1 Why some regions are peaceful and others are not

This book offers a new theory of war and peace. I argue that if we approach the question of war and peace from the regional perspective, we may gain new insights which are otherwise obscured. The new theory developed here thus offers an explanation of the variations between war and peace within and among regions. It explains why some regions are particularly war-prone, while others are so peaceful that war among the regional states has become practically unthinkable. The theory also explains why regions become more or less war-prone over time.

The twentieth century was the stage on which two puzzling, not to say contradictory, phenomena were at play: some regions, such as the Middle East, were scenes of tense conflicts and numerous wars, while others, such as South America, suffered only a limited number of wars.[1] During the very same period, however, Europe profoundly transformed itself from an unstable, war-prone region into a peaceful, stable one. South America's move toward peace began at the end of the nineteenth century, but it has not yet attained the depth and institutional overlay that now characterize the European regional peace.

Thus, in the contemporary international system, some regions are peaceful (Europe, the Americas), while other regions either experience recurrent bloody conflicts, or are constantly on the verge of descending into war (East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and, at least until recently, the Balkans). These examples show that, over time, there is a

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[1] See Geller and Singer 1998, ch. 5; Holsti 1996, Table 2.1, p. 22, Table 2.3, p. 24, and appendix pp. 210–224; and appendix B in this book. On territorial disputes, see Huth 1996, pp. 27–29, 195–251; 1999, pp. 48–50. For classifications of conflicts in different periods, see Luard 1986, pp. 421–447, esp. pp. 442–447; and Holsti 1991, especially pp. 140–142, 144–145, 214–216, 274–278, 280, 307, 308. On conflicts involving non-state rivals, see Gurr 1993.

States, nations, and the great powers

marked variation in the level of violence among regions – and within regions.[2] In this book I explain this intriguing puzzle; a puzzle, moreover, that has not yet been systematically or satisfactorily examined in international relations scholarship.

I provide this explanation by proposing a theory of regional war and peace. This theory explains variations in war and peace among different regions – and also transitions from war to peace, and vice versa, within a region. In order to provide a more nuanced and powerful explanation, I further distinguish between "hot" and "cold" types of regional war and peace, depending on the intensity of the war or peace.

My explanation is based on three key concepts (I develop each concept in detail later): state, nation, and the international system. I argue that the specific balance between states and nations in a given region determines the more intense, or hot or warm, outcomes (that is, whether the region will experience hot wars or a warm peace). The international system – more specifically, the type of engagement in the region by the great powers – affects the cold outcomes, that is, whether the region will be the scene of a cold war or a cold peace.

What I call the "state-to-nation balance" is the key underlying cause that affects the disposition of a region toward war – in effect, determining the war proneness of the region. The state-to-nation balance refers to the degree of congruence between the division of the region into territorial states and the national aspirations and political identifications of the region's peoples. This balance also refers to the prevalence of strong versus weak states in the region. There is a state-to-nation imbalance when there is a lack of congruence between states and national identifications and at least some of the regional states are weak states.[3]

Some patterns of regional behavior and outcomes may appear to conform to more traditional realist expectations about the prevalence of

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[2] See, for example, Zeev Maoz's 2005 Dyadic MID Dataset (version 2.0), psfaculty. ucdavis.edu/zmaoz/dyadmid.html. See also ch. 3 and appendix B in this book.

[3] For a more elaborate definition – and measurement – of the state-to-nation balance, see chs. 2 and 3. I draw here on Van Evera, who calls it "the state-to-nation ratio" (1994, 10–11). Van Evera's term is, however, too mechanical and relies too much on a numerical ratio between states and nations, whereas in my usage the number of states and nations in the region is not the only dimension. In contrast to Van Evera, who focuses on ethnic nationalism, I accept that nationalism can be either ethnic or civic (again see chs. 2 and 3). Moreover, given my conception of the state-to-nation balance, it is possible that in a region where the number of states is much smaller that the number of ethnic groups the state-to-nation imbalance may be low – for example, in North America. Conversely, a high state-to-nation imbalance may occur in a region where the number of ethnic groups does not vastly exceed the number of states – for example, the Balkans after 1991.

interstate conflict and the recurrence of war among the local states. The underlying explanation I offer for these phenomena, however, is not based on causal factors which realists usually highlight, such as the distribution of capabilities (Waltz 1979) or a quest for hegemony (Mearsheimer 2001), but rather on the state-to-nation balance within the region itself. Applying this logic to the dangerous conflict between China and Taiwan, for example, would lead us to expect that "the policy objective behind China's coercive diplomacy is national unification rather than regional hegemony" (Wang 2000, p. 61). Different approaches to addressing such a state-to-nation balance – crucially, whether such approaches or strategies derive from global factors or regional/domestic factors – would then produce different types and levels of regional peace.

