this purpose (though he does not voice them aloud) come down roughly to the following sophistical maxims.

1. *Fac et excusa* [Act, and then excuse]. Seize the favorable opportunity to take possession on your own authority (either of a right of the state over its own people, or over another, neighboring people). The justification can be presented far more easily and elegantly *after the deed*, and the violence glossed over (especially in the first case, where the supreme power at home is at once also the legislative authority, which must be obeyed without reasoning about it), than if you wanted first to think up convincing reasons and then wait for the counterarguments. This very audacity gives a certain appearance of inner conviction that the deed is rightful, and the god *bonus eventus* [good outcome] is afterward the best advocate.[5]

2. *Si fecisti, nega* [If you did it, deny it]. Whatever crime you yourself have committed—for example, to drive your people to despair and so to revolt—deny that it is *your* fault. Claim instead that it is the fault of your subjects' obstinacy; or, when you have seized a neighboring people, that it is the fault of human nature: if one does not forestall the [375] other by force, he can count with certainty on the other forestalling him and seizing him.

3. *Divide et impera* [Divide and rule]. That is: if there are certain privileged chiefs among your people who have merely

5 Bonus Eventus ("Good Outcome") was a Roman god of success.

chosen you as their head (*primus inter pares* [first among equals]), set them at odds with one another and set them against the people. Then stand by the people, holding out the prospect of greater freedom, and everything will depend on your unconditional will. Or if it is foreign states, then stirring up discord among them is a fairly sure means of subjugating them to yourself one after another, under the guise of helping the weaker.

Now it is true that no one is deceived by these political maxims, for they are all already universally known. Nor is it the case that one need be ashamed of them, as if the injustice shone all too plainly in everyone's eyes. For great powers are never ashamed before the judgment of the common crowd, but only before one another; and as for those principles, what can make them ashamed is not their becoming public but only their *failure* (for as regards the morality of the maxims, they all agree among themselves). So there always remains to them *political* honor, on

which they can safely count: namely, that of *enlarging their* power, by whatever route it may have been acquired.[6]

From all these serpentine twists of an immoral doctrine of prudence, which tries to bring the peaceful condition among human beings out of the warlike condition of the state of nature, this much at least becomes clear: that 376 human beings can no more escape the concept of right in their private relations than in their public ones. They do not dare to base politics openly on mere tricks of prudence, and so to renounce all obedience to the concept of a public right (which is especially striking in the case of the right of nations). Rather, they pay it all due honor in itself, even if they should devise a hundred evasions and pretexts to dodge it in practice and to impute to cunning force the authority of being the origin and bond of all right. — To put an end to this sophistry (if not to the injustice it glosses over), and to bring the false *representatives* of the powerful of the earth to confess that it is not right but might in whose favor they speak—might, from

6 KANT'S NOTE. Among *human beings* living together in a state, one might still doubt that there is a certain malice rooted in human nature, and might with some plausibility cite instead the lack of a culture not yet sufficiently advanced (crudeness) as the cause of the lawless manifestations of their way of thinking. But in the external relations of *states* toward one another it strikes the eye quite undisguised and undeniably. Within each state it is veiled by the coercion of civil laws, because a greater force—that of the government—powerfully counteracts the citizens' inclination toward mutual violence. This not only gives the whole a moral veneer (*causae non causae* [causes that are not causes]); by bolting the door against the outbreak of lawless inclinations, it also really makes it much easier for the moral predisposition to develop toward immediate respect for right. — For each person now believes of himself that he would indeed hold the concept of right sacred and follow it faithfully, if only he could expect the same from everyone else—which the government partly assures him of. In this way a great step is taken *toward* morality (though not yet a moral step): toward being attached to this concept of duty for its own sake, without regard to any return.—But since each, with his good opinion of himself, nevertheless presupposes an evil disposition in all the others, they pass judgment on one another in turn: that as far as the *fact* goes, they are all of little worth. (Where this comes from may remain undiscussed, since it cannot be blamed on the *nature* of the human being as a free being.) But since respect for the concept of right, which the human being simply cannot shake off, also most solemnly sanctions the theory that he has the capacity to become adequate to it, everyone sees that he, for his part, must act in accordance with it, however others may behave.

