Constructing National Security

Jarrod Hayes examines why democracies tend not to use military force against each other. He argues that democratic identity – the shared understanding within democracies of who “we” are and what “we” expect from each other – makes it difficult for political leaders to construct external democracies as threats. At the same time, he finds that democratic identity enables political actors to construct external non-democracies as threats. To explore his argument, he looks at U.S. relations with two rising powers: India and China. Through his argument and case studies, Professor Hayes addresses not just the democratic peace but also the larger processes of threat construction in international security, the role of domestic institutions in international relations, and the possibility for conflict between the United States and the world’s two most populous countries.

Jarrod Hayes is an assistant professor of international relations at the Georgia Institute of Technology.
To my wife, family, and friends.
I could not have done it without you.
Contents

Preface ix

Introduction: Constructing Democratic Security 1
The Social and Political Nature of Security 2
Identity as Boundary Condition: Enabling and Constraining Security 4
Beyond the Democratic Peace: Rising Powers 7
At Many Crossroads: Relating to International Relations Scholarship 10
Structure of the Book 11

1 Securitization, Identity, and Security Outcomes 13
The Copenhagen School and Securitization Theory 14
Bringing in Identity 23
Putting the Pieces Together: Identity and the Construction of Democratic Security 31
Methods: Focal Points and Discourses 39

PART I. DEMOCRACY, SECURITY, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES 47
The Indo-American Literature 50
Roadmap and Theoretical Expectations 52

2 Near Miss: The Bangladesh War, India, and the United States in 1971 54
Historical Overview and Literature 54
The Case 58
Conclusions 78

3 Nuclear Games: The United States, India, and the Desecuritization of Nuclear Weapons 79
Historical Overview and Literature 79
1974 PNE 81
## Contents

The 1998 Nuclear Tests  
Desecuritizing Proliferation: 2005 U.S.-India Nuclear Deal  
Conclusions  
Democratic Identity and Security in Indo-American Relations  

**PART II. THE NONDEMOCRATIC “OTHER”: THE SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP**  
The Sino-American Literature  
Roadmap and Theoretical Expectations  

4 Near Miss: China and the United States in the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis  
   Historical Overview and Literature  
   The Case  
   Public Response  
   Conclusions  

5 Collision Course: The 2001 Hainan Island EP-3 Incident  
   Historical Overview and Literature  
   The Case  
   Conclusions  
   Democratic Identity and Security in Sino-American Relations  

Conclusion: The Social Construction of Security  
Theoretical and Empirical Contributions  
Policy Significance  
Moving Forward  

References  
Index
Preface

Security is everywhere, and applied to almost everything. The initial impetus for the highway system in the United States was national security. President Dwight Eisenhower’s avowed purpose for building the massive transit network was to facilitate the movement of U.S. military forces in the event of a land invasion. Two years later, security was used to justify education policy. The 1958 National Defense Education Act provided, for the first time in American history, large-scale federal support for postsecondary education. The list goes on, from Nixon’s War on Drugs¹ to immigration² to climate change³ to AIDS⁴ to government deficits.⁵ Almost any topic one might think of has probably been included under the rubric of security. In international relations, however, there is a notable exception. As reams of evidence indicate, democracies have been consistently unwilling to label their peers as security threats.⁶ The puzzle is obvious: How is it that democracies have avoided constructing each other as threats while so many other subjects have been labeled as such? Indeed, in the United States, the spread of democracy has become a principal basis for ensuring security – as democracy-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and democracy promotion in Libya and Myanmar attest.