In sum, the explanation I propose combines and integrates global factors and domestic/regional factors in a single theoretical construct. In other words, I argue that the old and apparently irreconcilable divide between systemic and regional/domestic explanations of state behavior may be bridged, and this book offers a theoretical synthesis that shows how a fruitful and compelling theoretical coexistence may be created within different schools of IR scholarship, and between IR scholarship and comparative politics.

Why there is a need for a new theory of regional war and peace: filling the gaps in the existing literature

Balancing the explanatory emphasis on great power rivalry with richer regional war and peace theories

Despite some recent notable developments, the international security field is still dominated by the traditional issues of great power rivalry and war. International relations theory has traditionally focused on the international system as a whole, emphasizing the role and influence of the great powers;[4] more recently, this emphasis has been augmented by appeals to international institutions and regimes as explanatory variables of state behavior.[5] The issue of regional war and peace is important

[4] See Miller 2002, in which I cite and discuss many of these works. See also Van Evera 1999, Copeland 2000, and Mearsheimer 2001.

[5] See Krasner 1983, Keohane 1984, Oye 1986, Grieco 1988, 1990, Mearsheimer 1995 and Keohane and Martin's response (1995), and Kagan 1997/8. For a more recent contribution, see Ikenberry 2001.

in general, especially in the post-Cold War period, but it has not enjoyed the kind of scholarly attention these other, more traditional, issues have. Conventional IR theories notwithstanding, most wars and war-related deaths are no longer attributable to great power conflicts, and can no longer be understood as the mere reflection or result of great power rivalry. This study, accordingly, develops a new theory of regional orders which is informed by the traditional literature on international conflict and international relations, but which takes advantage of the new literature on ethnic conflict, civil war, and small state behavior.

Lack of integration of regional and international factors

Neorealists emphasize the primacy of the international system in bringing about regional events and developments, while regional specialists argue that it is unique regional factors that are the most important in fostering the conditions that cause or drive regional events. Many analysts accept that both levels are important to one degree or another, but they do not offer modes for integrating the two levels which, at the same time, are theoretically rigorous and parsimonious. This study offers a novel way of doing this.

IR theory and regional conflicts: the conceptual limits of explanations

Realist and liberal approaches to war in general, and regional war in particular,[6] share a common problem: both are weakened by overlooking the political context of regional wars, most notably, the substantive issues over which wars are fought, especially issues related to nationalism, territory, and boundaries.[7] This weakness is the main reason why neither theory accounts very well for variations in the propensity toward war among regions and within regions. Both approaches treat the nation-state as an actor that either reacts to threats and opportunities in the international system (realism) or behaves in accordance with the nature of its regime and the effects of economic interdependence and international institutions (liberalism). For both theories, the nation-state is unified at least in the sense that states and nations are identical, and thus both theories use the terms "state" and "nation" interchangeably, as

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[6] Realist and liberal approaches to war and peace are discussed below.
[7] This point is elaborated below. On the limitations in the treatment of nationalism by both realism and liberalism, see Hoffmann 1998.

the titles of major books in the field show.[8] There is an identity between states and nations in some regions (the Americas and Western Europe), but they are not the same in other regions (for example, the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East, and some parts of Asia).[9] This variation in the commensurability of state and nation among regions goes a long way toward explaining the war/peace variation among them. The imbalance between states and nations has crucial implications for international politics because of the centrality of the state as the key actor in the international system, and because of nations being the key political locus of identification at least since the late eighteenth century.[10] Moreover, national self-determination is a major norm legitimizing sovereignty in the international system, and a powerful motivation for people to fight for their independence.[11]

Neither realism nor liberalism can thus adequately explain the motivations of the regional actors to resort to violence, if such motivations are derived from problems of state-to-nation imbalance. It is the regional state-to-nation imbalance that provides a basic motivation for war, and therefore disposes certain regions to be more war-prone than others.