which they take their tone, as if they themselves had something to command here—it will be good to expose the illusion by which people deceive themselves and others; to find out the supreme principle from which the aim of perpetual peace proceeds; and to show that all the evil standing in its way comes from this: that the political moralist begins where the moral politician rightly ends, and, by thus subordinating principles to the end (that is, putting the cart before the horse), defeats his own aim of bringing politics into agreement with morality.

FORMAL PRINCIPLE BEFORE MATERIAL END

Practical reason must start from the formal principle of right, not from the end to be achieved.

To make practical philosophy consistent with itself, one must first decide the question whether, in problems of practical [377] reason, one must begin from its *material principle*, the *end* (as object of choice), or from its *formal* principle—that is, the one (resting merely on freedom in external relations) according to which it runs: act so that you can will that your maxim should become a universal law (whatever the end may be).

Without any doubt the latter principle must come first. For as a principle of right it has unconditional necessity, whereas the former is necessitating only on the presupposition of empirical conditions of the proposed end, namely of its being carried out. And even if this end (for example, perpetual peace) were also a duty, that duty would still have to have been derived from the formal principle of the maxims for acting externally. — Now the first principle, that of the *political moralist* (the problem of the right of a state, the right of nations, and cosmopolitan right), is a mere *technical problem* (*problema technicum*). The second, by contrast, as the principle of the *moral politician*, for whom it is a *moral problem* (*problema morale*), is worlds apart from the other in its procedure for bringing about perpetual peace—which one now desires not merely as a physical good but also as a condition arising from the acknowledgment of duty.

Solving the first, namely the problem of political prudence, requires much knowledge of nature, in order to use its mechanism for the intended end; and yet all such knowledge is uncertain in its result as regards perpetual peace, whichever of the three divisions of public right one takes. Whether the people can best be kept obedient and at the same time flourishing—and for a long time—by severity or by the bait of vanity, by the supreme power of a single ruler or by a union of several chiefs, perhaps merely by a nobility of service, or by popular power at home: this is uncertain. History offers examples of the opposite for every form of government (except the only genuinely republican one, which, however, can occur only to a moral politician). — Still more uncertain is a *right of nations* supposedly established on statutes according to ministerial plans. It is in fact only a word without substance, and it rests on treaties that, in the very act of their conclusion, also contain the secret reservation of their violation.—The solution of the second, by contrast—namely of the *problem of political wisdom*—forces itself on us, so to speak, of its own accord. It is evident to everyone [378] , puts all artifice to shame, and leads straight to the end—though with prudence's reminder not to drag it in hastily by force, but to approach it steadily as favorable circumstances allow.

Here the saying goes: "Seek first the kingdom of pure practical reason and its *righteousness*, and your end (the blessing of perpetual peace) will come to you of itself." For morality has this peculiarity—specifically with regard to its principles of public right (hence in relation to a politics knowable *a priori*): the less it makes conduct depend on the proposed end, the intended advantage, whether physical or moral, the more it nonetheless harmonizes with that end in general. This is because it is precisely the general will given *a priori* (in one people, or in the relation of different peoples to one another) that alone determines what is right among human beings. And this union of the will of all, provided it is acted on consistently in practice, can at the same time, according to the mechanism of nature, also be the cause that produces the intended effect and gives effect to

the concept of right.[7] — So it is, for example, a principle of moral politics that a people should unite into a state solely according to the concepts of right of freedom and equality; and this principle is grounded not on prudence but on duty. Political moralists may reason as much as they like against it—about the natural mechanism of a crowd of human beings entering into society, which would weaken those principles and defeat their aim—or they may try to prove their claim against it by examples of badly organized constitutions of ancient and modern times (for example, of democracies without a system of representation). Still, they deserve no hearing—especially since such a pernicious theory may well itself bring about the evil it predicts. For according to it the human being is thrown into one class with the other living machines, which would need only the consciousness that they are not free beings to make them, in their own judgment, the most wretched of all beings in the world.

