

A World of Commonwealths

It seems obvious to many people that if no state hopes to gain from aggression there will be no war, and therefore to eliminate war one does not require a world government but only states without territorial ambitions. What is not obvious, one might think, is what sort of institutional arrangement, if any, will reliably produce such states.

This is what Kenneth Waltz, in his book *Man, the State, and War* (1959), called the “second image” of the causes of war. The main thesis of that book is that this view is wrong, because it overlooks the effect of the anarchic nature of the international system (the “third image”) on the behavior of states. This is the basis for what has been dubbed “structural Realism,” which I discussed in chapter 1.

However, we have seen that Waltz’s “third image” was derived from Rousseau and Rousseau’s ideas about international politics were based squarely on the incentives of predatory rulers. Rousseau wrote, “The whole life of kings, or of those on whom they shuffle off their duties, is devoted solely to two objects: to extend their rule beyond their frontiers and to make it more absolute within them” (1991b, 90). Kant, who was also much influenced by Rousseau, concluded that the solution was not to eliminate “anarchy” but to eliminate predation.

This view is consistent with what Hobbes wrote as well. Hobbes said that “in all places, where men have lived by small families, to rob and spoil one another, has been a trade, and so far from being reputed against the law of nature, that the greater spoils they gained, the greater was their honour,” and “as small families did then; so now do cities and kingdoms which are but greater families” (1957, chapter XVII, 109–10). The role of Hobbes’s sovereign, we saw, was to provide his subjects with security not only from the “injuries of one another” but also “from the invasion of foreigners.” With security, Hobbes thought, the “passions that incline men to peace” would prevail.

The claim of structural Realists, however, is that the desire for security alone is sufficient to cause wars among rulers who are not themselves subject to a common sovereign. But the only justification of this claim that has been offered is the security dilemma, which, as we saw in chapter 1, means

simply that attempts by one ruler to increase the security of his subjects will diminish the security of others. And the only basis for believing in the existence of the security dilemma is that, unless there is a complete differentiation between defensive and offensive capabilities, measures taken by one ruler to diminish the probability that he might be disarmed by foreigners also increase the probability with which he could disarm them. It is not clear why this should lead to war or even why it must lead to mutual insecurity.

As we saw in the previous chapter, what makes this incomplete reasoning plausible, apart from the mistaken belief that it implies that rulers are trapped in a Prisoner's Dilemma, are two facts: in a world of predatory rulers, states may have an incentive to wage preventive wars; and there may be a connection between control over territory and military power. These facts seem to imply that even rulers interested only in providing security for their subjects would be interested in territorial expansion and have an incentive to attack other states.

But we have seen that rulers might think twice before waging a preventive war, even if they were certain that a ruler who was expected to benefit from an expected future increase in his military capabilities was a fellow predator. If the beneficiary of an expected increase in military capabilities is unlikely to be a predator, it is not clear why a nonpredatory ruler would want to wage a preventive war against him.

Moreover, in early modern Europe the connection between territory and military power was largely the result of the connection between territory and wealth and therefore was inseparable from the incentive for predation. Thus, as we saw, its effect was not to motivate territorial expansion, for which ample motive already existed, but to make negotiated settlements prior to war more difficult.

If the connection between territorial expansion and wealth is broken, then expansion can lead to greater security for a ruler's subjects only if the territory to be absorbed directly affects the expected outcome of future military contests and control over it can be acquired and maintained at a lower cost than mobilizing greater military capabilities from within the territory a state already controls. Since one of the costs of trying to acquire more territory would be the risk of defeat, and therefore a loss of power, these conditions are hard to satisfy. And if other rulers are not likely to be predators, it is not clear how they ever could be.

Thus, when it is common knowledge that rulers are predators, the possibility of preventive war and the connection between territory and power provide additional incentives for contests in forcible disarmament beyond those implied by opportunities for predation. But in a world in which it is common knowledge that no ruler is a predator, these additional incentives would not exist.

The grain of truth in structural Realism is that if it is not common

knowledge that rulers are not predators then preventive wars may occur, even if in fact no rulers are predators. But Kant, as we saw, apparently agreed:

the state of peace must be *founded*; for the mere omission of the threat of war is no security of peace, and consequently a neighbor may treat his neighbor as an enemy unless he has guaranteed such security to him. (1795, 436; emphasis in original)

As we saw in chapter 1, structural Realists assume that such guarantees are impossible, since no state can ever be sure that other states are not predators. But none has offered a reason for believing this to be true.

One reason might be that predation is simply a reflection of the preferences of rulers, which they have an incentive to misrepresent. One might also think that, whatever the preferences of a state's current leaders, they may change over time, and no leader can commit his state not to engage in predation in the future. Thus, one might conclude, one should always prepare for the possibility that other states will take advantage of opportunities to engage in predation.

But this is also a reason for a ruler's subjects not to trust their ruler. And one of the central insights of European *raison d'état* thinking is that it is possible to guard against predatory rulers by the construction of institutions such that, as Kant put it, the "private attitudes" of conflicting individuals "mutually impede each other in such a manner that the public behavior . . . is the same as if they did not have such evil attitudes" (1795, 453). Thus trust might be based on an institutional structure, which can be publicly known, and not on the idiosyncratic preferences of particular rulers, which are reliably known only by them.

Some people have hoped to duplicate at the global level the institutional arrangements with these properties that were developed within European states. Others have thought that the balance of power among independent states, like a competitive market, might conceal an "invisible hand" that would be sufficient to accomplish the same thing.¹ Kant's idea seems to have been that the institutional mechanisms that make competing interests serve the common good within states can, if the way they work is common knowledge, simultaneously perform the same function among states.²

1. These possibilities are the focus of Claude 1962.

2. Kenneth Waltz claimed that Kant contradicted himself, since he believed both that in a state of nature no state can be secure and that a world state was both impossible and undesirable (1962, 338). He concludes that Kant just meant to say that world peace, like moral behavior, was an ideal that could never be fully achieved and thus "Kant makes understandable and in a sense excuses the failures of men and their rulers to achieve moral rectitude" (340). But Waltz's justification for claiming that Kant believed states could never be secure without a world state is a passage in which Kant says that states have a right to engage in preventive wars (338).

In recent years, Kant's ideas have been used to explain what is often called "the democratic peace": the observation that democratic states do not fight democratic states. But Kant did not actually say that democratic states would not fight democratic states, and his statement that peace requires some sort of guarantee implies that they might.³ The absence of wars among democracies is often offered in support of Kant's ideas, while Kant's ideas are offered as reason for believing that the absence of wars among democracies is not just a coincidence. What is missing is a valid argument deriving the observed absence of wars among democracies from Kant's ideas. But without that neither of these inferences is justified.⁴

Following a pattern we observed in chapter 1, Kant's ideas have been appropriated by Liberalism, one of the "isms" that dominate the study of international politics, and Liberalism, like other "isms," is supported indirectly by the flaws in opposing "isms." For example, Michael Doyle, a defender of Kant's ideas, has written that

In the end, as with most theoretical disputes, the debate will turn on the alternatives. Liberal theory should not be compared to the statistical residual or to a richly described case study, but to the comparative validity of other theories of similar scope. (1995, 183–84)

But the lack of validity of somebody else's argument cannot make one's own argument valid.

We have seen that wars are inefficient even for predators and are the consequence of a lack of common knowledge of military capabilities or the inability to reach self-enforcing agreements to divide the spoils of predation. And therefore democracy could reduce the incidence of war not because democratic states would have no interest in predation against the residents of other states but because bargaining between democracies is more efficient than bargaining between nondemocracies.⁵

3. Indeed, Kant said that democracy was just a form of despotism and that peace required that states be what he called republics (1795, 437–41). This does not necessarily contradict the claims made by writers on the democratic peace, but it illustrates the fact that it is difficult to define what the democracy that is supposed to lead to peace consists of.

4. The seminal work on the connection between Kant's ideas and the democratic peace is Doyle 1983. For an influential presentation of the empirical evidence for the democratic peace, see Russett 1993. For a critique of the evidence, see Gowa 1999. For a representative selection from the literature and an extended bibliography, see Brown, Lynn-Jones, and Miller 1996. A recent survey can be found in Morrow 2002.

5. For an argument in support of this proposition, see Schultz 2001. See also Lipson 2003. The seminal work on the importance of these factors in explaining the occurrence of war is Fearon 1995b.

Moreover, while the wars we have focused on were contests in forcible disarmament among rival predators, wars might be the result of other motivations as well and take many different forms. A war is just any contest in killing and destruction that results in some minimum level of damage or harm. We saw that a contest in forcible disarmament, even if carried to completion, might be followed by a countervalue contest between the armed forces of the winner and elements of the population of the territory it had occupied, and contests of that sort are possible even if not preceded by a contest in disarmament. Thus it is at least possible not only to reduce the frequency of war without eliminating predatory rule but also to eliminate predatory rule without eliminating wars.

These are reasons for taking seriously Geoffrey Blainey's claim that most attempts to explain the occurrence of wars focus on the wrong question. They try to identify what states fight about, he said, not explain why they fight, and they are therefore really explanations of conflict, not wars. But conflict is pervasive, while wars are relatively rare, and therefore what is important is not to identify what might occasion disputes but to explain why disputes turn into wars (Blainey 1988, 291). Much of the literature on war in recent years has followed this advice, and neither Realists nor Liberals have challenged it. While my discussion of bargaining and war in chapter 4, for example, focused, as did Clausewitz, on territorial conflicts among predatory rulers, the contemporary literature on which that chapter is based aims to be more general than that, and territorial conflicts are intended merely as examples.⁶

Nonetheless, there is good reason to think that eliminating the incentives for predation would reduce the incidence of interstate wars. Changes in relative bargaining power among predators will always occur, and thus there will be recurring opportunities to renegotiate territorial boundaries. It seems as unrealistic to think that this could always be accomplished peacefully, even by democratic predators, as it is to think that strikes might never occur even though labor and management are free to bargain over the terms of a contract between them. And expectations of changes in relative bargaining power would continue to provide a possible motive for preventive wars.