The state-to-nation balance – the underlying cause that determines regional war proneness – incorporates substantive issues of war (territory, boundaries, state creation, and state-making) and the motivations for war (hypernationalist, pan-national or secessionist revisionist ideologies). There are other influential ideologies and affiliations that play a role in shaping the war disposition of a region, but nationalism is an especially powerful ideology,[12] and the state-to-nation issue[13] bears

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[8] For example, G. Snyder and Deising, *Conflict Among Nations* (1977); Grieco, *Cooperation Among Nations* (1990); Geller and Singer, *Nations at War* (1998); and Arthur Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate* (1991). These authors had in mind "states" but used "nations" interchangeably.

[9] For details, see chs. 4 and 6.

[10] Most modern scholarship dates nationalism, as a movement and ideology, as emerging with the Industrial Revolution and especially the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century. See, for example, Gellner 1983, B. Anderson 1991, Hobsbawm 1990, and Breuilly 1993. However, other leading researchers of nationalism argue that there has been a certain extent of continuity between traditional/old nations and modern nationalism. See H. Seton-Watson 1977 and A. Smith 1991, 1998, and 2000, pp. 25–51 (where he provides a comprehensive overview of the debate and references). See also Greenfeld 1992. On nationalism, see also chs. 2 and 3.

[11] On the connection between nationalism and popular sovereignty, and the implicit relations with international peace, see Mill 1861, cited also in Mayall 1990, pp. 27–29.

[12] Gellner 1983, A. Smith 2000.

[13] For ease of reading, I will generally use "state-to-nation" as a modifier instead of "state-to-nation balance": so "state-to-nation issue" rather than "state-to-nation balance issue."

5

directly on the key values of states – territorial integrity and, in some
cases, state survival and independence.

Current treatments of territorial conflict: a useful framework but not a theoretical explanation

Since the early 1990s, more attention has been paid in the IR literature
to territorial conflicts as a major source of war.[14] These discussions are
useful, and they move us in the right direction for understanding war
and peace, but they do not provide a theoretical explanation of *why* such
wars occur so frequently, and under what conditions territorial conflicts
are more likely to escalate to large-scale regional violence. Moreover,
the argument in the literature on territorial issues that conflicts erupt
over territory is correct, but it does not, by itself, offer an explanation
as to whether the conflict owes to the territory's strategic location, its
economic resources, or the state-to-nation issues involved with it.

From the dyadic level to regional outcomes

I argue that the state-to-nation imbalance is a major source of territorial
conflicts, and especially of those regional conflicts that escalate to war
and are hard to resolve peacefully. The literatures on territorial conflicts
and enduring rivalries focus on the dyadic level (that is, the relationship
between any two states in a region), but I suggest that the extent of the
state-to-nation imbalance in a region affects the stability of the region as
a whole because of the strategic interdependence among the constituent
units. The primary security concerns of these units link them together
"sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be
considered apart from one another."[15]

Too high a divide between domestic and international conflict

The theoretical framework I offer overcomes the divide between
domestic/civil and interstate conflict. Analysts have emphasized this
divide especially since the end of the Cold War, arguing that civil wars
were replacing international wars as the key conflicts in world poli-
tics. This study shows the common origins of numerous conflicts of
both types. In many cases we have "mixed" internal and transborder

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[14] Holsti 1991, Vasquez 1993, 1995, Goertz and Diehl 1992b, Huth 1996, and Diehl 1999.
[15] This is Buzan's (1991, ch. 5, p. 190) conception of a region, or what he calls a "security complex." This is further developed in Buzan and Waever 2003.

conflicts. Two examples are directly related to the post-2003 Iraqi cri-
sis and its regional repercussions: the Kurdish problem involving Iraq,
Turkey, Iran, and Syria; and the relations between Shiites and Sunnis
in Iraq and their effects not only on Iraq's stability but also on many
countries in the Middle East because of transborder ties among Shiites
(in south Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain) and Sunnis (in
numerous Arab countries).[16] Such conflicts – indeed, this type of con-
flict – are influenced by both systemic and regional/domestic factors.
Thus, we need a theory that will integrate both types of factors in a rig-
orous and compelling way. This is what I do in this book: I offer a new,
integrated theory of war and peace. I argue that a regional perspective
is the most useful in explaining these *mixed* conflicts.