The proposition *fiat iustitia, pereat mundus* [let justice be done, though the world perish] sounds somewhat boastful and has become proverbial, but it is true. In plain German it means: "Let justice reign, even if all the scoundrels in the world should perish because of it." It is a sturdy principle of right, one that cuts off all the crooked paths marked out by cunning [379] or force. Only it must not be misunderstood—say, as permission to exercise one's own right with the utmost severity (which would conflict with ethical duty)—but understood as an obligation on those in power not to deny or diminish anyone's right out of disfavor or pity toward others. For this there is required above all an internal constitution of the state arranged according to pure principles of right, and then also a constitution uniting it with other states, neighboring or even distant, for a lawful settlement of their disputes (analogous to a universal state).[8] — This proposition means nothing other than this: political maxims must not

7 Kant adapts Matthew 6:33: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

8 The motto is traditionally attributed to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I (1503–1564).

proceed from the welfare and happiness of each state that is to be expected from following them—hence not from the end that each state makes its object (from willing), taken as the supreme (but empirical) principle of political wisdom—but from the pure concept of the duty of right (from the ought, whose principle is given *a priori* by pure reason), whatever the physical consequences may be. The world will by no means perish because there are fewer bad people in it. Moral evil has the property, inseparable from its nature, that in its aims (especially in relation to others of like mind) it contradicts and destroys itself, and so makes way for the (moral) principle of the good, even if through slow progress.

Objectively (in theory), then, there is no conflict at all between morality and politics. *Subjectively*, by contrast (in the self-seeking propensity of human beings, which, since it is not grounded on maxims of reason, should not yet be called practice), the conflict will and may always remain, because it serves as the whetstone of virtue. Virtue's true courage (according to the principle *tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito* [do not yield to evils, but go against them all the more boldly]) consists, in the present case, not so much in setting oneself with firm resolve against the evils and sacrifices that must be taken on here, as in looking in the eye the far more dangerous evil principle in ourselves—lying and treacherous, yet given to sophistry, holding up the weakness of human nature as a justification for every transgression—and in defeating its cunning.[9]

380 The political moralist can indeed say: ruler and people, or people and people, do not wrong *one another* when they feud with one another by violence or treachery, although they do wrong in general in refusing all respect to the concept of right, which alone could found peace forever. For since the one transgresses his duty toward the other, who is disposed just as unlawfully toward him, it *serves* both sides quite right when they wear each other down—yet in such a way that enough of this breed always remains to keep the game going into the most distant

9 Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.95, the Sibyl's counsel to Aeneas.

ages, so that a late posterity may one day take a warning example from them. Providence in the course of the world is justified by this. For the moral principle in the human being never goes out; and reason, which is pragmatically capable of carrying out the ideas of right according to that principle, keeps growing besides through ever-advancing culture—and with it, however, grows the guilt of those transgressions. Creation alone —namely, that such a kind of corrupt beings should have existed on earth at all—seems impossible to justify by any theodicy (if we assume that things never will or can go better with the human race). But this standpoint of judgment is far too high for us to be able to ascribe our concepts (of wisdom), with a theoretical purpose, to the supreme power, which is inscrutable to us.[10]

— We are unavoidably driven to such desperate conclusions if we do not assume that the pure principles of right have objective reality, that is, that they can be carried out; and that the people within the state, and further the states in relation to one another, must act accordingly, whatever empirical politics may object. True politics, therefore, cannot take a single step without first having paid homage to morality. And though politics by itself is a difficult art, its union with morality is no art at all; for morality cuts the knot that politics cannot untie as soon as the two conflict. The right of human beings must be held sacred, however great a sacrifice it may cost the ruling power. One cannot split the difference here and devise the halfway thing of a pragmatically conditioned right (between right and utility). Rather, all politics must bend its knee before right, but in return it may hope to reach, though slowly, the stage where it will shine with lasting brilliance.

