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978-0-521-69161-1 - States, Nations, and the Great Powers: The Sources of Regional War and Peace

Benjamin Miller

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States, Nations, and the Great Powers

Why are some regions prone to war while others remain at peace? What conditions cause regions to move from peace to war and vice versa? This book offers a novel theoretical explanation for the differences in levels of and transitions between war and peace. The author distinguishes between “hot” and “cold” outcomes, depending on intensity of the war or the peace, and then uses three key concepts (state, nation, and the international system) to argue that it is the specific balance between states and nations in different regions that determines the hot or warm outcomes: the lower the balance, the higher the war proneness of the region, while the higher the balance, the warmer the peace. The international systemic factors, for their part, affect only the cold outcomes of cold war and cold peace.

The theory of regional war and peace developed in this book is examined through case studies of the post-1945 Middle East, the Balkans and South America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and post-1945 Western Europe. It uses comparative data from all regions and concludes by proposing ideas on how to promote peace in war-torn regions.

BENJAMIN MILLER is a professor in the School of Political Sciences at the University of Haifa, Israel. He is the author of *When Opponents Cooperate: Great Power Conflict and Collaboration in World Politics* (1995).

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press,
New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521691611

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First published 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-87122-8 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-69161-1 paperback

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Preface and acknowledgments

This book investigates the origins of regional war and peace. My interest in this subject can be traced back to the first day of a major regional war in which I actively took part as a very young soldier – the 1973 Yom Kippur War. On the first day of that war I found myself engaged in tank battles with Syrian forces and in the early morning of the day after I – together with a few other Israeli soldiers – was surrounded by a major Syrian armored force in a very small bunker in the southern part of the Golan Heights.

I will not go here into the details of the very frightening experience in that bunker and following experiences later in the war. But such traumatic events have left me with a strong desire to look for an explanation for the occurrence of armed conflicts, notably those which escalate to large-scale violence, and how to manage, reduce, or overcome such conflicts and to move from war to peace.

As a student of Kenneth Waltz at the University of California, Berkeley, I fully realized the importance of the international system, and specifically the great powers and their influence on a great variety of events in world politics. Thus, my first book focused on the sources of conflict and cooperation among the great powers. Even though the great powers exercise important effects on regional affairs as well, as this book fully acknowledges, I have felt that they do not provide the only answer to the great differences among different regions with regard to their level of war and peace. Thus, I faced two major challenges:

1. To define the general type of effects the great powers have on regional war and peace as compared to the effects of the regional and domestic factors. Here came the idea – developed in this book – that rather than just a dichotomy between war and peace, we may have “cold” and

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“hot/warm” war and peace situations: the great powers affect the cold outcomes, while the regional/domestic factors affect the more intense hot outcomes.

2. Which are the key regional/domestic factors that provide the most powerful explanation of the variations in war and peace among regions and of the transitions of regions from war to peace and vice versa? My thinking and research have led me to the idea that the concepts of “state” and “nation,” and especially the balance between them, as explained in this book, while overlooked in the mainstream international relations theorizing on war and peace, deserve a closer look. Indeed, they are especially crucial for understanding the phenomenon of regional war and peace – both civil and interstate wars and a significant number of “mixed” domestic and transborder violent incidents.

This process of a search for an explanation of the regional war and peace puzzle has been a long one, sometimes enjoyable and at times frustrating. At least one big advantage of such a protracted process is that it enabled me to benefit from the wise advice of many wonderful people. Thus, I have accumulated a lot of debts to numerous colleagues and students even if, unfortunately, I may have forgotten to acknowledge some of them here. While the comments improved the manuscript quite a bit, I remain, of course, fully responsible for the book’s content.

The initial stages of thinking about these issues started in an exciting fellowship year at the Center for International Studies at Princeton University. I would like to thank Professor Aaron Friedberg for giving me the opportunity to spend the year in such a stimulating environment and to benefit also from the many insights of George Downs, Michael Doyle, Robert Gilpin, and Bill Wohlforth, as well as Ilene Cohen, among other engaging people at the Princeton Center. My conversations and exchanges with Jack Levy, Ed Rhodes, Matthew Randall, and Jeffrey Taliaferro were also helpful in shaping my theoretical thinking on war and peace issues.

When I came back to teach at the Hebrew University, a group of colleagues helped to develop the initial ideas I brought from my stay at Princeton – particularly Hillel Frisch, Avraham Sela, Norrin Ripsman, Galia Press Bar-Nathan, and Elie Podeh, as well as Yitzhak Brudni, Raymond Cohen, Uri Bialer, Yaacov Bar Siman-Tov, Sasson Sofer, Arie Kacowicz, Michael Brecher, and Emanuel Adler. In addition to my faculty colleagues, a group of very able graduate students worked

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as my research assistants at different stages (some later became colleagues) and provided invaluable help with a lot of dedication and clever ideas. Among this wonderful group I would like to note the great help of Oded Lowenheim, Ram Erez, Boaz Atzili, Yoav Gercheck, Ohad Laslau, Shlomi Carmi, and particularly Korina Kagan, who was always extremely helpful in numerous areas of the research and the writing. Uri Reznick was a first-rate research assistant, and later collaborator, on a study of the nineteenth-century Balkans. Uri's great contribution is reflected in some of the key empirical portions of chapter 6.

