Part A

THEORY AND AGGREGATE ANALYSIS

Introduction to Part A

History provides conclusive evidence that the twentieth century was an era of pervasive **turmoil.** There were two *general wars* (1914–18, 1939–45) and many *lesser wars in all regions* of the world, for example, Angola in 1975–76 (Africa), the Falkland-Malvinas islands in 1982 (Americas), the Sino-Japanese War in 1937–45 (Asia), Kosovo in 1999 (Europe), and Gulf War I in 1991 (Middle East). There were *revolutionary upheavals* in Russia and China during and after the two global wars; an array of *protracted conflicts/enduring rivalries,* such as the Arab-Israel and India-Pakistan conflicts since the late 1940s; a myriad of intra-state and interstate violent *ethnic rivalries,* as in Biafra in the mid-1960s, Bangladesh in the early 1970s, Sri Lanka since the early 1980s, and Rwanda and Yugoslavia in the 1990s; severe *economic dislocation,* notably the Great Depression during the 1930s, oil-price shocks in the early and late 1970s (and again in 2008), and international financial crises in the 1980s and 1990s; and, for most of the last half of the twentieth century, 1945–89, a titanic Cold War *struggle* between the United States and the USSR *for global hegemony.*[1]

There are also many sources of turmoil in the current post–Cold War global structure. Among them are *conventional interstate crisis-wars,* notably **Gulf War I** in 1990–91 between the U.S.-led Coalition and Iraq, followed by **Iraq Regime Change/Gulf War II** in 2002–3, and the continuing Iraqi insurgency since 2003. Another source is *ethnic conflict,* which generates interstate crises

and wars, as in the disintegration of **Yugoslavia,** from the secession of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 and the Serbia-Croatia-Bosnia wars in 1992–95, through the NATO-Serbia war over Kosovo in 1999, to the Macedonia civil war in 2001. The upsurge of *terror* as a global movement, highlighted by the 9/11 attack on the United States, triggered the U.S.-led war against the Taliban regime in **Afghanistan** in 2001. Several crises related to *nuclear proliferation* have also occurred—and persist—in the current polarity configuration: **North Korea** in 1993–94 and since 2002, **India-Pakistan** in 1998 and 2001–2, and **Iran** since 2003. Long-running *protracted conflicts/enduring rivalries* have continued to challenge international stability, as they have in all other system structures—the fifth **Taiwan Straits** crisis between China and Taiwan over the latter's disputed status took place in 1995–96, and a third Kashmir war (the fourth war between India and Pakistan since 1947) was fought in the Himalayan region of **Kargil** in 1999. Intense conflict has persisted *outside the dominant subsystem:* two devastating wars took place in Africa: the first, between **Ethiopia and Eritrea** in 1998–2000, produced casualties in the tens of thousands and an estimated displaced population of 650,000; the second, a multi-layered civil, ethnic, and interstate war in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC), the former Zaire—with seven central, southern, and equatorial African participants in what was regarded as Africa's world war from 1998 to 2002, Angola, Chad, DRC, Namibia,

Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe—resulted in the death of 2.5 million people.[2] In sum, *there were—and still are—multiple sources of global disruption.* So much for the "end of history" concept (Fukuyama 1992), at least insofar as international crises and conflicts are concerned.

Another crucial feature of world politics during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is **structural change:** from *multipolarity* (late 1918–early September 1945; some have argued [e.g., Waltz 1979: 70–71] that multipolarity dates back to the emergence of the modern state system at Westphalia in 1648) to *bipolarity* (September 1945–end 1962), *bipolycentrism* (1963–89), and unipolarity or *unipolycentrism* (since the beginning of 1990). These two traits, *pervasive turmoil* and *structural change,* provide the rationale for this volume, a comparative analysis of **international political earthquakes (international crises) before, during,** and **after** the **Cold War.**[3]

Why have crises and, more generally, conflict been pervasive in twentieth-century world politics and, in fact, over the millennia? There has been much progress in unraveling this puzzle, including advances in theory and the creation of two comprehensive and reliable data sets on core conflict dimensions: for wars and militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) since 1816—the Correlates of War (COW) project;[4] and for international crises and protracted conflicts (PCs) since late 1918—the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project.[5] Many aspects of the puzzle remain unsolved, however.