Of course, as long as states are independent, disagreements among them will still have to be settled by bargaining, and bargaining will always be inefficient to some degree. But it is possible that, in the absence of incentives for predation, states would find it easy to settle other disagreements peacefully.

Thus it is worth investigating what institutional arrangements, if any,

6. If the issue in dispute is not a divisible good such as territory, then compromise settlements may be more difficult. This point is discussed further later in this chapter.

might reliably reduce the incentives for predation among states and what role, if any, democracy might play in doing that.

Taming Predators

The incentive for predation by the great families of early modern Europe was twofold: predation was a means of securing their control over their existing wealth and also a means of increasing it further. But this was true only because there was enough wealth to make robbing and spoiling a valuable trade, as Hobbes put it, and because the people who produced the wealth lacked the means of resisting. Thus the only source of resistance to a family of predators was other predators, and since none was able to eliminate its competitors, continuing competition was required merely to maintain control over what one already possessed.

Two related developments in Europe helped change all that. One was an increase in the bargaining power of the prey. The other was the development of alternative means of acquiring great wealth, first through trade and overseas empire and then through industrial production. An increase in the bargaining power of the prey meant that predation against foreigners became less profitable, since the foreigners had greater means of resistance. And the increased bargaining power of subjects, together with the development of new forms of wealth, meant that rulers acquired alternative means of securing their positions within their own territories—they could supply public goods to their subjects in exchange for taxes. But the result was that the profits from rule were drastically reduced, and it became merely one occupation among others.

These changes were related, because the development of new forms of wealth contributed to the increased bargaining power of the producers of wealth. And since predators needed increasing amounts of wealth in order to protect themselves from competitors, at least some of them had to accept this reduction in their bargaining power in order to maintain their positions.⁷

Others, however, succeeded in mobilizing great wealth and popular support without having to accommodate the interests of the producers of wealth or of the larger population that supplied their armies. And they did this by capturing and controlling one of the mechanisms that in other circumstances could be used by ordinary people to protect themselves from powerful predators: mass political movements.

By coordinating the selective incentives such as praise and blame or

7. As we saw in chapter 2, many of these developments were described and explained by Kant.

honor and dishonor that all human groups have available to influence the behavior of their members, such movements enable ordinary people to overcome the collective action problem that would otherwise inhibit their ability to pursue common interests. Religion and what are commonly called political ideologies are among the means by which such coordination can be achieved, as is illustrated today by radical Islamic political movements.⁸

The more a ruler's subjects prefer him to foreign competitors, the more willing they will be to provide him with the resources necessary for defending himself against them. Mass political movements based on race, religion, ethnicity, or ideology provide a potent means of differentiating an existing predator from his opponents and creating expectations of attempted predation by them. And given such means of attracting support, predation against foreigners can then be justified as a preventive attack for the common defense. Thus the very mechanisms that make a mass political movement a powerful force against its opponents weaken the ability of its members to protect themselves against its leaders. Leadership of such a movement can therefore also become a "trade," which can make predation possible on a far larger scale than was feasible in early modern Europe. Thus it is still possible, as Rousseau claimed of rulers in the eighteenth century, for predatory rule and mutual insecurity to be mutually reinforcing.⁹

However, mass political movements based on a common commitment to the defense of a well-defined territory will have the opposite effect. If it is common knowledge that the rulers' subjects will provide support only for protection of their existing territory, then the ruler's incentive for predation is diminished. And if foreign populations can be mobilized to defend their territory against intruders, then their resistance to attack from outside their territory will not end even if their army is destroyed, and therefore the gains from disarming them will be drastically reduced. Finally, if trade provides a way of jointly benefiting from the economic resources in all territories, then the comparative benefit from predation against foreigners is reduced even further. In those circumstances, non-

8. For some recent examples and a discussion of how this is done, see Stern 2003. See also the discussion of the motivations of the early Christian martyrs in Stark 1997, 163–89. For a more extended discussion of the role of religion in making collective action possible, see Wilson 2002. For a classic discussion of the role of political ideas in collective political action, see Mannheim 1936.

9. With the religious conflicts of early modern Europe in mind, this is why neither Hobbes nor Kant thought that morality or social norms could be relied on to prevent predatory rule or organized violence. Note that this also implies that debates about whether mutual insecurity or predation explain ethnic civil wars may, like debates about whether insurgency is best explained by "greed or grievance," pose a false antithesis.

predatory rule and mutual security would appear also to be mutually reinforcing.¹⁰

Democracy merely requires that wars be popular. The reasoning just outlined implies that, for democracy reliably to promote peace between two states, it must provide a means of mobilizing support in each state for the defense of a well-defined territory, and opposition to the extension of rule to areas outside that territory. When this is true of two states and is also commonly known between them, democracy can help sustain a peaceful equilibrium.

Virtually all discussions of the relation between democracy and peace tacitly assume that democracies are characterized by such territorial commitments. But they are not implied by the notion of democracy alone, and how they develop is not well understood. This is an important research frontier in the study of international politics.¹¹

Since insecurity can foster predatory rule, democracy may be hard to sustain when the basis for mass mobilization is race, ethnicity, or religion. Thus one might observe a correlation between pairwise democracy and peace and conclude that the former causes the latter. But, like driving on the right-hand side of the road and the absence of collisions, they may both instead be the product of a more complex set of equilibrium expectations.

For example, the absence of war between Britain and the Weimar Republic might be offered as an illustration of the democratic peace.¹² But Hitler came to power under the Weimar Republic and had a significant amount of popular support—support that was based on claims that non-Jewish Germans everywhere were threatened by Jews and their foreign allies. And had the possibility of his coming to power been more widely anticipated, then the Weimar Republic, even though arguably democratic,

10. See the discussion of the difference between civic and ethnic nationalism in Snyder 2000.

11. See, for example, the recent discussion in Lipson 2003, which is largely based on Fearon 1995b. In addition to claiming, like Schultz 2001, that democracies have an advantage in revealing information about their interests and capabilities, Lipson claims that democracies have an advantage in making long-term commitments (2003, 100–104). But such an advantage, if it exists, is far more obvious for territorial commitments than for any other, and it is far from clear that breaking commitments that prove to be inconsistent with territorial security would always be unpopular in democracies. One reason for the ability of democracies to make territorial commitments may be that democracies are usually based on some system of geographical representation. However, because students of domestic politics, like students of international politics, tend to take states (and therefore territorial boundaries) for granted, the relation between democracy and territorial commitments has been little studied. For a discussion, see Linz and Stepan 1996, 16–37. For a general discussion of how to explain the development of territorial commitments, see Goemans 2006 and the literature cited there.

12. As it is in Doyle 1983.

would not have been able to commit itself not to pose a future threat to the territorial security of other European states. Or consider how stable democracies could exist in both Israel and a Palestinian state independently of an agreement about what territory belonged to Israel and what territory belonged to the Palestinian state.¹³

Unfortunately, like the example of the rule of the road that I discussed in chapter 2, the proposition that both mutual insecurity and predatory rule, on the one hand, and mutual security and democracy, on the other, might be supported by a self-enforcing equilibrium, even if true, does not tell us anything about how to get from one to the other.¹⁴

Moreover, violent bargaining will always be possible, both within states and among them. In a world in which the territorial security of all states was guaranteed, groups within states might want to secede, and for all we know that could lead to violence. And even states in a world of territorially satisfied democratic states might conceivably find something besides territory to fight about, though if bargaining between democratic states is efficient enough that need not happen. I do not have any clear ideas about how to think about such questions and therefore leave them as an exercise for the reader.

However, that is not the world we live in. But neither does the world we live in much resemble eighteenth-century Europe. As a result of the development of European states since Kant's time and the incorporation of the entire globe into the European state system, we live in a world that contains some states that might be able to give each other Kantian guarantees of mutual security but more that would not. Moreover, many entities that have the legal status of states do not actually exercise effective control over all the territory that international agreements have allocated to them and therefore may not really merit the appellation of "state" at all. Thus parts of our world resemble Hobbes's state of nature, parts resemble the predatory states described by Rousseau, and parts, perhaps, resemble

13. Consider also the relations between India and Pakistan, where a combination of religious and ethnic conflicts with conflicting territorial commitments puts pressure on India's democratic institutions and inhibits the development of democracy in Pakistan. Lipson writes that "issues of race and ethnicity rarely surface in diplomacy among democracies" (2003, 54). But this leaves open the question of whether democracy diminishes the importance of issues of race and ethnicity or whether racial and ethnic conflicts make problematic the establishment of democratic institutions. For reasons to take the latter possibility seriously, see Fearon 1994.

14. Nor is it clear whether a common understanding of economics and political science is required for mutual security. Socialists, for example, have been skeptical of the idea that democracy alone could prevent predation and have claimed that peace required a world of socialist states. However, the socialist peace has fallen out of fashion. For an interesting discussion, see Viner 1944.

the world that Kant hoped would eventually emerge out of Europe's recurring wars.¹⁵

I used Clausewitz's analysis of eighteenth-century warfare as a way of understanding the recurrence of wars in a world of predatory rulers. Kant's ideas are, perhaps, relevant at most to a world in which it is common knowledge that no rulers are predators. It is important to consider what the consequences might be if some rulers and would-be rulers are predators and some are not.