10 A theodicy is a defense of God's justice in the face of evil; the term was coined by Leibniz (1710).

Appendix II: Morals and politics agree

Publicity as the test of whether a political maxim is just.

APPENDIX II: ON THE AGREEMENT OF POLITICS WITH MORALITY ACCORDING TO THE TRANSCENDENTAL CONCEPT OF PUBLIC RIGHT

Publicity serves as the test: a maxim that cannot be openly declared is wrong.

381 If I abstract from all the *matter* of public right (according to the various empirically given relations of human beings within the state, or of states among one another), as legal scholars usually conceive it, there still remains the *form of publicity*. Every claim of right contains in itself the possibility of this form, because without it there would be no justice (which can be thought only as *publicly knowable*), and hence also no right, which is conferred only by justice.[1]

Every claim of right must have this capacity for publicity. And since it is quite easy to judge whether it is present in a given case—that is, whether publicity can be reconciled with the agent's principles or not—it can supply a criterion that is easy to use and is found *a priori* in reason: in the latter case, it lets us recognize at once, as if by an experiment of pure reason, the falsity (wrongfulness) of the claim in question (*praetensio iuris* [claim of right]).

After such abstraction from everything empirical that the concept of the right of a state and of the right of nations contains

1 Publicity (*Publizität*) means openness to public knowledge, the capacity of a maxim to be openly declared.

(such as the malice in human nature that makes coercion necessary), one can call the following proposition the *transcendental formula* of public right:

"All actions relating to the right of other human beings whose maxim is incompatible with publicity are wrong."

This principle is to be regarded not merely as *ethical* (belonging to the doctrine of virtue) but also as *juridical* (concerning the right of human beings). For a maxim that I may not *let be heard* without thereby defeating my own aim, one that must be kept entirely *secret* if it is to succeed, and one that I cannot *publicly avow* without inevitably provoking everyone's resistance to my plan—such a maxim can get this necessary and universal resistance of all against me, which can be seen *a priori*, from nowhere else than the injustice with which it threatens everyone.—Further, the principle is merely *negative*: that is, it serves only as a means of recognizing what is *not right* toward others. [382] Like an axiom, it is certain without being provable, and it is moreover easy to apply, as can be seen from the following examples of public right.

1. *As regards the right of a state* (*ius civitatis*), namely internal right: here a question arises which many consider hard to answer and which the transcendental principle of publicity resolves quite easily: "Is rebellion a legitimate means for a people to throw off the oppressive power of a so-called tyrant (*non titulo, sed exercitio talis* [one who is such not by title but by the exercise of power])?" The rights of the people are violated, and he (the tyrant) suffers no wrong by being dethroned; of that there is no doubt. Nonetheless, it is in the highest degree wrong of the subjects to seek their right in this way, and they could just as little complain of injustice if they were defeated in this struggle and then had to suffer the harshest punishment for it.

Much can be argued for and against here if one tries to settle it by a dogmatic deduction of the grounds of right; but the transcendental principle of the publicity of public right can spare itself this long-windedness. According to this principle, the people asks itself, before the civil contract is established,