The *general objective* of this inquiry is to enrich and deepen our knowledge of the world of crisis and conflict in the twentieth century and beyond. One *specific goal* is to develop the concept of international crisis as an **international political earthquake** and to compare such earthquakes in all structures, regions, diverse levels of power and economic development, and other contextual dimensions.

A *closely related aim* is to delineate the concepts of crisis **severity** and **impact** and to refine their indexes, using ten-point scales designed to measure the intensity and fallout (impact) of international political earthquakes. The ten-point severity scale envisaged here is similar to the Richter ten-point scale in its *purpose* and *rationale:* that is, the Richter scale was designed to measure the **severity** of a **geological earthquake** while the scale used here is designed to measure the **severity** of a **political earthquake** or **international crisis.** Both measures are based on the premise that such precise measurement is scientifically possible. The scale envisaged here goes one important step further in that it also measures the **impact** of political earthquakes on the landscape of international politics. The severity scale differs, however, in the technical meaning of the scale points and the substantive gap between them. The important distinction is that the Richter scale is logarithmic, while the severity scale used here is linear.

Another *purpose* is to explore the **impact of the structure of the international system on the dynamics of crisis from onset to termination;** that is, are there common patterns or mere diversity in the four structural eras of twentieth- and early twenty-first-century world politics? It was not possible to examine this dimension fully until very recently because quasi-unipolarity, a very rare structure (Rome in antiquity and the brief Qin [Ch'in] dynasty in China in the third century BCE), only reemerged at the end of the Cold War. Only now, more than a decade into a one-superpower (United States) world, have there been a sufficiently large number of crises and wars, as noted previously, to permit an analysis of international crises in all four structural eras.

The aim is to bring closure to the long-standing unresolved debate on the link between **system structure** and **stability,** by discovering which of the four polarity structures is the most stable, that is, the least disruptive of the international system, and which structure is the least stable. The data provide compelling evidence that bipolarity is the most stable international system structure and bipolycentrism is the most unstable. Multipolarity ranks second in terms of stability, and unipolycentrism is third.

Why should this seemingly esoteric topic merit continued attention? It is self-evident, I think, that international stability should be a high value for all states and peoples in an epoch characterized by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the persistence of anarchy despite the enlargement of order via institutions and regimes, the increase of ethnic and civil wars, and the growing preoccupation with worldwide terrorism. These disruptive, in fact, potentially catastrophic, features of contemporary world politics enhance the *normative* desirability of stability per se. In practical terms, a gradual and, as long as its potential has not been exhausted, non-violent/diplomatic approach to conflict resolution and international change is to be preferred, no matter how threatening any given problem might be.

The high value placed on international stability and the preference for non-violent techniques of conflict resolution should not be equated with hostility to change or the advocacy of pure non-violence. I know that opposition to change per se, or *status quoism,* can be—and often is—a mere rationalization for oppression of poor and/or weak and/or small states by rich, strong, and large states and that change is an essential component of progress in international relations. Moreover, I recognize that, in extreme circumstances, such as a genuine, not contrived, threat to a state's existence, a violent response may be necessary. My contention is that the resort to violence in the contemporary international system, especially by major powers and WMD states, is not the sole or preferred technique of conflict resolution or of international change, for it contains the risk of very grave damage, including escalation to a planetary nightmare; that is, violence in interstate conflicts can, I think, be justified only as a last resort, when all non-violent techniques have been exhausted. Thus, illuminating the system structure–stability nexus has important implications for foreign policy and national security decision makers—and the attentive publics—of all states. In sum, *it is important to study and, if possible, to enlarge the domain of international stability.*

A *fourth objective* is to extend our knowledge of **international crisis management.** This will be achieved by in-depth case studies of the two main adversaries in four international crises, supplemented by the findings from earlier research on 21 other cases, focusing on how decision makers coped with the stress of international political earthquakes during each structural era in the past near-century—multipolarity, bipolarity, bipolycentrism, and unipolycentrism.