During my stay as a visiting professor at Duke University, a number of colleagues posed tough challenges to my ideas and the direction my study was taking. I hope that, by forcing me to rethink some propositions and methods, they have helped me to improve the manuscript. I especially appreciate the regular meetings I held with Robert Keohane over lunch – always after he had read some portion of the study and was ready with written comments and suggestions. Extremely helpful and challenging were also Joe Grieco, Hein Goemans, Peter Feaver, Chris Gelpi, and Martin Seeleib-Kaiser. All read some important portions of the study and provided detailed and insightful comments. Other helpful and supportive colleagues at Duke included Don Horowitz, Bruce Jentleson, and Allan Kornberg. Also at Duke a group of graduate students was both demanding and helpful in its questioning and assistance. Among them were Jonathan Van Loo, Phil Demske, and the participants at a joint graduate seminar given by Hein Goemans and myself, who discussed the typescript at length.

My extended stay at Duke was also useful for delivering talks on the study in stimulating places such as Princeton University, the University of Chicago (PIPES), the University of Virginia, McGill University, Concordia University, James Madison College at Michigan State University, and of course a number of seminars at Duke. I thank the participants in these seminars, especially Aaron Friedberg, Richard Ullman, Charles Lipson, John Mearsheimer, Alex Downes, Charles Glaser, T. V. Paul, Dale Copeland, John Owen, Mohammed Ayoob, Norrin Ripsman, and Paul C. Noble.

The last stage of the long journey of writing and rewriting this manuscript took place when I came back to Israel, and colleagues and students at the University of Haifa and from other places gave much needed help for the final formulations of the study. Among them, Avi Kober, Jeremy Pressman, Zeev Maoz, and Ben D. Mor

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as well as Ranan D. Kuperman, Zach Levey, Sammy Smootha, Gabi Ben-Dor, Tal Dingott-Alkopher, Avi Ben-Zvi, and Uri Bar-Joseph were especially helpful. A number of graduate students provided a lot of badly needed help in many senses. Among them I would like to note Erez Shoshani, Moran Mandelbaum, and Zvika Kaplan, as well as Sharon Mankovitz in particular; above all Dov Levin was extremely helpful beyond the call of duty in numerous senses. Sharon was very instrumental in preparing the data-file on the post-1945 wars (see appendix B) while Dov refined and updated it as well as the comparative regional tables (see appendix A). I would also like to thank participants in seminars at the University of Haifa and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as well as participants in the annual meetings and workshops of the Israeli Association for International Studies (IAIS) in Bar-Ilan, Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem Universities. As the president of this association during 2003–7 I would like to thank my assistants there – Erez, Zvika, and Keren Raz-Netzer – and the members for their help and insightful comments.

Finally, many thanks to the very helpful team at Cambridge University Press – the editor, John Haslam, and his assistant Carrie Cheek. Both provided important assistance at various stages of the typescript preparation. Special thanks to the extremely helpful and cheerful copyeditor, Karen Anderson Howes, who has done a superb job in copyediting my typescript.

I am grateful for the generous financial assistance of the Israel Science Foundation (founded by the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities); the Tel Aviv University Institute for Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation; the Department of Political Science, Duke University; the National Security Studies Center at the University of Haifa; the Tami Steimnitz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University; and the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University.

I have much revised earlier versions of some limited portions of this book which have been published before in “Between War and Peace: Systemic Effects on the Transition of the Middle East and the Balkans from the Cold War to the Post-Cold War Era,” *Security Studies* 11, 2 (Winter 2001–2), 1–52; “Conflict in the Balkans, 1830–1913: Combining Levels of Analysis,” *International Politics* 40, 3 (September 2003), 365–407, coauthored with Uri Reznick; “When and How Regions Become Peaceful: Potential Theoretical Pathways to Peace,” *International Studies Review* 7 (2005), 229–267 © (2005) the International Studies Association; and “Balance of Power or the State-to-Nation Balance: Explaining Middle

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East War-Propensity," *Security Studies*, 15, 4 (October–December 2006). I would like to thank these journals for permitting me to use material that first appeared in their pages.

Such a protracted and demanding process of writing a book is made easier by a supportive family. I would like to thank my wife, Liora, and my daughter Adi for their wonderful and warm love and support during the occasional crises related to writing the typescript. My daughter, in particular, inspires my curiosity at creating two-by-two tables to capture logically key arguments of the manuscript. My sister Eti and her lovely family were always a source of great encouragement. Any amount of words would not be able to capture the enormous support of my late parents, Zvi and Zunia Miller, and my late aunt and uncle, Tzipora and Yitzhak Sarfi. I dedicated my earlier book to my parents and to my wife and daughter. I would like to dedicate this book to my sister and my uncle and aunt for all their love and material and spiritual encouragement.