A Mixed World

In exploring the implications of Clausewitz's explanation of warfare in chapter 4, I assumed that, no matter how much territory rulers already controlled, they would want to acquire more. If for some reason a ruler wanted no more territory than he already controlled, others would expect not to lose any territory if they were disarmed by him. But this would reduce the risk they faced in an absolute war and therefore increase their bargaining power. Thus satiation might diminish the ability of a ruler to hold onto the territory he already possessed—his adversaries could assume that “what's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable.”¹⁶

I also assumed that a state that was attacked would try to disarm the attacker rather than merely try to prevent the attacker from disarming it. If it is feasible to do the latter then one might think that a satiated state would be satisfied with doing so. However, this would reduce the risk to the attacker even further and therefore further increase his bargaining power.

Finally, I assumed that the object in dispute was divisible territory that was valued only because it provided private goods for consumption and that military defeat made possible the capture of all the enemy's territory. These assumptions have two consequences: they imply that everyone is in conflict with everyone else, even if they might ally temporarily, but also that compromises are possible, even if they do not last.

Thus the analysis of the relation between bargaining and war between predatory rulers offered earlier implies that domestic opposition to territorial expansion diminishes the bargaining power of states confronted

15. See the description of the post-cold war world in Cooper 2003. Cooper calls these “pre-modern,” “modern,” and “postmodern” states, respectively.

16. There is a difference between being satiated and being satisfied. A satisfied state is one that prefers its current allocation of territory to the expected consequences of trying to increase it by the use of force; it might become dissatisfied if the distribution of military capabilities changes in its favor. A satiated state is one that would decline more territory if it were given to it.

with predatory rulers. Domestic opposition to territorial concessions restores some of that bargaining power, as does any connection that may exist between territory and military power: they both enable states to make credible commitments not to accept territorial compromises as an alternative to war. This might, as we saw, actually make wars with would-be predators less likely. But the price of this effect is that any wars that occur will be more severe.

Nonetheless, if a state is expected to restore the independence of an aggressor that has been disarmed then it is less dangerous to attack it than it is to attack a state that is not satiated.¹⁷ One way a satiated state can compensate for that is to threaten to divide defeated aggressors into smaller states, thereby depriving their rulers of some of their territory without paying the costs associated with absorbing it. Ex post this can be represented as a form of “balancing,” since the relative power of each of the successor states will be less than the power of the original aggressor. But ex ante the expectation that this will be done will increase the ability of a satiated state to deter an attack by a dissatisfied one and therefore also serves as a punishment strategy for deterring aggressors.

However, to punish an aggressor a satiated state must first disarm it, and to do that it must fight it. A satiated state will resist forcible disarmament if attacked by two dissatisfied states. But if it is the only satiated state, how should it respond if one of the other two attacks the third? Since neither of the other two is satiated, if territorial expansion leads to greater power then the satiated state will confront a much more dangerous adversary in the resulting two-state world no matter which side wins. But the only way to avoid this outcome is to join one side or the other and, if successful, bargain with its ally, and therefore a satiated state might join a predator in an attack on another state, even if it plans to partition its winnings into independent states in order to avoid the costs of controlling them.

But it is also possible that the dissatisfied state might become satiated without absorbing all the territory of its victim. Perhaps, then, the existing satiated state could avoid the costs and risks of war by standing aside and allowing the dissatisfied state to expand. If so, then, in spite of the fact that concessions would only strengthen the dissatisfied state, the third state might prefer making concessions to fighting, since if the dissatisfied state becomes satiated it will no longer be a threat and if it does not then the satiated state will be more likely to fight as well.

Of course, satiated states need not remain satiated, and thus there are risks associated with allowing states to expand until they are satiated, just

17. Think of the movie *The Mouse That Roared*, about a tiny state that attacked the United States in order to be defeated by it, hoping thereby to get economic assistance for postwar reconstruction.

as there are risks associated with allowing them to expand until they are satisfied. The optimal policy for the satiated state therefore depends on its evaluation of the risks associated with allowing each of the other two states to increase in size and therefore power, as well as the expected costs of war in alliance with either one. Since neither the satiation point of the potential aggressor nor the satiated state's willingness to tolerate its expansion is likely to be common knowledge, the likelihood of mistaken expectations is great.

Moreover, the optimal outcome for the satiated state is the continuation of the status quo. Thus it may have an incentive to conceal its own true preferences if it believes that the result will be that each of the other two states will overestimate its willingness to support its opponent. Perhaps this helps explain the failure of Great Britain to make clear what it would do in response to German expansion prior to both World War I and World War II, as well as controversies about what is called "strategic ambiguity" in debates about contemporary U.S. policy toward Taiwan.¹⁸

Note that if two of the three states are commonly known to be satiated then each would benefit from cooperating with the other to disarm the third, since neither would want to acquire more territory and both would gain by dividing the third state and thus reducing the military capabilities of any single potential adversary. However, each would also need to consider the probability of success in a military contest between the two of them and the third state. If it is sufficiently low, one or the other might prefer to come to terms with the predatory state.¹⁹

These are the properties of a world in which (1) some states are only interested in maintaining the territorial status quo, while others might be predators; (2) it is not clear what it might take to satisfy potential predators; and (3) no potential predator has reached the point at which territorially satisfied states might consider waging a preventive war against it. They imply that the ruler of a Hobbesian commonwealth who is interested only in providing his subjects with security from foreigners faces a more complex and less well-defined set of problems than does a predatory ruler in a world of predators, whose decisions were analyzed in the previous two chapters. His problems are made even more complex if, unlike Hobbes's sovereign, he has to justify his decisions to his subjects.

18. See the discussion in Fearon 1997, 84–85.

19. Joanne Gowa (1999) has argued that the data that support the idea of a democratic peace merely reflect the fact that democracies have been allies during the twentieth century. Others have argued that alliances among democracies are implied by the idea of a democratic peace and therefore should be counted as evidence in its favor (see the discussion in Morrow 2002). But there are no complete arguments that tell us what sort of alliances territorially satisfied democracies should be expected to form.

Domestic and International Politics

As noted in chapter 1, Waltz claimed that the theory of international politics that he sketched in his famous book with that name was “closely identified with the approach to politics suggested by the rubric, *Realpolitik*.” He wrote:

The elements of *Realpolitik*, exhaustively listed, are these: The ruler’s, and later the state’s, interest provides the spring of action; the necessities of policy arise from the unregulated competition of states; calculation based on these necessities can discover the policies that will best serve a state’s interests; success is the ultimate test of policy, and success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state. . . .

Realpolitik indicates the methods by which foreign policy is conducted and provides a rationale for them. Structural constraints explain why the methods are repeatedly used despite differences in the persons and states who use them. (Waltz 1979, 117)

We saw that the approach Waltz had in mind was *raison d’état*, and writers in the *raison d’état* tradition did indeed assume that it was in the interest of rulers to preserve and strengthen the state. But this was a means to the end of maximizing the wealth of rulers and their extended families and supporters.

Waltz claimed that what he called *realpolitik* implied the possibility of constructing a theory of international politics analogous to the theory of market competition in economics: states were like firms, which could be assumed to be maximizing something in a competitive environment (1979, chap. 5). If we think of ruling families as organizations in the protection business, this makes a lot of sense, and it was the basis for the analysis of recurring warfare among predatory rulers in the previous two chapters. It is perhaps a good basis for understanding international politics in Europe during the eighteenth century, when, as McKay and Scott said,

Rulers and statesmen strove ceaselessly to increase the power, and therefore the wealth, of their state. State power was everywhere measured in terms of territorial extent and population, which in turn determined revenue and the size of the army. . . . Additional territory was everywhere the aim of policy. (1983, 211)

But this “unregulated competition” among rulers required that all rulers find ways of mobilizing ever increasing amounts of domestic support. And in order to protect themselves from being overthrown by for-

eign competitors, some rulers had to give up the ambition of absolute rule at home and compromise with subjects who had no interest in territorial expansion.²⁰ Moreover, the combination of trade and industrialization meant that maximizing state revenues no longer necessarily entailed maximizing the territory a ruler controlled.

These changes raise the question of whether it still makes sense to think of all states as trying to maximize something in a competitive environment. The security dilemma has apparently led some Realists to believe that one might think of them as maximizing their security in an environment in which no state can be certain whether other states are predators or not. But there are several problems with thinking of international politics in these terms.

One is that, if all states really are security maximizers, then the only wars that can occur are preventive wars, and one must wonder why states could not reveal that their only concern was security (Kydd 1997, 2005). A second problem is that it is implausible to assume that anyone would want to maximize security. Much of life involves a trade-off between risk and reward, and no one simply minimizes his risks. If individuals do not do this, it is not clear why states would. And finally, we have just seen that in a world of multiple states in which it is unclear which are predators and which are not, or what it would take to satisfy a state that was, there may be no clear answer to the question of what a state that just wanted to maximize its security should do. These facts make the relation between the sovereign and his subjects in a Hobbesian commonwealth much more complex than the relation between ruler and ruled described by Rousseau.

Predatory rulers, like the leaders of democratic states, must be concerned about maintaining the support of their followers. But territorial expansion not only enriches the ruler; it also enriches his followers and provides resources that can be used to intimidate his opponents.²¹ Thus successful predation is self-supporting: it provides the resources to maintain the ruler's position in the present and sustains the expectation that he will be able to control such resources in the future.