whether it would dare to make public the maxim of intending to rise up when the occasion arises. It is easy to see that if, in founding a constitution, one wanted to make it a condition that force may be used against the head of state in certain cases, the people would have to claim a rightful power over him. But then he would not be the head of state; or, if both were made conditions of establishing the state, no state at all would be possible—which, after all, was the people's aim. The wrongness of rebellion is thus evident from the fact that its maxim, if one *publicly avowed* it, would make its own aim impossible. One would therefore necessarily have to keep it secret.—But this would by no means be necessary on the part of the head of state. He can say outright that he will punish every rebellion with the death of its ringleaders, however much they may believe that he for his part was the first to transgress the fundamental law. For if he knows that he possesses *irresistible* supreme power (which must be assumed in every civil constitution, because whoever does not have power enough to protect each person in the people against every other [383] also has no right to command him), then he need not worry that making his maxim known will defeat his own aim. It is quite consistent with this that, if the people's rebellion succeeded, that head of state would have to step back into the position of a subject; he likewise could not start a rebellion to regain power, but neither would he have to fear being called to account for his former conduct of the state.

2. *As regards the right of nations.*—Only on the presupposition of some rightful condition (that is, of the external condition under which a right can actually be allotted to a human being) can there be talk of a right of nations. For, as a public right, its very concept already contains the publication of a general will that determines for each what is his. And this *status iuridicus* [rightful condition] must arise from some contract that need not (like the one from which a state arises) be grounded on coercive laws, but can also, if need be, be one of *continually free* association, like the federation of different states mentioned above. For without some *rightful condition* that actively links the vari-

ous (physical or moral) persons—hence in the state of nature—there can be nothing but private right. — Here, too, there arises a conflict of politics with morality (morality regarded as the doctrine of right), and here that criterion of the publicity of maxims likewise finds easy application—but only in this way: that the contract binds the states only for the purpose of keeping themselves at peace with one another and together against other states, but by no means for the purpose of making acquisitions. —Now the following cases of antinomy between politics and morality arise, together with their solution.

a) "If one of these states has promised the other something—whether assistance, or the cession of certain lands, or subsidies and the like—the question is whether, in a case on which the state's welfare depends, it can free itself from keeping its word by wishing to be regarded as a double person: first as *sovereign*, since he is answerable to no one in his state; but then again merely as the highest *official of the state*, who must give account to the state. The conclusion then turns out to be that what he has bound himself to in the first capacity, he is released from in the second."—But if a state (or its head) let this maxim of its be heard, [384] everyone else would naturally either shun it or unite with others to resist its presumptions. This proves that politics, with all its cunning, would on this footing (of openness) defeat its own end, and hence that the maxim must be wrong.

b) "If a neighboring power that has grown to a fearsome size (*potentia tremenda* [a power to be dreaded]) arouses concern, may one assume that, because it *can* oppress, it will also *want* to —and does this give the less powerful a right to a (united) attack on it, even without any prior injury?"—A state that wished to *announce* its maxim here in the affirmative would only bring the evil about more surely and more swiftly. For the greater power would forestall the smaller ones; and as for the union of the latter, that is only a weak reed against one who knows how to use *divide et impera*.—This maxim of political prudence, publicly declared, thus necessarily defeats its own aim and is consequently unjust.

c) "If a smaller state, by its location, breaks up the territorial unity of a larger one, which the larger needs for its preservation, is the larger not entitled to subjugate the smaller and join it to its own?"—It is easy to see that the larger state must certainly not let such a maxim be heard beforehand. For either the smaller states would unite in good time, or other powerful states would fight over this prey; hence the maxim makes itself impracticable by its openness. This is a sign that it is unjust—and can be so to a very high degree; for the smallness of the object of an injustice does not prevent the injustice shown in it from being very great.

3. *As regards cosmopolitan right,* I pass over it here in silence, because, given its analogy with the right of nations, its maxims are easy to state and to assess.

THE AFFIRMATIVE PRINCIPLE OF PUBLICITY

Politics agrees with morality only within a federation of states, and maxims that need publicity accord with right.