Explaining both war and peace

In the literature, the causes of war and sources of peace are usually
treated separately, but it is not possible to understand transitions from
war to peace without knowing the sources of regional wars and how
different peace strategies address them. Different theories explain vary-
ing aspects of regional peace, but these theories are disconnected from
each other, and as a result there is no single framework that integrates
them into a coherent theoretical construct capable of accounting for dif-
ferences among regions, or for differences within regions over time, that
is, regional transitions from war to peace and vice versa.

9/11, the post-Cold War era, and regional conflicts

Following the end of the Cold War, many analysts expected that regional
security would become separate from global security,[17] especially from
the concerns of the great powers. This was because the great powers
were no longer involved in an intense competition in all parts of the
globe, as was the case during the Cold War. The events of 9/11 show,
however, that there is a tight relationship between global security, US

[16] Other examples include the Balkans, both in the nineteenth century and in the post-
Cold War era, and other post-Soviet crises; the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Syria,
Lebanon, the various ethnic communities there, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and
Israel; India–Pakistan and Kashmir; Congo and the other states in the Great Lakes region
in Africa; the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey; and North
Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Vietcong – a conflict that also spilled into Cambodia and
Laos.
[17] See, for example, Lake and Morgan 1997.

national security, transnational terrorism, failed states, and issues of
regional conflict (such as the relations among Afghanistan, its neigh-
bors, and transborder ethnic groups; the Pakistan–India conflict over
Kashmir; Iraq, Iran, and Gulf security; the Arab–Israeli conflict; and
challenges to the stability of Arab regimes and other weak states). The
US 9/11 Commission, set up by the US Congress to investigate the events
leading up to the 9/11 terror attacks, agrees. Among its conclusions is
this: "In the twentieth century, strategists focused on the world's great
industrial heartlands. In the twenty-first, the focus is in the opposite
direction, towards remote regions and failing states."[18] Thus, regional
conflicts and their resolution should be addressed not only for their
intrinsic importance, but also in order to advance the cause of interna-
tional security and stability. The resolution of these regional conflicts,
however, would be more likely were we to understand better the sources
of such conflicts. The theory I offer makes a contribution toward such
an understanding.

Indeed, one major reason why questions of regional war and peace
have assumed added importance in the post-Cold War era is the grow-
ing salience of regional conflicts as a result of the end of the super-
power rivalry, and the potential consequences of regional conflicts for
international stability.[19] Militarily, the proliferation of weapons of mass
destruction and their means of delivery to different regions may eventu-
ally pose a threat, if they do not already, not only to regional security, but
to global security as well. Regional conflicts can place access to markets
and resources at risk – Middle Eastern oil is a good example. As we have
already witnessed in the Balkans, local conflicts may accelerate massive
flows of refugees across state and regional boundaries, giving rise and
added potency to xenophobic anti-foreigner extremism in Western soci-
eties.[20] These tendencies may, in turn, challenge the political stability in
leading states such as Germany.

Regional developments may have gained importance in the post-Cold
War era, but there is nothing new about the centrality of regional wars
within the general phenomenon of international war.[21] Most of the inter-
state wars listed in the Correlates of War data, for example, were wars

[18] Quoted in *Financial Times*, July 23, 2004, 2. See 9/11 Commission 2004. See also the
summary of the report's recommendations cited in *International Herald Tribune*, July
24–25, 2004, 1.
[19] Miller and Kagan 1997, p. 52.   [20] See, among others, Rudolph 2003.
[21] Vasquez 1993, 1995; Holsti 1991; and the literature review in Goertz and Diehl 1992b,
pp. 1–31, citing especially the work of Starr, Most, and Siverson.

between neighbors, that is, regional wars.[22] More broadly, about two-thirds of the instances of threat to use force and of the actual use of force from 1816 to 1976 also took place between neighbors. As the level of threat increases, and that of violence escalates, so does the frequency of neighbors being drawn into the conflict.[23] Thus, with the exception of the great powers and their involvement in wars, war is largely a regional phenomenon – a neighborhood issue. Making peace among neighbors thus becomes even more important, because neighboring states are more likely than any other kind of states to get into a war with each other.