Hobbes apparently thought that, if a ruler's subjects gave him a secure license to rule and enough resources to protect both him and them from foreigners, his own self-interest would be sufficient to guarantee them all peace, justice, and prosperity. This is the reasoning of the Italian monarchist quoted in chapter 3, who said that

the king is . . . the owner of the country. Like the owner of a house, when the wiring is wrong, he fixes it. (Banfield 1958, 27)

20. See the description of this process in England in Brewer 1989.

21. See Rousseau's discussion of all this in Rousseau 1991b, 92–93.

Many discussions of issues pertaining to national security within democratic countries involve reasoning similar to this. If every citizen is interested in maintaining the political independence of his country, one might think, then any political leader drawn from the general population will have the same interest in conducting foreign policy as any other, which seems to imply that questions of national security are different from domestic political issues, which require the resolution of conflicting interests among citizens. If this were true, democratic states would be similar to states with predatory rulers, in that the interest of the ruler would always be identical with the interest of the state.

Two ideas developed by economists can help us understand both why this reasoning is not universally accepted and some of the consequences of rejecting it. They are the concepts of a public good and of a principal-agent relationship.²²

Security as a Public Good

The concept of a public good is best understood by comparing a public good to the goods that we might buy in a grocery store, which are private goods. If I eat a loaf of bread, for example, it is gone and no one else can eat it. This property is called “rivalry in consumption.” And if I possess a loaf of bread, you do not have access to it—though you could take it away from me, and then I would not have access to it. This property is called “excludability.” A public good is something of value that is characterized neither by rivalry in consumption nor by excludability. If I magically cleaned up the air in Los Angeles, for example, no one in that city could breathe deeply enough to limit the amount of clean air that other people could breathe, and the only way to prevent them from breathing it would be to kill them or expel them from the city. Cleaning up the air in Los Angeles is thus, for the people in Los Angeles, a public good.²³

There are three problems associated with the provision of pure public goods. The first is how they can be provided at all, since their two defining properties imply that no one may have an incentive to do it. This question is the basis for what came to be known as the collective action problem,

22. A recent introduction to these and other ideas developed by economists, with references to the literature, can be found in Sandler 2001.

23. The two defining properties of a public good can vary independently of each other, and each really refers to opposite ends of a scale, along which there can be intermediate possibilities. A public swimming pool, for example, can be shared by many people, but if too many try to use it then there begins to be rivalry in consumption. And therefore, while it could be open to anyone, it makes sense to exclude people from using it who do not pay an admission fee.

after Mancur Olson's (1965) influential book on the subject.²⁴ Economists have traditionally said that this is why we need governments, since public goods cannot be supplied by markets. But that raises the question of where governments come from and why they would have an incentive to supply them.²⁵

A second problem associated with the provision of pure public goods is how, if they are supplied at all, they can be supplied efficiently. This problem is closely associated with the third problem, which is the main reason for discussing public goods here: the provision of public goods requires the resolution of conflicting interests among the people who are to contribute toward the cost of supplying them.

One might think that people would not disagree about public goods, since if they are goods then everyone must want them. And it is true that if they are free then everyone would be happy to have them.²⁶ The problem is that they are not free and the conflicts are the result of the necessity of having to pay for them. There are two sources of such conflicts. One is that, while everyone may value a public good, not everyone will value it equally—for example, some people will find air pollution more bothersome than others, and richer people may be more willing to pay money to eliminate it than poorer people. Another is that, even if everyone placed the same monetary value on every quantity of the good to be supplied, everyone would have an interest in having others bear most of the cost of supplying it.

Decisions about the supply of private goods also entail both issues of efficiency, which benefits everyone, and the distribution of welfare, where increasing one person's benefit entails reducing someone else's. But decisions about these issues can in principle be divided between markets, which can be efficient, and governments, which can redistribute income. This is not possible with public goods, and some people may end up being asked to pay more for some quantity of a public good than they are willing to pay. Thus, at the price they are asked to pay, these people will want less of the good, while others might want more. And since tax burdens are distributed independently of decisions about the amount of various public goods to be supplied, conflicts over the distribution of costs can lead to conflicts over the level of supply of a public good.

National security is a public good, and since it is expensive, one should expect neither that everyone will want to maximize the supply of it nor that everyone would find it easy to agree about how much should be

24. I discussed the collective action problem in chapter 3.

25. I discussed this question in chapter 3 and will return to it in the next section.

26. However, it is possible that what is considered a good by some people would be considered a "bad" by others.

supplied and how the costs of supplying it should be distributed. And thus, even if everyone within the territorial boundaries of a state wants only to preserve the state's control over that territory but not acquire more, it does not follow that the interest in security of every political leader chosen from within that territory will be the same as everyone else's.

In addition, the cost required to maintain some level of security depends on the size of the threat that a state confronts. Since payments for weapons to provide security lead to transfers of income from some citizens to others, everyone has reason to worry that politicians may have an interest in exaggerating the size of the threat.²⁷

Principals and Agents

A king who owns a country might, as we have seen, find it in his interest to supply many benefits to his subjects, just as a dairy farmer may have an interest in making life good for his cows. And every king would want to protect his subjects from other kings. The political leader of a democratic state, however, does not own the country but is hired by its citizens to supply them with public goods, among them security from foreign rulers. Thus a democratic political leader is not the owner but an agent (Grossman 2000). And therefore citizens of democratic states must find ways not only of resolving conflicts among themselves about how much security to buy and how to divide up the costs of supplying it but also of preventing their agent from simply doing what he prefers.

This is an especially complex example of the principal-agent problem. A principal is just anyone who has an agent, and an agent is someone who acts on behalf of someone else. The principal-agent problem is that the interests of the agent and the principal are not identical, and therefore the principal must find a way of inducing his agent to act in accordance with the principal's interests and not the agent's. The principal, therefore, will try to specify what he wants the agent to do and provide him with an inducement to do it. The problem is that the principal is not fully informed about the agent's interests or about what the agent actually does, and there may therefore be some gap between what the agent does and what the principal would have done had he acted for himself. Thus the principal-agent relationship, like the bargaining problem, is affected by the fact that

27. There are also other, more complex ways in which exaggerating threats to national security can serve private interests. For example, measures to protect national security may enhance the security of foreign investments. And there is the connection between insecurity and predatory rule discussed earlier. It perhaps helps explain why many people on the left are reluctant to provide support for interstate conflicts but have a soft spot for revolutionary violence. This gives nonstate predatory organizations an incentive to portray themselves as revolutionaries, which helps fuel the "greed versus grievance" debate referred to earlier.

people may have private information that they have an incentive to conceal.²⁸

For example, suppose you hire a lawyer to defend your interests in a lawsuit and you lose. Does this mean your lawyer did a bad job? To answer that question you might have to know as much about the law as a good lawyer would know. But the reason you hired a lawyer in the first place was that you do not. Similar problems arise if you hire a doctor to treat your child and the child dies or your stock broker recommends you buy a stock whose value then plummets. The problem is that knowing the outcome is not enough to determine whether the agent acted as you would have acted, since even the best lawyers sometimes lose, patients of even the best doctors may die, and the best-informed investors sometimes lose money.

Similarly, the U.S. intervention in Vietnam was notoriously unsuccessful. Nonetheless, there are still people who maintain that it was the right thing to do. And President Kennedy was spectacularly successful in getting Soviet missiles out of Cuba without the use of force. But there were people who argued that the method he chose to accomplish that goal, a naval blockade of Cuba, was very unwise and that he was merely lucky that the outcome was a good one.

The simplest way of aligning the interests of a principal and his agent is for the principal to contract to pay for the performance of the agent. But when the principal cannot judge the performance by the outcome, this is not enough. Among the ways of overcoming this problem are procedures for supervising what the agent does; mechanisms for screening out agents who might be incompetent or whose preferences are very different from those of the principal; and hiring other agents to check up on the performance of the agent doing the job.

Medical doctors, for example, must be trained by certified medical schools and pass examinations to receive a license to practice. One can also try to pick doctors who have practiced medicine for a while and therefore have reputations that can be checked and hire other doctors to review their recommendations. And if things go wrong, a doctor's performance is subject to review by committees of other doctors and ultimately by courts where he can be sued for malpractice.

However, the mechanisms that principals use to control their agents may have perverse consequences. If you hire a painter and pay him by the hour, you may discover that it takes a long time to paint your house. If you decide next time to pay him by the job, you may discover places where the

28. See the discussion of this problem in the context of bargaining in chapter 4. For an application of these ideas to an issue that is pertinent to this discussion, see Peter Feaver's (2003) recent analysis of the problem of civilian control of the military as a principal-agent problem.

paint is applied in rather thin coats. A doctor who knows his decisions will be reviewed if the patient does not do well may perform unnecessary tests so that he cannot be accused of negligence or may fail to prescribe risky medicine that might have saved the patient but at the risk of serious side effects. And agents that one hires to check up on other agents may claim to find fault when none existed in order to demonstrate that they have earned their money.

These are problems that characterize all principal-agent relationships. They may help us understand the ambivalent attitude that people in democratic countries have about the relation between public opinion and foreign policy. Political leaders are sometimes criticized for making decisions just to curry popular support and at other times are criticized for making decisions that are contrary to public opinion. For example, once it became clear that the U.S. intervention in Vietnam was not going well and opposition to it began to emerge, President Lyndon Johnson was criticized both for deciding to intervene in Vietnam merely in order to maintain public support (he did not want to be the president that “lost Vietnam”) and for failing to withdraw U.S. troops once it became clear that the war was very unpopular.