This puzzle, the democratic peace in the parlance of International Relations (IR) scholars, provides the genesis for the book that follows. As I argue elsewhere,⁷ while innumerable pages have been dedicated to testing – largely through large-N, regression analysis methods – the existence of a zone of peace

¹ Dufton 2012.
⁴ Elbe 2006.
⁵ Sahadi 2012.
⁶ Choi 2011; Maoz and Russett 1993; Oneal and Russett 1997; Oneal et al. 2003; Ray 1995a; Russett 1993.
⁷ Hayes 2012.
between democracies, relatively little attention has been paid to the dynamics and processes that produce the phenomenon. To put it another way, scholars can claim with significant confidence that the democratic peace exists but cannot say very much about why. As I read more of the democratic peace literature, I was increasingly struck by the extent to which the scholarship has lost sight of the significance of the democratic peace in international relations, focusing increasingly on internal debates over which variables to include in regression equations. The importance of International Relations’ failure to come to terms with the forces behind the democratic peace is difficult to overstate. Even before the end of the Cold War, democracy promotion occupied a powerful place in foreign and security policy, although it sometimes existed in tension with the prerogatives of containment. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign and security policy has explicitly rested on the spread of democracy as an integral element of ensuring U.S. national security, and there is evidence that this reliance has in part been inspired by the scholarship on the democratic peace. On the surface, this relationship represents the achievement of what many social scientists (particularly IR scholars) seek in their work: to influence policy and thus impact the world beyond the halls of academia. Yet there is a danger here. IR scholars have precious little information as to what produces the democratic peace, and this means policy is built on a shaky foundation. Scholars are not able to tell policy makers how democracy leads to peace, and thus leave it up to policy makers to hypothesize what causes the democratic peace and how best to operationalize those mechanisms into policy.

My goal in this book is to provide a coherent theoretical framework for understanding the democratic peace, and in doing so to lay a solid foundation upon which policy makers can build. Specifically, I propose a possible mechanism by which the democratic peace is produced and examine U.S. relations with India and China to determine if and how the mechanism operates. I argue that democratic identity is central to collective understandings of who poses a potential threat in the international system. This identity arises from the practice of democracy and the norms (rule of law, democratic accountability, non-violent conflict resolution) that underpin that practice. Democratic identity in turn shapes the range of possibilities political actors have in terms of presenting external states as threats by making some claims – those involving other democracies – implausible. In making this assertion, I provide one of the first studies to cogently and coherently account for how the democratic peace has come to exist at the societal level.

While the origins of this book lie in the puzzle of the democratic peace, the approach I present speaks to more than the democratic peace. Or perhaps, in

---

8 Jack S. Levy goes so far as to call the democratic peace the closest thing International Relations scholars have to a natural law (1988).

9 Presidents Clinton and Bush have referred to the democratic peace in justifications of policy (Bush 2003; Clinton 1994a).
Preface

speaking to a phenomenon as large and important as the democratic peace, the study addresses other issues of significance in international relations. Most basically, it argues for the importance of accounting for how shared understandings of the world shape foreign and security policy. These shared understandings create the field on which policy makers operate, making some policy avenues easier and others more difficult. If scholars and policy makers understand that field, they can better account for the foreign and security policies of other states. In short, I argue for a more social, ideational, and contextual study of international security in contrast to the largely material and rational assumptions that tend to dominate the study of IR and security in the United States.

My choice of cases also has timely relevance as the United States and the world contemplate substantial shifts in economic and material (e.g., military capabilities) strength in the foreseeable future as states like India and China develop. In many ways, how this transition will occur is the central international security question confronting scholars, policy makers, and publics. Some IR scholars argue that similar transitions in the past have been the source of major wars, a worrying proposition for the future given the destructive capacities of modern industrialized militaries. Others point to the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom to argue that transitions need not result in war. In short, the question remains unanswered. By examining U.S. relations with India and China within the context of my identity-based approach, this book provides an alternative perspective on a subject of enduring and timely significance.

