Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy

Kenneth Schultz explores the effects of democratic politics on the use and success of coercive diplomacy. He argues that open political competition between the government and opposition parties influences the decision to use threats in international crises, how rival states interpret those threats, and whether or not crises can be settled short of war. The relative transparency of their political processes means that, while democratic governments cannot easily conceal domestic constraints against using force, they can credibly demonstrate resolve when their threats enjoy strong domestic support. As a result, compared to their nondemocratic counterparts, democracies are more selective about making threats, but those they do make are more likely to be successful – that is, to gain a favorable outcome without resort to war. Schultz develops his argument through a series of game-theoretic models and tests the resulting hypotheses using both statistical analyses and historical case studies.

Kenneth Schultz is Assistant Professor of Politics and International Affairs at the Department of Politics and Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University. He has published articles in such journals as the American Political Science Review, International Organization, and the British Journal of Political Science.
CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: 76

Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy

Editorial Board
Steve Smith (Managing editor)
Thomas Biersteker  Chris Brown  Phil Cerny  Alex Danchev
Joseph Grieco  John Groome  Richard Higgott  G. John Ikenberry
Caroline Kennedy-Pipe  Steve Lamy
Michael Nicholson  Ngaire Woods

Cambridge Studies in International Relations is a joint initiative of
Cambridge University Press and the British International Studies
Association (BISA). The series will include a wide range of material,
from undergraduate textbooks and surveys to research-based
monographs and collaborative volumes. The aim of the series is to
publish the best new scholarship in International Studies from
Europe, North America, and the rest of the world.
CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

76 Kenneth A. Schultz
Democracy and coercive diplomacy

75 David Patrick Houghton
US foreign policy and the Iran hostage crisis

74 Cecilia Albin
Justice and fairness in international negotiation

73 Martin Shaw
Theory of the global state
Globality as an unfinished revolution

72 Frank C. Zagare and D. Marc Kilgour
Perfect deterrence

71 Robert O’Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams
Contesting global governance
Multilateral economic institutions and global social movements

70 Roland Bleiker
Popular dissent, human agency and global politics

69 Bill McSweeney
Security, identity and interests
A sociology of international relations

68 Molly Cochran
Normative theory in international relations
A pragmatic approach

67 Alexander Wendt
Social theory of international politics

66 Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink (eds.)
The power of human rights
International norms and domestic change

65 Daniel W. Drezner
The sanctions paradox
Economic statecraft and international relations

Series list continues after index
Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy

Kenneth A. Schultz

Princeton University
To Heather and Aaron
Contents

List of figures x
List of tables xi
Preface xiii

1 Introduction 1

Part I: Theory
2 Information and signaling in international crises 23
3 Democratic politics in international crises 57
4 Domestic competition and signaling in international crises 84

Part II: Empirical analysis
5 Selective threats, effective threats: the initiation and escalation of international crises 119
6 Credibility confirmed: the implications of domestic support 161
7 Credibility undermined: the implications of domestic dissent 197
8 Conclusions and implications 231

Appendices
A Solution to the basic crisis bargaining game 249
B Solution to the bargaining game with opposition 253
C Data and methods 261
D Coding and sources for opposition stances 273