If we think of the constitution of a democratic country as a very complex contract between voters and political leaders that is designed to align the decisions of leaders with the interests of voters, we may be able to resolve the seeming inconsistency between these criticisms. A doctor, for example, is supposed to act in the best interests of the patient, and the certification and review procedures to which he is subjected are just a means to make sure that he does. A doctor who failed to follow prescribed procedures can be criticized, even though he acted as he did because he thought that was best for the patient. But a doctor who just follows procedures in order to protect himself from adverse consequences, even though it would have been better for the patient had he not done so, could be criticized for following the procedures. The parallel with the criticisms of President Johnson seems obvious, and what the two examples have in common are the problems inherent in any principal-agent relationship.

The more reliable are the procedures for aligning the interests of principals and agents, the smaller should be the difference between an explanation of the agent’s actions based on the interests of the principal and an explanation of his actions based on his own interests as shaped by the institutional constraints to which he is subjected. This may be a useful way of thinking about the relation between “national interest” and “domestic politics” explanations of foreign policy decisions by democratic governments.

However, there is a deeper issue here as well, which is that both the principal’s interest and the national interest may be poorly defined. When

the principal's interest, for example, concerns a risky prospect, then, as we saw in discussing the choice between a gamble and a sure thing in chapter 4, there is an inherently subjective element in his choices. A broker may give you a questionnaire to determine your attitude toward risk, but if the whole country had to buy the same portfolio, it is not clear how it could determine its collective attitude toward risk.

Moreover, collective choices of both the level of supply of a public good and the distribution of its costs are at least to some extent arbitrary. A familiar proposition about distributive issues in the public choice literature, for example, is that for every possible distribution of some divisible good a majority can be found that would prefer some other distribution.²⁹

When we combine these results with the indeterminacy of the problem faced by the Hobbesian sovereign, who just wants to provide his subjects with security from foreigners in a world in which other rulers may be predators, then it may be impossible to distinguish between the national interest and the decisions that emerge from whatever collective decision procedures a democratic state follows.

Nonetheless, the fixed geographical location of states implies that each state will confront similar choices over time and politicians will have an incentive to offer competing interpretations of current issues that can be made to sound plausible in light of prior experience. There may be people who disagree, but if they are unable to coordinate their actions sufficiently to compete effectively with the dominant competing interpretations, they will be ignored. Thus the combination of recurring problems with stable political organizations may give democratic states fairly stable conceptions of their national interests, but not necessarily one that could be inferred from the goal of military security alone. How this is done is little understood and is therefore an important research frontier in the study of international politics.³⁰

It remains true, however, that foreign policy is different from domestic policy, in that the agent hired to make foreign policy must do so by engaging in (possibly violent) bargaining with the leaders of other states. In such bargaining, the political process in democratic states may reveal information about the interests of the state that rulers of nondemocratic states cannot reveal, while the rulers of nondemocratic states may be able to conceal information that the leader of a democratic state could not conceal even if it would be in the state's interest to do it. The interaction between domestic politics and interstate bargaining is also something that

29. See the discussion in Sandler 2001, chap. 5.

30. This is perhaps what Constructivists have in mind when they speak of a state's "identity." However, this terminology adds nothing to our understanding of how states determine their interests.

is little understood and is therefore another important research frontier in the study of international politics.³¹

Writing the Global Constitution: Top-down or Bottom-up?

Kant wrote:

Just as nature wisely separates the nations which the will of each state would like to unite under its sway either by cunning or by force . . . , so also nature unites nations which the concept of a cosmopolitan or world law would not have protected from violence and war, and it does this by mutual self-interest. It is the *spirit of commerce* which cannot coexist with war, and which sooner or later takes hold of every nation. . . . states find themselves impelled . . . to promote the noble peace and to try to avert war by mediation whenever it threatens to break out anywhere in the world. . . . In this way nature guarantees lasting peace by the mechanism of human inclinations; however the certainty [that this will come to pass] is not sufficient to *predict* such a future. . . . But for practical purposes the certainty suffices and makes it one's duty to work toward this (not simply chimerical) state. (1795, 454–55; emphasis in original)

There are two propositions of interest here. One is that a just and peaceful world order is not simply chimerical. We have seen that there are reasons to believe this to be true, though we still cannot confidently predict that it will come to pass. The other is that an interest in commerce will impel some states to cooperate with others in promoting the development of such an order. But since the foundation of a peaceful international order, according to Kant, is the institutional structure of the component states, it is not clear how this could be done.

As we saw, Western intellectuals have given contradictory answers to this question since the European state system first began to emerge, and it is still the source of great controversy. These controversies can usefully be divided into two parts: controversies about the role that international institutions might play in preventing war, on the one hand, and controversies about state building, on the other.³²

31. For a pioneering analysis, see Schultz 2001. See also Lipson 2003.

32. For an extended discussion of the evolution of the “global constitution” that complements the analysis offered here, see Bobbitt 2002.

International Institutions

As we saw in chapter 2, in the eighteenth century the Abbé de Saint-Pierre proposed an agreement for collective security among the rulers of Europe as a kind of halfway house between a universal European monarchy and what would now be called an anarchic system of independent states. This idea has appealed to many people ever since and has influenced the structure of both the League of Nations and the United Nations.³³ But E. H. Carr's argument that the idea was utopian was the occasion for the introduction of the word *realism* into the academic study of international politics.

Rousseau's fundamental criticism of Saint-Pierre's proposal was that Europe's predatory rulers would never give up the option of using force to acquire more territory, since that would undermine the basis for their own rule.³⁴ But territorially satisfied democratic states share a common interest in maintaining their own territorial boundaries, and the only interest they might have in altering other states' boundaries would be as a means of weakening potential predators. Thus one might think they would be interested in a scheme like the one Saint-Pierre proposed, even if the predatory rulers that Rousseau described would not.

However, we also saw in chapter 2 that, even if the predatory rulers of eighteenth-century Europe had been willing to agree to Saint-Pierre's scheme, it would provide no further incentive for each of them to oppose the use of force than they would have had without it. But each predatory ruler actually had a greater incentive to oppose the use of force by others than a territorially satisfied state might have, since a predator would want to join an alliance against a competing predator in order to gain a share of the spoils. But actions taken to defend one state's territory can protect another's as well, and actions taken to weaken a potential predator will benefit all the predator's potential victims, and therefore the citizens of a territorially satisfied democratic state may hope that some other state will act to protect it. Thus territorially satisfied states confronted by the use of force may confront a collective action problem in opposing it.³⁵

Because the Prisoner's Dilemma game has often been used to show why public goods lead to a collective action problem, one might think that this finally justifies the claim that it is a useful way of thinking about the consequences of anarchy.³⁶ But note that, if there is a Prisoner's Dilemma

33. For a survey of much of the literature on this subject, see Claude 1962, chaps. 4 and 5.

34. See the discussion in chapter 2.

35. For further reading on the collective action problem among allies, see Sandler 1992, 96–106, and the references cited there. Note that the collective security equilibrium discussed in Niou and Ordeshook 1994 is based on the incentives of predators.

36. For the connection among public goods, the collective action problem, and the Prisoner's Dilemma game, see Sandler 2001, 70–71.

here, it has nothing to do with either the security dilemma or the possibility of preventive war. Rather, it may inhibit the cooperation of territorially satisfied democratic states in waging war, and thus if it helps explain war it is only because the expectation of noncooperation among territorially satisfied states may encourage predators. The collective action problem among territorially satisfied democratic states therefore contributes further to the bargaining weakness of such states in dealing with potential predators that I described earlier.

However, while territorially satisfied states may be unwilling to commit themselves to automatic cooperation in a collective security scheme, there are two reasons why they may nonetheless be able to cooperate in defending themselves. The first is that they need not, like the two prisoners, decide independently of each other but can negotiate agreements arranging for conditional cooperation in the form of alliances. And the second is that territorial security is not often a pure public good. During the cold war, for example, protecting West Germany from the Soviet Union meant that France was protected as well. But it was possible to compromise West Germany's territorial integrity without compromising France's, and actions taken to protect West Germany could make Germany a threat to France in the future. And therefore not everything done to protect West Germany was necessarily in France's interests. Thus, like predatory rulers, territorially satisfied states cannot necessarily rely on other states to protect their interests.

But the example of France and West Germany also illustrates the fact that, since the interests of even territorially satisfied states are not identical, such states face a more complex problem in cooperating for their common defense than merely deciding how to share the costs of providing a public good. They must also agree on a common course of action that may not be identical to what each of them would prefer.

Cooperation among territorially satisfied democratic states is further complicated by the fact that democratic political leaders must persuade voters that their decisions are required to protect the state's security and do not merely serve the interests of one group at the expense of others; and they must reassure the leaders of other territorially satisfied states that they are not predators in disguise. This may be difficult if military preparations against potential predators can be interpreted as motivated by predatory interests. Controversies about the second U.S. war against Iraq illustrate the fact that it is especially difficult to provide such reassurances if what is contemplated is a preventive war.³⁷

Thus territorially satisfied democratic states must negotiate agree-

37. But this war also illustrates the fact that democracy does not make preventive wars impossible.

ments for collective action in the common defense in a way that (1) satisfies each state's conception of what is required to protect its political independence and territorial integrity, (2) provides reassurances to all states about the defensive nature of each state's interests, (3) maintains domestic political support for whatever measures are agreed upon but (4) does not make potential predators optimistic about what they might accomplish by the use of force. This obviously poses an enormously complex coordination problem. Unfortunately, the first three conditions may not always be compatible with the fourth.

Since World War II, a variety of international organizations have been instrumental in helping territorially satisfied democratic states cooperate in defending themselves.³⁸ Until the end of the cold war, cooperation was made easier by the threat posed to many states by the Soviet Union and by the role of the United States as the central coordinator.³⁹ Since the end of the cold war, and under the more recent stimulus of the attacks on U.S. territory by radical Islamists, many of these arrangements have begun to be renegotiated. It is too early to say where this will lead. One of the issues in these recent conflicts has been the role that international institutions can or should play in state building.