The *final aim* is to provide a novel **test of the validity of neo-realism,** specifically Waltz's formulation of neo-realism. For more than two millennia (since Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War), realism has been the dominant paradigm for international relations. However, it has been under increasing attack from several perspectives in the past 35 years—neo-institutionalism, constructivism, critical theory, feminism, post-structuralism, and others (Brecher and Harvey 2002; Harvey and Brecher 2002). The discovery of substantive differences in the patterns of crisis during the four structural eras would indicate strong support for the neo-realist contention (Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981; Mearsheimer 2001) that structure shapes world politics, as well as the

foreign policy–security behavior of states, its principal actors. However, should this study find either no or minor differences in the patterns of crisis during the four structural eras, it would seriously undermine the claim of neo-realism to be the optimal paradigm for world politics in the decades ahead.[6]

With these goals in mind, this inquiry will unfold in two broad sections: **Part A, Theory and Aggregate Analysis, and Part B, Qualitative Analysis: Case Studies of Political Earthquakes.**

The first three chapters of this book will focus on **international crisis** and **protracted conflict/enduring international rivalry (EIR).** Concepts and empirical overviews of PCs and international crises will be presented in chapter 1 (Findings on Earthquakes I). The links between crisis and PC will be examined in chapter 2. A **protracted conflict–crisis** model will be specified and tested in chapter 2, and a **crisis–escalation-to-war** model will be specified and tested in chapter 3. The testing of the clusters of hypotheses derived from the models will be accomplished with a myriad of data amassed by the ICB project on more than one hundred variables about 32 protracted conflicts and 391 international crises from late 1918 to the end of 2002—excluding the 49 intra-war crises (IWCs), that is, crises that occurred in the context of an ongoing war (see note 1).

The data relate to an array of **crisis attributes** in the four **phases:** trigger and triggering entity (**onset**); number of actors; values threatened, as perceived by the main adversaries; the **escalation** process, with an emphasis on the role of violence; **de-escalation,** that is, coping by the principal protagonists and by third parties, notably major powers and international organizations as conflict/crisis managers; crisis duration; and **termination,** both the content of outcome—ambiguous or definitive—and its form: voluntary agreement, imposed agreement, unilateral act, and so forth. The results of this aggregate data analysis in chapters 2 and 3—Findings on Earthquakes II and III—will be presented in the form of a comparison of crises since the end of World War I (WW I), by *polarity* and *region,* as well as *conflict setting,* that is, crises *within and outside protracted conflicts.*

Chapters 4 and 5 will revisit the idea of international crisis as an **international political earthquake** (Brecher 1993). To that end the core concepts, **severity** and **impact,** will be reexamined in chapter 4 as indicators of the intensity of a crisis while it unfolds and its post-crisis

consequences for the adversaries and for the international system(s) in which it occurred. Moreover, a **severity-impact model** will be specified. In chapter 5 (Findings on Earthquakes IV), as in chapters 1, 2, and 3, *in-breadth* aggregate findings for the four structural eras since the end of WW I will be presented and will be used to test the model and its derived hypotheses on crisis intensity (severity) and fallout (impact).

Part A concludes with an analysis of **system structure (polarity)** and **stability;** that is, it ascends from a unit (state/interstate) level of analysis to a system level. Chapter 6 will clarify the linkages between these concepts. It will also set out the distinguishing characteristics of the four polarity configurations noted previously. And it will present a **structure-stability model.** Chapter 7 will provide the findings from a testing of this model and its derived hypotheses, as well as from an array of other sources, for the four structural eras, 1918–45, 1945–62, 1963– 89, and 1990–2002, in an effort to discover which system structure is the most and the least stable.

Part B will present **qualitative** findings on the world of crisis, in two forms. The first will be in-depth and comprehensive case studies of four international political earthquakes, one from each of the four polarity structures, with four regions represented. The first three are **high severity–high impact** crises; the fourth represents a **high severity–low impact crisis.** These four in-depth case studies are as follows:

Ethiopian (Abyssinian) War 1934–36, Ethiopia and Italy (**multipolarity, Africa**)

Berlin Blockade 1948–49, United States and USSR (**bipolarity, Europe**)

Bangladesh War 1971, India and Pakistan (**bipolycentrism, Asia**)

Gulf War I 1990–91, Iraq and United States (**unipolycentrism, Middle East**)