Now in the principle of the incompatibility of the maxims of the right of nations with publicity we do indeed have a good sign of the *disagreement* of politics with morality (as doctrine of right). But we also need to be taught what the condition is under which its maxims agree with the right of nations. For one cannot infer conversely that maxims compatible with [385] publicity are for that reason also just, since whoever has decisive superior power need not conceal his maxims.—The condition of the possibility of a right of nations in general is that a *rightful condition* exist in the first place. For without it there is no public right; rather, all right that one may think of outside it (in the state of nature) is merely private right. Now we saw above that a federative condition of states, which aims merely at removing war, is the only *rightful* condition compatible with their *freedom*. So the harmony of politics with morality is possible only in a federative union (which is therefore given and necessary *a priori* according to principles of right); and all political prudence has as its rightful basis the establishment of such a union to its greatest pos-

sible extent. Without this end, all its cleverness is unwisdom and veiled injustice.—Now this pseudo-politics has its *casuistry*, a match for the best Jesuit school: the *reservatio mentalis* [mental reservation], drafting public treaties in terms that one can interpret to one's advantage as one likes when the occasion arises (for example, the distinction between the *status quo de fait* and *de droit* [the status quo in fact and in law]);—probabilism: inventing evil intentions in others, or making the probability of their possibly gaining the upper hand into a ground of right for undermining other, peaceful states;—and finally the *peccatum philosophicum* (*peccatillum*, *bagatelle*) [philosophical sin (a little sin, a trifle)]: holding it an easily forgiven trifle to swallow up a *small* state if a much *larger* one thereby gains, for the supposedly greater good of the world.[23]

The opening for this is given by the duplicity of politics toward morality, using now one branch of it, now the other, for its purposes.—Both love of humanity and respect for the *right* of human beings are duties; but the former is only a *conditional* duty, the latter an *unconditional*, absolutely commanding one. Whoever wants to give himself up to the sweet feeling of beneficence [386] must first be fully assured that he has not transgressed it. With morality in the first sense (as ethics) politics readily agrees, so as to surrender the right of human beings to their superiors. But with morality in the second meaning (as doctrine of right), before which it would have to bend its knee, it finds it advisable not to negotiate at all, preferring to deny it all reality

2 KANT'S NOTE. Evidence for such maxims can be found in Councillor Garve's treatise "On the Connection of Morality with Politics" (1788). This worthy scholar admits at the very outset that he cannot give a satisfactory answer to this question. But to approve of them nonetheless, while admitting that he cannot fully remove the objections that arise against them, seems to show more indulgence toward those who are very inclined to misuse them than it would be advisable to concede.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Christian Garve (1742–1798), a widely read popular philosopher in Breslau, held the honorary title of *Hofrat* (court councillor).

3 Probabilism, associated with Jesuit casuists, held that one may act on any probable opinion even if its opposite is more probable. The "philosophical sin" was an offense against reason alone, supposedly not against God; the doctrine was condemned by Rome in 1690.

and to reinterpret all duties as mere benevolence. This trickery of a politics that shuns the light would easily be foiled by philosophy through the publicity of those maxims—if only politics would dare to grant the philosopher the publicity of his own.

With this in view I propose another transcendental and affirmative principle of public right, whose formula would be this: "All maxims that *need* publicity (in order not to fail of their end) agree with right and politics combined."

For if they can reach their end only through publicity, they must conform to the universal end of the public (happiness); and to be in harmony with this (to make the public content with its condition) is the proper task of politics. But if this end is to be attainable only through publicity, that is, through removing all distrust of its maxims, then these maxims must also be in harmony with the right of the public; for in this alone is the union of the ends of all possible. — The further development and discussion of this principle I must put off to another occasion. Only that it is a transcendental formula can be seen from the removal of all empirical conditions (the doctrine of happiness), as the matter of the law, and from its regard solely to the form of universal lawfulness.

If it is a duty, and if at the same time there is well-founded hope, to make the condition of public right actual, even if only in an approximation progressing to infinity, then the *perpetual peace* that follows what have hitherto been falsely called peace treaties (really only truces) is no empty idea, but a task that, solved little by little, steadily comes nearer its goal (since the intervals in which equal progress is made will, it is hoped, keep getting shorter).