Some argue that the process of globalization has intensified with the end of the Cold War, and that this process leads to greater global uniformity which diminishes regional differences.[24] Others, however, point out that the end of the Cold War produced increasing regional variations, especially in the area of security.[25]

Indeed, the end of the Cold War has brought to the surface even greater variations among regions with respect to war and peace. In contrast to post-1945 international norms and practice (Zacher 2001), Iraq, a state with revisionist aspirations,[26] annexed a sovereign neighboring state, Kuwait, in summer 1990. The Iraqi action led to a major US intervention and to the First Gulf War in 1991. Following the 9/11 attacks, the United States came to see the Middle East, particularly Iraq, as a major source of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This brought about the Second Gulf War, in which the United States invaded and occupied Iraq in spring 2003. This time the United States had a wider agenda, one which called for bringing democracy to Iraq and, coupled with other US diplomatic initiatives, to the Middle East as a whole. Another example is the Balkans where, after forty-five years of relative calm, the collapse of the USSR led to an eruption of violence which eventually brought about US-led NATO interventions in Bosnia in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999. Violent eruptions also took place in other

[22] Cited in Vasquez 1993, pp. 134–135. See also the findings of Holsti 1991. The Correlates of War project is a major quantitative study of wars. It focuses on collecting data about the history of wars and conflict among states. The project has advanced the quantitative research into the causes of warfare. See, for example, Small and Singer 1982.
[23] Gochman 1990, cited in Vasquez 1993, pp. 135–136, Gochman et al. 1996/7, pp. 181–182.
[24] For an overview and citations, see Clark 1997, and Buzan and Waever 2003, pp. 7–10.
[25] See Friedberg 1993/4, p. 5. For a useful overview, see Hurrell 1995, and Katzenstein 1996a. See also Lake and Morgan 1997, pp. 6–7; Holm and Sorensen 1995, ch. 1; and Buzan and Waever 2003, pp. 10–13; in the rest of these three books the authors focus on different regions. From another perspective, see Huntington's critique of the globalization thesis and his notion of the "clash of civilizations" (1993, 1996).
[26] See ch. 4.

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areas of the collapsing Soviet empire (for example, the war between
Armenia and Azerbaijan), although they did not elicit Western military
interventions.

At the same time other parts of the world had experienced more
encouraging developments. The conflict-ridden Third World witnessed
an encouraging process of conflict resolution in the late 1980s–early
1990s, as evident in the resolution of simmering conflicts in Southern
Africa, the Horn of Africa, Southwest and Southeast Asia, and Central
America. Moreover, for the first time in the long history of the Middle
East conflict, most of the major parties, including Syria and the Pales-
tinians – parties that had been reluctant to take part in the peace process
with Israel – convened under US and Soviet auspices at the Madrid
peace conference of October 1991. During the following five years, the
adversaries met, now under the formal cosponsorship of the United
States and Russia, for a series of bilateral and multilateral talks in Wash-
ington, Moscow, and other world capitals.[27] Since the Oslo accords of
1993, the peace process in the Middle East has led to a series of interim
agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. These agreements facil-
itated the Jordanian–Israeli peace treaty of October 1994, and growing
Israeli diplomatic and economic relations with Arab states from North
Africa to the Persian Gulf. In the wake of the collapse of the summer
2000 Camp David summit between Israel and the Palestinians, how-
ever, violence between Palestinians and Israelis erupted again in fall
2000.

These diverging trends – toward peace in one region and war in
another, and toward peace and then war within the same region – led
analysts and practitioners to note two sets of differences: the difference
between regions regarding the prospects of war and peace in the post-
Cold War era, and the differences within the same region with regard
to the propensity toward war between the Cold War and post-Cold War
eras. Expressions such as "New Europe,"[28] "New East Asia,"[29] and, even
more controversially, "New Middle East"[30] capture this new perspec-
tive. These variations in the tendency toward war among regions and

[27] Kaye 2001.
[28] See Mearsheimer 1990; Van Evera 1993; J. Snyder 1990; Hoffmann 1990/1; for an
extended bibliography, see Lynn-Jones, and Miller 1993, pp. 396–397; Sheetz 1996.
[29] See R. Ross 1995 and M. Brown et al. 1996b.
[30] Former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres (with Aori 1993) articulated a vision of
a "New Middle East" in which Jews and Arabs live, cooperate, and grow rich together.
Critics have argued that it is the same old Middle East in which the Arabs and their hostile
intentions vis-à-vis Israel have not changed much.

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