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978-1-108-41704-4 — Contagion and War: Lessons from the First World War
John A. Vasquez
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Contagion and War

John Vasquez explains the processes that cause the spread of interstate war by looking at how contagion worked to bring countries into the First World War. Analyzing all the key states that declared war, the book is comprised of three parts. Part I lays out six models of contagion: alliances, contiguity, territorial rivalry, opportunity, “brute force,” and economic dependence. Part II then analyzes in detail the decision-making of every state that entered the war, from Austria-Hungary in 1914 to the U.S. and Greece in 1917. Part III has two chapters – the first considers the neutral countries, and the second concludes the book with an overarching theoretical analysis, including major lessons of the war and new hypotheses about contagion. This book will be of great interest to students and scholars of international relations, conflict studies, and international history, especially those interested in the spread of conflict, or the First World War.

John A. Vasquez is the Thomas B. Mackie Scholar in International Relations at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is author of eight books including *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge, 1993) and *The Power of Power Politics* (Cambridge, 1999), and editor of ten others, including *The Outbreak of the First World War*, with Jack S. Levy (Cambridge, 2014). He is the former President of the International Studies Association and the Peace Science Society (International). In 2017, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Conflict Processes section of APSA.

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Lessons from the First World War

John A. Vasquez
with the assistance of Emily E. Barrett
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



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To the Dead

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved ...

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Preface

Most international relations (IR) scholars become fascinated with the First World War at the start of their careers, and if they write something about it, it is usually early in their careers. I have been fortunate to come to the First World War toward the end of my career. Part of this was occasioned by the approach of the 100th anniversary which provided an opportunity to meet and listen to David Stevenson, Samuel Williamson, and Annika Mombauer. I was able to bring the first two along with Mustafa Aksakal and Frederick Dickinson to Illinois as part of the ConflictSpace project with Paul Diehl, Colin Flint and Jürgen Scheffran. This was followed up by another conference at ISA in San Francisco that I co-organized with Jack Levy related to our 2014 edited book on the war. All of this was part of my growing commitment to study the war extensively and systematically, and I thank each of my colleagues who participated in these conferences for their intellectual stimulation. The First World War remains, as most IR scholars know, the single most fascinating case in the history of our field. I have sought to make a contribution here to one of the less-studied aspects – why the war spread.

To do this I have taken a case-study approach that is informed by relevant data that set the structure and context in which these fascinating decisions were taken. Along the way I have incurred some welcomed debts. The data used in this book were painstakingly collected by many peace scientists, some of them my former students, and their data and contributions are acknowledged in Chapter 2, where the data are described. The actual compilation of these previously collected data was no mean task and was part of a larger project to prepare a Handbook of Interstate Conflict that would have histograms and data boxes on every dyad that had three or more militarized disputes in its history. To accomplish this I was aided over a three-year period by a team of remarkable undergraduate research assistants (RAs): Dannika Andersen, Amelia Berger, Mike Colucci, Haley Coyne, Allison Gerns, Gina Gonnella, Sarah Halko, Hannah Jarman, Dennis Jung, Ada Irem

Karacal, Connor Murray, S. Tyler Muncy, Grace O’Gara, Seung Yeun Oh, Amy Radlinski, Elaine Sine, Marko Sukovic, Ben Sybert, Mina Urbina, Brianna Winkel, Changchang Sophie Wu and Lindsey Zawila. The histograms presented here, out of over 400, were constructed by Emily Barrett, who also supervised many of these RAs and organized their overall work; for this her name has been added to the title page. By the time this book came to fruition, she had long since graduated and joined the work force. Her histograms were prepared for publication expertly by Niti Shah, also an undergraduate RA. During the years 2009–2015 I also taught a study-abroad course in Vienna. The course in 2014 dealt with the First World War, and in each of the other years part of the course was devoted to it. In this course I had four assistants over the years who helped me immensely and kept me on track: Kaily Grabemann, Stephanie Pedretti, Lily Tam, and Victoria Thompson. To each and every one of these students my heartfelt thanks. Your work was invaluable and it was a pleasure working with you.

A number of colleagues were kind enough to read parts of this manuscript and offer very valuable suggestions, some at a 2017 APSA panel: Öner Akgül, Jack Levy, Sean Lynn-Jones, Sara Moller, William Mulligan, Andy Owsaik, Paul Poast, and especially William Mulligan, who caught several errors and ambiguities. My thanks to all of them. None of them is responsible for any remaining errors in the book; that is my responsibility entirely.

Support for this research has been provided by the Thomas B. Mackie bequest to the University of Illinois. This fund has supported much of my research since I came to Illinois, and it was especially useful in the fall of 2017 for providing time to complete the writing of the book.

Cambridge University Press, publisher of several of my books, has as always proved to be the best way to complete the writing process. My thanks particularly to my editor John Haslam, who has been supportive throughout my years with the Press; it has always been a delight to work with him. I would also like to express my gratitude to my copy editor Dr. Steven Holt, who provided informed edits based on a close and thorough reading of the manuscript. Thanks also to Neil Wells for preparing the index, and to Robert Judkins, my production editor, for his excellent stewardship of the manuscript. Lastly, my thanks also to Delinda Swanson, who prepared the references, as she has for most of my books since I came to Illinois.

My wife, Marie T. Henehan, has always been supportive during my research and the writing of the book. She has relatives who live in Alsace and has an interest in the First World War that allowed us to

share some of the more remarkable details of this case. Still, what has been important is simply having her at my side, without which it would have been a considerably less pleasant endeavor. Growing old together is the stuff of dreams and songs; it is never easy, but growing old with the love of your life is without comparison. Raising your own family is a great part of this venture. My daughter Elyse, who got married two days short of the 100th anniversary of the Austro-Hungarian declaration of war on Serbia, has reminded me that life goes on. A year later we were proud to have a grandson, Gavin, to keep us focused on the present, and as this book goes to press she and Walter have given us a granddaughter – Avery Jane.

Still, the past is important, and I have dedicated this book to the dead, wherever they are, and not just to the fallen in the “Great” War. Included in these billions upon billions are the dead who haunt my life: Sal Melluzzo, Connie Melluzzo, Terry Melluzzo Voss, John C. Vasquez, Helen J. Vasquez, Aunt Zina Vasquez, Uncle Rene Vasquez, Sebastian “Pa” Cristina, Concetta “Nana” Cristina, J. S. Benvento Vasquez, Sean Henehan Vasquez, Paul Senese, Tracy Jarvis, Tim Henehan, and Virginia Henehan.