State Building

Whatever international institutions states decide to create, as long as there is no global government with a monopoly of the legitimate use of force, the states themselves will constitute the most important part of the institutional structure of the global order, and the existence of governments in those states with a monopoly of the legitimate use of force is a necessary condition for peace at the global level. Kant, as we have seen, seems to have thought that a sufficient condition for peace was that the institutions of each state be designed to support a generally recognized commitment to defend a well-defined territory but not to extend it by the use of force.

Whether Kant was right or not, it is clear that most people in territorially satisfied democratic states would prefer that other states have those properties, for at least three reasons. First, they would imply security from foreign predators. Second, they would imply the existence of governments with which it might be possible to reach agreements for the mutual protection of property rights, which would facilitate commerce. And finally, they would satisfy the humanitarian impulses of democratic publics.

There are two ways a government might fall short of meeting these

38. For a recent discussion with citations to much of the relevant literature, see Ikenberry 2001.

39. As I noted earlier, these are arguably the attributes of the cold war period that Herz and Waltz tried to explain by the concept of bipolarity.

conditions: (1) it might not have a monopoly of the organized use of force within the territory that other states want to assign to it, and (2) it might exercise such effective control over its territory that it is a menace to other states. Unfortunately, correcting one of these problems might just lead to the other. Moreover, it is not clear how a government can participate in the construction of a state outside its own territory without depriving the residents of the foreign territory of their political independence.

As a result of the civil wars in the Balkans that accompanied the collapse of Yugoslavia after the end of the cold war, as well as a variety of civil wars in Africa, these questions have moved to the center of policy debates both within the United States and between the U.S. government and its allies. They have led to controversies about the role of the United States, its allies, and international institutions in mediating civil wars, as well as debates about whether the U.S. government, NATO, or the United Nations should engage in state building (or nation building, as it is often called). A closely related literature is devoted to explaining state failure or state collapse. Unfortunately, the division of intellectual labor between students of international politics and students of domestic politics has left us with few intellectual resources for thinking about these questions. This is therefore another important research frontier in the study of international politics.⁴⁰

A state, let us remember, consists of a well-defined territory, the people who inhabit that territory, and a government. A government is an organization that uses force to collect economic resources from the people in its territory, which it uses to regulate their behavior, and to defend its position against competing groups either within its territory or from outside it. To build a state, therefore, one must put together an organization capable of supporting itself by forcible means from the economic resources available within a territory and of resisting challengers from both within and without. Acceptance of such an organization by people within its territory constitutes a government's internal sovereignty, and acceptance by people outside it constitutes its external sovereignty.⁴¹

Two sovereign states can fight a war with each other, but a government that fought a war within its territory would be said to have lost its

40. Examples of the literature on civil war termination include Licklider 1993; Stedman, Rothchild, and Cousens 2002; and Walter 2002. On state failure, see, for example, Zartman 1995 and Rotberg 2004. There is virtually no serious analytical literature on state building.

41. A nation is a collection of people with some characteristics in common (e.g., language or religion) who also share a sense of common interests—properties that facilitate their organization for large-scale collective action. A nation-state, therefore, is a state whose territory coincides with a nation. Nation building may be the consequence of state building or may precede it. Preexisting nations make the peaceful negotiation of the territorial boundaries of sovereign states difficult. But wars are one of the main ways by which the people governed by a state who were not already a nation become one.

internal sovereignty. Yet a sovereign government might regularly use force against individuals or small groups within its territory. The difference lies in the degree of organization of the people against whom the government uses force. Sometimes people say that internal sovereignty requires that the government have a monopoly of the use of force, but that is true of few governments, if any. Internal sovereignty requires, rather, something close to a monopoly of the *organized* use of force.

Thus a government can lose its internal sovereignty not because it has “collapsed” but because new organizations emerge to challenge it. That would be true of the government of Colombia, for example, whose control over its territory, which was never complete, has been challenged by a variety of organizations that have emerged in remote areas. In those areas these organizations might be said to be stateless governments: they do what governments do, but they lack both internal and external sovereignty over the territories they inhabit.

As we have seen, it is useful to think of a government as an organization in the protection business, an expression whose ambiguity exemplifies the range of possible relations between governments and the people they govern.⁴² At one extreme an organization in the protection business might be a company that supplies armed guards to protect a piece of property. At another it could be a mafia that makes offers that people cannot refuse and protects them primarily from itself. Similarly, the governments of states range from what Jared Diamond has called “kleptocracies,” which own and exploit the people they govern, to governments employed by the people they govern to provide them with public goods (1997, 265–92).

To explain the difference, one must think about the relative bargaining power of organizations in the protection business and their customers, which is in turn largely a function of how well organized each of them is. Even if a government has a monopoly of the organized use of force, it still requires the cooperation of its subjects to accomplish its ends, and therefore, as Thomas Schelling once wrote,

the tyrant and his subjects are in somewhat symmetrical positions. *They* can deny *him* most of what *he* wants . . . [a]nd *he* can deny *them* just about everything *they* want—he can deny it by using the force at his command . . . [while t]hey can deny him the economic fruits of conquest. . . . It is a bargaining situation in which either side, if adequately disciplined and organized, can deny most of what the other wants; and it remains to see who wins. (quoted in Ackerman and Kruegler 1994, 9; emphasis in original)

42. The seminal discussion of governments in these terms is Lane 1958. The idea is developed in Tilly 1985. See also North 1981; Levi 1988; and Glete 2002.

Moreover, a government must worry about the possibility that it will lose its monopoly of the organized use of force, as happens in revolutionary civil wars.

Governments can be profitable for their members, but the benefits supplied by organizations formed to influence what a government does are often public goods, and therefore people who want to protect themselves from a government may have difficulty organizing themselves to do so. Moreover, once a government exists it can use the force available to it to punish people for organizing and can inhibit their ability to coordinate their actions. Thus it is easier to build a state than to organize people to protect themselves from it.

We saw that there are three main mechanisms that prevent governments from being pure kleptocracies. One is that, like any parasite, even kleptocracies have some interest in the well-being of the people they exploit. A second is that since kleptocracies are profitable they attract opposition from both within their territories and outside them. This may indirectly increase the bargaining power of the people they exploit, since the need to protect themselves from actual or potential opponents makes rulers more dependent on the resources their subjects control than they otherwise would be. And a third is that a government's subjects may be able to overcome the collective action problem and organize to oppose it by coordinating the selective incentives such as praise and blame or honor and dishonor that all human groups have available to influence the behavior of their members.⁴³

There are limitations to each of these mechanisms, however. A parasite's interest in the well-being of its host may benefit the host a lot or a little. For example, a government that controls a territory with few valuable resources may have an interest in fostering the development of a commercial society in its territory to create wealth that it can then tax, while a government that controls a territory with a large supply of oil may have little interest in the well-being of the people with whom it happens to share that territory. Competition from other potential rulers may not be great, and if it is it may lead to recurring violence rather than to benefits for the people being exploited.⁴⁴ And political movements based on religion or political ideology can be captured and exploited by kleptocrats, leading to even more effective and profitable tyrannies. Thus organizations that satisfy the defining characteristics of a state have long existed, but states whose governments are genuinely controlled by the people they govern are historically rare.

43. For an analysis of how variations in the bargaining power of the residents of rural areas in Africa have influenced the terms of bargains struck between rulers and ruled in African states, see Boone 2003.

44. See the recent discussion in Skaperdas 2002.

The French Revolution and the wars that followed it, the U.S. Civil War, the Bolshevik Revolution and subsequent civil war in Russia, and the Spanish and Chinese civil wars are all examples of state building. The cold war was largely a conflict between the USSR and the United States about state building in Germany, and the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is a conflict over state building in the aftermath of Britain's abandonment of its empire in South Asia.

With the exception of the U.S. role in Germany after World War II, however, these are not examples that figure prominently in recent policy debates about state building, and when Germany is mentioned in that context it is rarely emphasized that World War II was part of the process that produced the current German state or that the cold war was the result of the ambition of both the United States and the USSR to reconstruct Germany after World War II. Moreover, the collapse of the *ancien régime* in France, the pre-Civil War federal government of the United States (which tolerated slavery), the czarist regime in Russia, the Chinese or Ottoman empires, or the Soviet Union do not figure prominently in the literature on state failures, in which state failures are typically portrayed as bad things, not good ones.

Rather, the implicit aim of state building in recent policy debates is to prevent the sort of violent conflicts that led to the building of the powerful states that might engage in it. Humanitarian catastrophes like the French Revolution are to be avoided, and if they occur their participants may be prosecuted for crimes against humanity; civil wars like the U.S. Civil War are to be ended early by compromise settlements, and their participants perhaps prosecuted for war crimes; and little Bismarcks seeking to redraw territorial boundaries are not to be allowed.

The contrast between contemporary debates about state building and the historical literature on the subject might lead one to ask: If state building is the answer, what is the question? And the question seems to be not how does one construct something like a European state where none exists but rather how does one construct some sort of institutional arrangement in such places that will protect the interests of the powerful states, avoid conflicts among them, and not require the expense and conflict associated with direct rule? It is an open question whether the answer to that question can provide a substitute for the long, violent process described by Kant that led to the development of modern democratic states.