While I refer to the approach presented in the following pages as “my” approach, in truth I am only the majority shareholder. I owe a tremendous debt to a small army of people for their advice, support, and guidance. Without these people this book would not exist – or if it did, it would be but a shadow of what is here. Five people stand out at the front of the list. Janelle Knox-Hayes has been my fellow traveler in life and academia. She is an extraordinary wife and partner, helping me refine my ideas, providing motivation to stretch myself intellectually, and offering emotional and editorial support throughout the long process of writing and publishing the book. Patrick James was present at the creation of this project and has been an amazing advisor and mentor, enduring a constant stream of e-mails, phone calls, and paper and chapter drafts over the past seven years. Where both Janelle and Pat had some obligation to endure my impositions, Ted Hopf had none. Yet Ted has been invaluable as I have worked through the book over the last year, reading the manuscript and particularly helping me get the preface and introduction right (or at least better). Indeed, the idea behind the crucial first paragraph of the whole book is Ted’s. I have been outrageously lucky to have him as a friend and mentor. Gordon Clark, Janelle’s doctoral advisor at Oxford University, has also gone above and beyond any expectation. He pulled on the hidden levers at that amazing institution to provide for me access to one of the world’s finest academic libraries while I lived there for two years. Without that access, none of this would have been possible. Gordon also filled in as surrogate advisor, doing a brilliant job of making an
outsider in Oxford feel at home. The final member of this party of five is my editor at Cambridge University Press, Robert Dreesen. Robert saw my article in International Organization and approached me about the book, already convinced of the merit of the theoretical story I am trying to tell. All who know the pain of trying to sell the merits of a book to (usually) skeptical editors will appreciate just how fortunate I was to get that e-mail from him. From the outset, Robert has been confident in the book and me, and it is entirely because of him that this book has found such an amazing home.

My debts do not stop with those five people. The anonymous manuscript reviewers provided priceless comments and ideas, and I hope I have done justice to their suggestions. Amy Below, Dave Blagden, Paul Brister, Conor Browne, Rosella Cappella, Jason Enia, Jeffrey Fields, Lene Hansen, Carolyn James, Shashank Joshi, Paul Levin, Yitan Li, David McCourt, Harald Müller, John Owen, Jean-Loup Samaan, Karthika Sasikumar, Brent Steele, Kai Thaler, Srdjan Vucetic, Wesley Widmaier, and Pablo Yangus have all been tremendously encouraging, providing friendship, insights, and more than the occasional confidence boost. My colleagues at the University of Oklahoma and Georgia Tech – particularly Vicki Birchfield, Peter Brecke, Miki Fabry, John Fishel, Mark Frazier, Eric Heinze, Hank Jenkins-Smith, Larry Rubin, Carol Silva, Adam Stulberg, Katja Weber, and Alasdair Young – provided a supportive environment as well as comments on various pieces of the project. One could not wish for better colleagues than these. Emmanuel Adler, Charli Carpenter, Christopher Daase, Michael Doyle, Robert English, Erik Gartzke, Ewan Harrison, Melody Herr, Colin Kahl, David Kinsella, Dan Lynch, Sara Mitchell, Mark Peceny, Brian Rathbun, James Lee Ray, Harvey Starr, David Welch, and Michael C. Williams epitomize all that is great about academia and those who work in it, generously taking time to talk to me about this project, in many cases reading portions and offering feedback. Thanks also go to Fideline Kraft, Jad Knox, Jadine Knox Luz, and Roman Luz for their consistent support and encouragement. I am sure there are others whose names belong here, and that they are omitted speaks to my own poor memory rather than the quality of their contributions. Of course, I alone am responsible for any shortcomings in the book. But without all these colleagues and friends, there would be a lot more of them. I appreciate permission granted by Wiley and Cambridge University Press to use material that previously appeared in journal articles. Specifically, portions of Chapters 1 and 2 appeared in abbreviated form in International Organization, and portions of Chapter 3 appeared in International Studies Quarterly. I would also like to thank the American Bureau for Medical Advancement in China Foundation for permission to use the image that appears on the cover of the book, John Watt for his assistance in that regard, and Nancy Reis and the University of North Texas Library for providing the image.

Last but not least thanks go to my family: Beverly, Walt, and Toni Thayer and Adam, Jennifer, and Daegan Hayes. My parents, Beverly and Walt, have been steady shoulders to lean on. My brother, Adam, is always good for levity when the weight of scholarly pursuits sets in, and my nephew Daegan reminds me how important it is to understand the issues that fill these pages.