Each of the four in-depth case studies will occupy a chapter in this volume (chaps. 8– 11). Together, they will generate eight cases of crisis management—by the two main adversaries in each international crisis, noted previously. These will be supplemented by twenty-one earlier ICB case studies of crisis management by individual states confronting a foreign policy crisis; they are noted here in chronological sequence, along with the structure and region in which they occurred:

United Kingdom, Munich 1938 (**multipolarity, Europe**)

Netherlands, Fall of Western Europe 1939–40 (**multipolarity, Europe**)

Italy, Trieste II 1953 (**bipolarity, Europe**)

Guatemala, Guatemala 1953–54 (**bipolarity, Americas**)

Hungary, Hungarian Uprising 1956 (**bipolarity, Europe**)

United States, Iraq-Lebanon Upheaval 1958 (**bipolarity, Middle East**)

United States, Berlin Wall 1961 (**bipolarity, Europe**)

India, China-India Border 1962 (**bipolarity, Asia**)

United States, Dominican Intervention 1965 (**bipolycentrism, Americas**)

Zambia, Rhodesia's UDI 1965–66 (**bipolycentrism, Africa**)

Israel, June—Six Day War 1967 (**bipolycentrism, Middle East**)

USSR, Prague Spring 1968 (**bipolycentrism, Europe**)

United States, Black September/Syria-Jordan Confrontation 1970 (**bipolycentrism, Middle East**)

Israel, October—Yom Kippur War 1973 (**bipolycentrism, Middle East**)

United States, Nuclear Alert 1973 (**bipolycentrism, Middle East**)

Syria, Lebanon Civil War 1975–76 (**bipolycentrism, Middle East**)

Argentina, Falklands-Malvinas 1982 (**bipolycentrism, Americas**)

Yugoslavia (FRY), Kosovo 1999 (**unipolycentrism, Europe**)

NATO, Kosovo 1999 (**unipolycentrism, Europe**)

Iraq, Iraq Regime Change/Gulf War II 2002–3 (**unipolycentrism, Middle East**)

United States, Iraq Regime Change/Gulf War II 2002–3 (**unipolycentrism, Middle East**)

The findings from the twenty-nine cases will serve as the database for the qualitative analysis of state behavior during international political earthquakes (chap. 12).[7]

Two fundamental questions will guide the case studies and their comparative analysis. First, do diverse states—in different geography, time, conflict, polarity, power, economic development, political regime, and other settings— exhibit a common pattern or diverse patterns of coping/crisis management in their search for and processing of **information,** *their* **consultation,** *their* **decisional forum,** *and their search for and consideration of* **alternatives?** *If common patterns emerge, this would facilitate much more*

effective anticipation of and policy responses to future crises, to prevent their escalation to war, both by state actors and the international system. Second, how do foreign policy–national security decision makers behave under high stress? That is, are the **effects of high stress on decision making negative** *(conventional wisdom, based upon the findings of individual psychology),* **positive** *(the view of rational choice theory), or neutral? The evidence from in-depth case studies can illuminate the stress-performance link in world politics.*

In order to reap the benefits of systematic comparison of international political earthquakes and to resolve the two puzzles—are there discernible patterns of crisis behavior or is there mere random diversity, and is high stress dysfunctional, functional, or neutral in crisis decision making?—the main focus of **Part B** will be on **coping with,** that is, **managing,** a crisis. Once a crisis erupts, the target state(s) must respond to a perceived value threat; that is, it (they) must cope with a foreign policy crisis; often, in due course, the crisis initiator(s) must cope as well. And in most crises, certainly "high-severity" crises (a concept to be defined and explored in **Part A,** chaps. 4 and 5), major powers and/or international organizations (IOs), the most visible actors in the global system, will attempt to manage the crisis with the aim of minimizing system instability. Similarly, once a crisis escalates, the adversaries must cope with the higher stress created by acute value threat, heightened probability of war, and time constraints on choice; and the major powers and IOs frequently experience a more urgent need to manage the increased threat to international system stability. The findings on crisis management (coping), by crisis adversaries, major powers and IOs, Findings on Earthquakes V, will be presented in chapter 12.

A concluding chapter will discuss the **lessons** from this inquiry into the world of crisis and conflict; that is, what have we learned and what parts of the puzzle are still unresolved (chap. 13)?

I begin with an analysis of international conflicts and crises (chap. 1).