Contemporary debates about state failure, civil wars, and state building are best understood as part of the long history of relations between the powerful states that first developed in Europe (which were then exported to parts of the rest of the world by colonization and imitation) and areas where such states do not exist. Sometimes the advantages enjoyed by European-style states led to various forms of direct and indirect rule over

other territories, but even when they did not, relations between the powerful states and residents of other territories posed special problems, since there was no equivalent state in those territories with which one could make an agreement with any confidence that it would be kept.⁴⁵ One consequence of this fact was further imperialism, as one European government intervened preventively or preemptively in such areas to forestall possible intervention by another.⁴⁶

Eventually the European empires proved too costly to maintain, a fact that posed the problem of what to do with those territories that the powerful states did not want to rule. The solution was for the powerful states to reach agreements among themselves and such organizations as existed in those territories that defined the boundaries of the territories and assigned responsibility for their governance to organizations within them.

One might call the territory assigned to some collection of people by such an agreement a “country.” But while the negotiation of such agreements may be enough to create a country, which can be given a country code and admitted to the United Nations, it is not enough to create a state that resembles the former colonial powers.⁴⁷ And therefore the creation of such countries has not eliminated the problems that once were among the causes of European imperialism and which the European colonial empires were primarily responsible for coping with. It is not surprising, therefore, that some people have called for a resurrection of imperialism.⁴⁸

But territorially satisfied democratic states are not interested in imperialism. Efforts to foster the negotiated settlement of civil wars and interventions leading to temporary rule (also known as “peace enforcement”) are both present-day attempts to find a substitute for it.⁴⁹

Mediating Civil Wars

As we saw in chapter 3, a state can be thought of as a bundle of contracts that define the organization of a government and its relation to the people

45. This was also a problem for the Romans in working out a relationship between their empire and the barbarians on their European frontier.

46. The U.S. government did this in Central America and the Caribbean as well. For recent discussions, see Smith 1981 and Abernethy 2000. For a seminal discussion of the relation among trade, political order, and imperialism, see Gallagher and Robinson 1953. For an interesting discussion of thinking by Europeans about the normative and legal foundations of relations between them and territories that lacked European institutions, see Keene 2002. Keene argues that, contrary to what many people assume, the problems these relations pose for writing a global constitution have not gone away.

47. This point is developed at length in Herbst 1996–97. Postcolonial governments often resemble the governments of the premodern world. For a systematic description of their properties, see Crone 2003, especially chaps. 3 and 4.

48. See, for example, Ferguson 2003.

49. For a recent discussion of the parallels between humanitarian interventions since the end of the cold war and imperialism, see Marten 2004.

it rules and to other states. All these contracts are subject to renegotiation by means of violence, and a civil war might be part of an attempt to do that. It is natural to think, therefore, that if outsiders can help the parties to such conflicts settle their disagreements, they can promote the development of the sorts of states that will provide the basis for a peaceful global order.

An evaluation of such an inference requires us to think about two questions. One is why outsiders would be able to promote the settlement of a conflict when the participants were unable to reach an agreement by themselves. The other is whether every conflict customarily identified as a civil war is really just a dispute about the terms of an agreement that, if accepted, would define a government capable of exercising internal sovereignty. Our discussion of contests over valuable territory among predatory rulers in chapters 4 and 5 is a useful place to begin thinking about both these questions.

We saw in those chapters that among the factors inhibiting predatory rulers from reaching peaceful agreements dividing valuable territory among themselves were conflicting expectations about the distribution of the cost of a contest in disarmament or its likely outcome, the existence of private information about rulers' preferences, and expectations of changes in the distribution of power that made it impossible for warring predators to commit themselves to abide by the terms of an agreement in the future.⁵⁰ Thus one possible role that third parties might play in fostering the peaceful settlement of violent conflicts would be to provide a means of overcoming these barriers to agreement.

A third party might, for example, try to make the adversaries' beliefs about their military capabilities and preferences more consistent by providing them with independent information. However, they may not believe what the third party says, and the third party may not want to share all the information it has. Moreover, the most important factor about which adversaries have conflicting expectations may be the behavior of the third party itself.

The source of all these problems is that it is unlikely that a third state's only interest in a conflict will be in arranging for a nonviolent outcome. Given the distribution of military capabilities between the adversaries, for example, an early settlement might require such adverse terms for the weaker side that a third party would not be willing to accept them and would instead prefer to intervene in the conflict to support the weaker side. Conflicting expectations about the circumstances that would be necessary

50. We also saw that writers influenced by game theory tend to assume that both the first two factors were just the result of the incentive of rulers to misrepresent private information—see, for example, Fearon 1995b.

to provoke such an intervention might themselves prevent a peaceful settlement of a conflict.⁵¹

Note well that, if such conflicting expectations lead to a military conflict and a third state does intervene, its intervention may lead to an end to the conflict, but only because the intervention reveals information about the third party's own capabilities or preferences. Thus it would be wrong to infer from the outcome of intervention that third parties can reliably manage conflict, since it may have been ex ante uncertainty about the eventual role that the third state would play that led to violent conflict, or its prolongation, in the first place. For the third state to have prevented the conflict would have required that it be common knowledge in advance what role it would play in the event that a violent conflict developed. But it is unlikely that this condition will usually be satisfied in the post-cold war environment.

Consider the recent conflict between NATO and Serbia over Serbia's treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The U.S. government wanted simultaneously to deter the Serbs from harming the Albanians in Kosovo while convincing the Albanians that it would not support their independence. But the combined effect of these two messages may have been to leave both the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic and the Albanians uncertain as to what the United States would do if the Albanians insisted on secession and were on the verge of being decisively defeated by the Serbs, with the result that the conflict was prolonged until events provided an opportunity for the U.S. government to answer that question. Moreover, while the earlier U.S. intervention in Bosnia may have contributed to a more desirable resolution of the civil war there, uncertainty about what the United States would do may also have prolonged it.⁵²

Similar problems inhibit the ability of third parties to act as enforcers of agreements. It is commonly assumed that enforcement of agreements consists mainly of confronting violators with superior force, an idea that is made plausible by the role that courts, police, and prisons play in enforcing laws within modern states and by the misuse of the Prisoner's Dilemma as a way of identifying what distinguishes international politics from domestic politics. The great disparity in military power between the United States and the parties to violent conflict in less fortunate countries might lead one to think that the United States can reliably promote nego-

51. See the recent discussion of third-party mediation in Rauchhaus 2003 and the literature cited there.

52. For a similar argument with other possible examples, see Kuperman 1999 and the June 2005 issue of *Ethnopolitics* devoted to moral hazard and humanitarian intervention. See also the discussion of the possible "moral hazard" resulting from attempts at extended deterrence, in Fearon 1997, 84–85. (Wagner 2005 argues that multiactor bargaining rather than moral hazard is the appropriate intellectual framework for thinking about these issues.)

tiated settlements of violent conflicts within and among them by serving as an enforcer of agreements.⁵³

But, as we have seen, such reasoning rests on a misunderstanding of the role that force plays in preventing violent conflicts within states. It is true that law enforcement authorities confronting small groups of law-breakers can reliably make take-it-or-leave-it demands of them, and even when such demands do not work the scale of the resulting violence remains small so long as the miscreants remain less well organized than the authorities. However, the enforcement power of the state, when it is effective, is not the result just of the greater amount of force available to the state but also of the credibility of its commitment not to compromise with law-breakers and therefore its ability to make take-it-or-leave-it demands. This credibility is partly the result of the fact that the state does not just enforce agreements and will not enforce every agreement. It also enforces rules and will not enforce agreements that violate those rules. Thus in the United States the state is not available to enforce contracts between drug dealers and their customers, nor will it enforce contracts made under the threat of force. When this credibility is lacking it becomes possible to bargain with the enforcer, who then becomes just another party to the conflict.

One must therefore distinguish between the role of a third party as an enforcer of agreements made between the parties to a potentially violent conflict and its role as an enforcer of the rules of the game. Uncertainty about which role it will play is another source of potentially conflicting expectations about its behavior. The difference can be most clearly seen in the strangely split personality of Slobodan Milosevic as both war criminal and indispensable partner in the Dayton Agreement that ended the civil war in Bosnia. Some have argued that the Dayton Agreement rewarded Serbian aggression, while the reluctance of the U.S. government to accept negotiated settlements in Bosnia or Kosovo leading to a partition between the Serbs and their opponents seems to be the result of a desire to deter secessionist groups elsewhere.⁵⁴

The problems just discussed are the result of a lack of common knowledge of when the third party will intervene and what agreements it will enforce. One might think that the probability of conflict would be diminished if the third party just succeeded in making clear that it would never intervene to support one side of a conflict or the other but would always enforce any agreement that the conflicting parties both accepted. Then the

53. For a recent discussion of the importance of third parties in enforcing civil war settlements, see Walter 1997.

54. Anecdotal evidence in support of such concerns has been supplied by Timothy Garton Ash, who was told by Albanians in Kosovo that what stimulated them to abandon nonviolent protest in favor of violence was the Dayton Agreement (Garton Ash 1999, 30).

third party could perhaps function as an impartial enforcer of agreements, which would enable the parties to conflicts to avoid violence by reaching negotiated settlements of their disagreements instead.

But, as we have seen in chapters 5 and 6, the availability of enforceable negotiated settlements may make violent conflicts more likely, not less, since the expectation of a negotiated settlement is what motivates violent bargaining over its terms—the fact that contracts between labor and management are enforceable does not, after all, prevent strikes from occurring. Governments prevent violence among their subjects not just by enforcing agreements among them but also by refusing to enforce agreements that have been extorted by violent means and punishing people who use force to get their way. That is part of what is meant by saying that a government has a monopoly of the legitimate use of force, and since there is no such monopoly at the global level, one cannot expect third parties contemplating intervention in a civil war to behave in the same way.

