**Realpolitik of Otto Von Bismarck and Camillo di Cavour**

***Define realpolitik and describe how this principle is evident in the strategies of Otto Von Bismarck and Camillo di Cavour.***

The term politics is used in many ways in everyday language, often with a negative implication of self-interest, backstabbing, and trickery, such as in the phrase “office politics.” This characterization is not completely unfair; even in the government, politics often involve such intrigue. But one need not think of politics only as a negative endeavor. In fact, despite the common joke that word comes from “poly” (meaning many) and “ticks” (blood-sucking insects), politics is an essential activity for any sizeable group of people. As Aristotle put it in *The Politics*, “Man is a political animal.” Without cooperation and an ability to enforce the rules established to govern behavior, large groups would be subject to chaos and the will of the strongest to a much greater extent than happens in modern societies.

Realpolitik is defined as a set of activities that help organize individuals, systematically resolve disputes, and maintain order in society with the use of power. These actions include passing and enforcing laws governing individual behavior, mobilizing and channeling mass participation, and socializing individuals to support the political system and the values on which it is based. If politics involves “who gets what, when, and how,” then when and how people get what they want depends to a large extent on their power.

Realpolitik refers to politics or diplomacy based primarily on power and on practical and material factors and considerations. It is a power as influence and a power as capabilities. Power is influence: *getting people to do what you want them to do*. The concept of power as influence includes the idea that one person in a power relationship can overcome the resistance of another. Power is capabilities that focus on the characteristics that would give one the ability to influence important outcomes.

Also, realpolitik is characterized with both coercive and noncoercive power. Coercive power is getting what one wants through the use of rewards and punishments. In domestic politics, government leaders can pass laws that prohibit certain actions and come up with punishments for those who break the law. On the other hand, noncoercive power is getting what one wants because of legitimacy. Noncoercive power rests on a different foundation, one that does not involve rewards and punishments. In this case, power results from a sense of legitimacy.

The principle of realpolitik is evident in the strategies of *Otto von Bismarck* and*Camillo di Cavour*. It is the strategy of influence and capabilities of coercive and noncoercive power.

**Otto von Bismarck**

World War I brought the world's major nations into the war at one time or another.  It's the alliance system was as much at fault as anything in bringing about the scale of the conflict.  It's possible to delve deeply into European history in the quest to unearth the roots of the various alliances that were at play in 1914.  However, for our purposes it serves to date the origins of the core alliances back to [Bismarck's](http://www.firstworldwar.com/bio/bismarck.htm) renowned intrigues, as he set about creating a unified Germany from the loose assembly of German confederated states in the 1860s. The German statesman *Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck* (1815-1898) was largely responsible for the creation of the German Empire in 1871. A leading diplomat of the late 19th century, he was known as the Iron Chancellor*.* Bismarck, first Prime Minister of Prussia and then Chancellor of the German Empire (once he had assembled it), set about the construction of Germany through high politics judiciously assisted by war against Austria and France.

Strategically, Otto von Bismarck engineered war with Austria in 1866 over disputed territory in the duchy of Holstein as the first step to oust Austria as the prime influence among these German states in order to achieve the creation of the German Empire. The resulting war lasted just seven weeks which its common title “The Seven Weeks War” and ended with the complete dominance of the supremely efficient Prussian military. Bismarck extracted Austria not only Schleswig and Holstein, but also Hanover, Hesse, Nassau and Frankfurt, creating the North German Federation. Having assembled a united assembly in the north Bismarck determined to achieve the same in the south – and so unite all of the German states under the Prussian banner. Bismarck resolved that war with the French, a common enemy, would attain his aims. First, he needed to engineer a credible reason for war by a doctored version of a telegram ostensibly from the Kaiser to Bismarck himself, called the Ems Telegram that affected both insult France and Prussia over their inability to resolve the dispute over the Spanish throne.

Napoleon III, facing civil revolt at home over quite unrelated matters, and receiving encouraging noises from his military commanders, responded by declaring war against Prussia five days later, on 19 July 1870. Once again, as was the case against Austria, the Prussian military machine demolished the French forces. The consequences of the war were numerous. Aside from the usual territorial gains – France ceded both Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia and was forces to pay swingeing reparations – the southern German states agreed to an alliance with their northern counterparts, resulting in the creation of Bismarck’s cherished German Empire. Bismarck did not initially fear an alliance between France and Britain, for the latter was at that time in the midst of a self-declared 1870s policy of “splendid isolation”, choosing to stay above continental European politics.