References 282
Index 297
Figures

2.1 Crisis bargaining model page 27
2.2 The challenger’s equilibrium strategies as a function of its value for war 45
2.3 Equilibrium outcomes under complete and asymmetric information 50
2.4 Predicted outcomes as a function of the challenger’s constraints 52
3.1 US crisis participation and the salience of foreign affairs, 1946–1992 75
4.1 Crisis bargaining game with a strategic opposition 87
4.2 The effects of the opposition party on strategies and outcomes 93
4.3 The effects of a dovish opposition party 105
4.4 One possible equilibrium with a hawkish opposition party 107
4.5 The effects of national welfare concerns 110
## Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Comparing the predictions of three perspectives on democracy</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>The probability of crisis initiation</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Predicted probabilities of crisis initiation as a function of regime type</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Observed frequencies of reciprocation by regime type</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>The probability of crisis reciprocation</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Predicted probabilities of reciprocation</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Observed frequencies of escalation by regime type</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>The probability of escalation</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Predicted probabilities of war as a function of regime type</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Summary of results</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Cases of extended-immediate deterrence</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Democratic defenders and their opposition parties</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Deterrence outcomes as a function of the opposition’s stance</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Deterrence outcomes as a function of defender’s type</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>The probability of successful deterrence</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In March 1999, as the first draft of this manuscript was being completed, the United States and its allies launched an air war against Yugoslavia over its treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. While this conflict was fascinating for many reasons, one aspect that particularly struck me was President Clinton’s decision to announce, both before and during the air campaign, that he had no intention of introducing ground troops into Kosovo. Why Clinton was reluctant to use ground forces is not very puzzling. Given the costs that were anticipated and the lack of strong public support, any such operation would have been politically and militarily quite risky. The decision to announce his intentions publicly, however, came under strong criticism, especially when the air campaign failed to produce immediate results. “How does it make sense,” asked Republican Senator John McCain, “to tell your enemy before you go into a conflict that you will not exercise whatever options are necessary to achieve victory?” (US Senate 1999). Asked this very question in an April 19 Newsweek interview, Vice President Al Gore defended the president’s strategy: “We have an obligation to candidly communicate with the American people about what we’re doing and why, and what we’re not doing and why. And if candor and clarity are costs of democracy, it’s not the first time.”

This book explores how the transparent political process within democracies influences the way these states use threats of force, how the targets of those threats respond, and whether or not crises are resolved short of war. While Gore’s response reflects a common perception that the requirements of open deliberation and debate impose liabilities on democratic foreign policy, my findings suggest a more mixed and, on balance, more positive conclusion. The Kosovo episode reflects a class of cases in which the demands of domestic politics and the demands of
international diplomacy clashed. President Clinton ruled out ground troops in large part to hold together fragile domestic support for the intervention, both in the United States and in Europe. He traded off some of his bargaining leverage against Yugoslavia in order to mute domestic oppositions that were leery of where the engagement would lead. I find that this is a common pattern, in which democratic governments are constrained in the threats they can make or find their threats rendered ineffective because of domestic opposition to the use of force.

This is not, however, the only pattern associated with democracy. In many other cases, democratic states have managed to use threats very effectively because open competition and debate reveal the strength of domestic support. In the strategic environment of an international crisis, convincing a rival state that one is willing and able to carry out a threat to use force is difficult. Thus, the ability to signal resolve in a credible manner bestows important advantages. I show that, when democratic states are strongly resolved to use force, they are better able to convince their opponents of that fact than are nondemocratic states. The support of domestic opposition parties, freely given, provides confirmation of the government’s political incentives to carry out its threats. Nondemocratic governments, which routinely coerce support and suppress dissent, have no comparable mechanism for signaling unified resolve.

Thus, while democracies cannot readily conceal domestic constraints against waging war, the fact that they are consequently more selective about threatening force means that the threats they make tend to be particularly effective. Indeed, I show that democratic states are less likely to initiate crises by issuing threats, but, conditional on their doing so, those threats are less likely to be resisted. The danger of war is consequently lower.

Many friends and colleagues have contributed their time and insight to this project. I am particularly grateful to the following people who read and commented on the manuscript or its various components: Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Michael Doyle, James Fearon, Kurt Taylor Gaubatz, Hein Goemans, Joanne Gowa, Stephen Krasner, Jack Levy, Jeffrey Lewis, Edward Mansfield, James Morrow, and Alastair Smith. I would also like to thank Paul Huth both for his comments on the manuscript and for providing the data that serve as the basis for the empirical tests in Chapter 6. The Eisenhower World Affairs Institute and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs provided financial support.
Preface

Parts of chapters 3, 4, and 5 are based on articles that were published in the American Political Science Review and International Organization (Schultz 1998, 1999).

This book is dedicated to my wife and son. Heather has been by my side through the entire process; indeed, the inspiration that would become the central thesis of this book came to me only a few weeks before our wedding. I am eternally grateful for her unconditional love and support. Aaron was born while the first draft of the manuscript was coming together. He is my proudest accomplishment and a source of immeasurable love and joy.