Thus there will necessarily be both uncertainty and conflicting expectations about the role that third parties will play in civil wars: third parties may be unable to commit themselves in advance either to intervene in a civil war or not to intervene. And therefore expectations about possible interventions may play a role in motivating an internal conflict even if outsiders never intervene in it.

I have so far assumed that the parties to a civil war would prefer a peaceful settlement if they could agree on its terms and be confident that they would be carried out. We saw in chapter 4 that this might be true if what was in dispute was a divisible good such as territory and the alternative to agreement was a costly contest in disarmament. But it need not be true even then, if one or the other of the adversaries is sufficiently risk acceptant.⁵⁵ And when the object in dispute is not a divisible good like territory, then a division of it between the adversaries cannot be the basis for a compromise settlement. Moreover, even territory may not be easily divisible for a variety of possible reasons.

A common way of making indivisible goods divisible in the literature on bargaining is to randomize over outcomes: instead of giving someone half the good in dispute, an agreement might give him a 50 percent chance at all of it. But we saw that a contest in disarmament is itself equivalent to a costly lottery, and if a lottery could be accepted as part of a negotiated settlement, one might think that there would always be at least one agreement that adversaries would prefer to fighting: a lottery that awarded the

55. It is important to remember that the terms *risk aversion* and *risk acceptance*, while seemingly referring to psychological properties of decision makers (their “attitudes toward risk”), really are just names for different points of indifference between a lottery giving them all of some valuable good and getting some of it for certain instead and therefore just refer to their preferences. These preferences might be explained in a number of different ways.

object in dispute to one of the adversaries with the same probability as a contest in disarmament but without the cost of fighting for it.

However, an agreement to accept a lottery as an alternative to war would likely not be enforceable: the outcome of the lottery would award all of the good in dispute to one or the other bargainer, and if the loser prefers fighting for it to allowing it to go to his adversary then he will not accept that outcome. That is a good reason for ignoring lotteries in thinking about negotiated settlements between warring predators, but lotteries illustrate a possible role that third parties can play in settling intrastate conflicts: third parties can sometimes help create a range of possible compromise settlements that would not otherwise exist and assist in enforcing them. While the notion of a lottery as part of a settlement of a violent conflict may seem fanciful, an agreement that some issues will be resolved in the future by a political process whose outcome is not predictable with certainty can be a functional equivalent, and a third party may be able to increase the adversaries' confidence that the outcome of that process will be implemented. Foreign aid and other side payments from a third party to one or both the adversaries that are conditional on reaching a peace agreement are more straightforward illustrations of the role third parties can play in creating a range of possible compromises where none would otherwise exist.⁵⁶

Thus there are a variety of ways that a foreign state could facilitate the peaceful resolution of violent conflicts within the territory assigned to another state but also strong reasons to believe that a state that tries will not necessarily be successful. There are also good reasons to believe that the mere possibility of outside intervention can make it harder for the parties to a violent conflict to reach a negotiated settlement on their own. But even if all these difficulties are overcome and a negotiated settlement is achieved, such a settlement need not lead to the establishment of a government that is both capable of exercising internal sovereignty and incapable of posing a threat to the sovereignty of other governments.

Here again the discussion in chapters 4 and 5 of the relation between bargaining and war can be helpful in thinking about this question. In that discussion wars were contests in disarmament between competing organizations of economic predators, and the object in dispute was territory that was valuable to a predator. While the analysis in those chapters focused on agreements that divided the disputed territory between or among rival predators, I pointed out that, if there were economies of scale in predation, even equally matched predators might agree to join together and share the

56. See the discussion by Paul Pillar of package deals and agreements that leave the final resolution of some issues uncertain as ways of overcoming discontinuities in the bargaining space (1983, 224–31).

gains from exploiting the same territory, in which case a civil war might just be a conflict over how to divide the gains from predation.

But while an agreement that ended such a conflict might lead to an organization that could be called a state, it need not be enough to produce a state with the properties of a modern state. Not only would it not necessarily be either democratic or territorially satisfied, but it might not even be able to exercise complete control over the territory that other states were willing to concede to it. Indeed, conflicts commonly identified as civil wars may not actually be contests in disarmament between well-organized groups but may instead consist of recurring violence perpetrated by shifting groups of predators in areas that no organization exercises effective control over. In such conditions the problem is not to negotiate a peace settlement between or among competing organizations but to create an organization that would be capable of governing the territory that other states want to assign to it. And violence may be a means neither of defeating another organization nor of bargaining with it but may instead be part of the process by which the organizations that engage in it are created and maintained. In those circumstances, as in riots, there may be no one with whom to negotiate or reach a settlement.⁵⁷

Temporary Rule

When mediation of a conflict is not enough to create an institutional arrangement in some territory that can keep the peace there, direct military intervention from the outside may be considered. But since territorially satisfied democratic states are not interested in permanently governing foreign territories, the question raised by such a possibility is whether such an intervention might lead to an institutional arrangement that would satisfy the interests of the intervening state or states after the occupation has ended.

That is a question that is also faced by any state that completely disarms another but does not want to govern its territory, as was true of the United States in its occupation of Germany and Japan at the end of World War II. But then whatever motivated the war that led to a state's defeat might be reason enough to confront this problem; and the defeated state will likely retain at least some of its previous organizational structure, which may make its reconstruction a straightforward task. Contemporary controversies about state building have focused instead on the question of whether intervention from the outside might be justified at least in part because it would give the occupying states or organizations an opportunity to create institutions that could keep the peace after the occupation had ended.

57. These can be properties of conflicts that, from one point of view, are called guerrilla wars and, from another, are called counterinsurgency operations.

This might be thought of as the problem faced by an imperial power that seeks to construct a temporary rather than a permanent empire. Thus there are important analogies between recent multilateral interventions in the Balkans and Afghanistan and such earlier halfway houses between empire and independence as the League of Nations mandates or the United Nations trusteeships (Helman and Ratner 1992; Caplan 2002). Of course, the European colonial empires proved to be temporary, but one might think that they would have been constructed differently had they been intended to be temporary at the outset. Moreover, when they ended, the colonial powers were typically in a hurry to leave. Had they prepared longer for their departure, perhaps the consequences would have been better. Besides the League of Nations mandates, the closest relevant examples might be the various interventions by the government of the United States in the Philippines and in Central America and the Caribbean between the beginning of the twentieth century and World War II. Unfortunately there has been little systematic analysis of this experience in the debates about state building since the end of the cold war.

Whether intended to be temporary or not, imperial rule is the result of a government's reliance on economic resources, organization, and technology that were developed in one territory to persuade the residents of another to acquiesce in its rule. Once established, of course, an imperial government can use the resources from its empire for the private benefit of its members or to solidify its control over its original territory. If this is the motivation for imperialism, it is yet another example of the close connection between economic predation and political order, which helps explain the ambivalent attitude many people have toward imperialism. Within democratic states, predatory rulers have been replaced by politicians hired by voters. Imperial rulers, however, have often been replaced either by less benign predators or by a condition resembling Hobbes's state of nature. If a substitute is to be found for imperialism, there has to be some mechanism to make sure that a temporary empire is not a predatory one or does not last longer than is necessary. One such mechanism is to organize temporary rule under the auspices of the broadest possible coalition of states. But without the incentives that motivated imperial rule, states may have little interest in joining such a coalition.⁵⁸

Even with the requisite incentives for the occupying powers, however, there is still the problem of constructing a government that is both internally sovereign and temporary. If the temporary government is financed from outside the territory it governs and those resources are withdrawn when the government's mandate ends, then its replacement may not be able to raise the resources necessary to govern and its attempt to do so may

58. See the recent discussion in Fearon and Laitin 2004.

lead to violent opposition. If, however, the replacement government continues to be financed from outside its territory, then that will reduce the bargaining power of the replacement government's constituents.

If temporary rule is financed instead from within the territory it governs, this may increase the internal opposition that the temporary government must overcome. If it is resisted successfully, then the temporary government may be succeeded by a powerful predator when it departs; if not, then the temporary government may decide to depart rather than pay the costs of overcoming violent opposition to its rule, and the end of temporary rule may resemble the chaotic process that has often accompanied the liquidation of an empire. Thus there appears to be little reason to think that even beneficent temporary rule can be expected reliably to avoid the sorts of conflicts associated with the development of the most powerful states or with colonial empires and their aftermath.

The current interest in state building is based partly on the humanitarian impulse that leads people in rich and powerful states to hope that, having discovered the means of achieving peace, justice, and prosperity for themselves, they might transmit the secret to people in less fortunate places and partly on the common belief that the only sure remedy for recurring violence is a state. Thus if the problem in some place is organized violence the cure must consist of a Western-type state.

But an attempt to construct such a state where none existed before can lead to more violence than would otherwise exist. It was the need to fit all the former territory of the British empire in India into either postindependence India or Pakistan that created the conflict over the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which had formerly been an independent princely state only indirectly ruled by Britain. There was less violence in the Middle East under the Ottoman Empire than there has been among the states that replaced it. And just as the necessity of disposing of Germany after World War II led to conflict among the states that had defeated it, it is hard to see how a true Western-type state could be constructed in Afghanistan without resolving conflicts among the states that surround it, which include Pakistan, Iran, Russia, China, and India. Even if Europe and North America have already arrived at a destination that everyone else is bound eventually to reach, hastening others along the way may not be a way of preventing violent conflicts.

Nonetheless, upon occasion temporary rule will probably continue to seem better than the alternatives to one or more of the great powers, and it may also be necessary to think of more permanent possible substitutes for the European colonial empires. It would therefore be useful to try to understand both temporary and imperial rule better than we now do. This is therefore another important research frontier in the study of international politics.