For, having achieved his life’s aim, Bismarck’s expansionary plans were at an end. He had secured what he wanted, and his chief desire now was to maintain its stability. He therefore set about building European alliances aimed at protecting Germany from potentially threatening quarters. He negotiated in 1873 with the *Three Emperors League* which tied Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia to each other’s aid in time of war. However Russia withdrew five years later in 1878 leaving Bismarck with a new *Dual Alliance*with Austria-Hungary in 1879.

This latter treaty promised aid to each other in the event of an attack by Russia, or if Russia aided another power at war with either Germany or Austria-Hungary. Should either nation be attacked by another power, e.g. France, they were to remain – at the very least – benevolently neutral. This alliance, unlike others, endured until war in 1914. It was this clause that Austria-Hungary invoked in calling Germany to her aid against Russian support for Serbia (who in turn was protected by treaty with Russia).

Two years after Germany and Austria-Hungary concluded their agreement, Italy was brought into the fold with the signing of the *Triple Alliance* in 1881. Under the provisions of this treaty, Germany and Austria-Hungary promised to assist Italy if she were attacked by France, and vice versa: Italy was bound to lend aid to Germany or Austria-Hungary if France declared war against either.

Potentially of greater importance, Bismarck in 1887 agreed to a so-called *Reinsurance Treaty* with Russia. This document stated that both would remain if either were involved in a war with a third (be it offensive or defensive). However, should that third power transpire to be France, Russia would not obliged to provide assistance to Germany (as was the case of Germany found itself at war with Austria-Hungary).

The realpolitik of Otto von Bismarck is narrowed down to power and alliance. By all means, he uses his legitimacy to engineer war against Austria as the first step to have the German Empire. In order to secure the power held by the German Empire, Bismarck strategically called for alliance not only to avoid war but to preserve the power of the German Empire. He allied with the Austria-Hungary with the Dual Alliance and also with the Triple Alliance with Italy to avoid war in the south. One of the chief aims of the Triple Alliance was to prevent Italy from declaring war against Austria-Hungary, towards whom the Italians were in dispute territorial matters. Also he negotiated Reinsurance Treaty with Russia to avoid the possibility of the two-front war against France and Russia. Realpolitik as being defined above is indeed a set of activities that help organize individuals, systematically resolve disputes, and maintain order in society with the use of power may it coercive or noncoercive.

**Camillo di Cavour & Realpolitik**

*Count Cavour*, as he’s often known, was the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia. He was largely responsible for creating the nation of Italy. He forged an alliance with France which meant that his kingdom got Lombardy as a reward for fighting along with the French against the Austrians. Then Garibaldi went into Sicily and overthrew the King of Naples. Because he was a radical and republican Cavour moved quickly to “welcome” the liberated lands into what he now called the Kingdom of Italy.

Strategically, the realpolitik of Camillo di Cavour was the same that of Otto von Bismarck which deals with power politics and alliance. Camillo di Cavour did his best to used Piedmont as the key to the unification of Italy same as Bismarck’s Prussia as the key to the unification of the German Empire. Camillo di Cavour accepted the alliance with Britain and France in order support Piedmont’s expansion in Italy.

Attempted assassination of Napoleon III brought strong bond between Cavour and Napoleon III. Cavour reluctantly agreed to cede Savoy and Nice to France and also arranged a royal marriage between Princess Clotide and Prince Napoleon to aid Piedmont by France.

On the other hand, Garibaldi was military dictator of southern Italy and Sicily, and he imposed the Piedmontese constitution but publicly demanded that Cavour be removed, which alienated him slightly from Victor Emmanuel.

Garibaldi was unwilling to stop at this point, and planned an immediate invasion of the [Papal States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_States). Cavour feared France in that case would declare war to defend the Pope, and would successfully stop Garibaldi from initiating his attack. Garibaldi had been weakened by the [Battle of Volturno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Volturnus_%281860%29), so Cavour quickly invaded the Papal regions of [Umbria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umbria) and the [Marches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marches). This linked the territories conquered by Piedmont with those taken by Garibaldi. The King met Garibaldi halfway at Naples, where Garibaldi handed over control of southern Italy and Sicily, thus uniting Italy.

In 1861, Victor Emmanuel II declared the Kingdom of Italy, making Cavour officially prime minister of Italy. In this case, Count Cavour strategically used France to protect not only Piedmont but to attain the unification of Italy.

Realpolitik is power and alliance

<http://marcchristiantangpuz.blogspot.com/2013/01/realpolitik-of-otto-von-bismarck-and.html>