



Hiroshima, 1945. The devastation that a great power war would create in the nuclear era raises the question of whether war, especially that between the great powers, can continue to be viewed as the “continuation of policy.”

CHAPTER

4

War and Violence in World Politics

The Realist's World

Unlike breathing, eating, or sex, war is not something that is somehow required by the human condition or the forces of history. . . . Conflicts of interest are inevitable and continue to exist within the developed world. But the notion that war should be used to resolve them has increasingly been discredited and abandoned.¹

—John Mueller, 1989

The optimists' claim that security competition and war among the great powers have been burned out of the system is wrong. In fact, all of the major states around the globe still care deeply about the balance of power and are destined to compete for power among themselves for the foreseeable future. . . . In short, the real world remains a realist world.²

—John Mearsheimer, 2001

Throughout human history, war and the threat of war have been a constant part of international life and central to understanding how the world works. Though all of the international relations paradigms provide explanations for the existence and frequency of war, the structural realist view that war is rooted in international anarchy provides least cause to expect that war can ever be substantially eliminated. In a world with no effective and reliable higher authority to impose order, realists insist that states will from time to time need to protect their vital interests through the use of force and violence. In this sense, war is inextricable from the realist's world.

However, as suggested in the quotations above, this view of war has come under increasing challenge. The amount of interstate war has declined in recent decades. Most

important, the great powers have not warred against each other since World War II. As John Mueller suggests in the quotation above, conflicts of interest might remain, but war as a means of settling them “has increasingly been discredited.”

This chapter will examine the evolving record of war in world politics. First, we will examine the role of war in world politics, including both an examination of the frequency of war and a discussion of how observers from the various international relations paradigms have come to terms with the moral questions posed by an activity that involves so much purposeful taking of human life. Second, we will examine the emergence and evolution of twentieth-century-style “total war.” The destruction rendered by twentieth-century technologies of warfare raises questions, both moral and empirical, as to whether the Clausewitzian view of war as the “continuation of policy” (see Chapter 1) can remain relevant. Third, we examine the evidence of a decline of the frequency of war in recent decades and competing explanations of that decline offered by various international relations paradigms. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of trends in twenty-first-century violence.

As you read, keep in mind Mearsheimer’s assertion in the quotation above that “the real world remains a realist world,” and ask yourself whether trends in the use of force and violence do, in fact, portend a fundamental change in how the world works. Do war and violence remain the ultimate currency of influence in world politics or have the evolution of military technology and moral norms combined to create a world in which war is increasingly “burned out of the system”?

WAR IN WORLD POLITICS

For many lay observers of world politics, war is an unfortunate interruption of the normal state of peace among countries. When wars do occur, they are often blamed on individual leaders with militaristic ambitions and inclinations. Go onto the street and ask passersby about the primary cause of World War II, and their answers will likely begin with the name Adolf Hitler. Likewise, depending on whom you ask or where you are doing the asking, the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States is likely to be blamed on either Saddam Hussein or George W. Bush.

When it comes to thinking about war, scholars suggest that Americans in particular tend not to be natural-born realists. The American view of war as an exceptional state of affairs is not hard to understand given U.S. history and geography. Due to the luxury of its location in the Western Hemisphere, no war has been fought on American soil since the Civil War, and the last time foreign troops fought on American territory was the War of 1812. Americans have experienced terrorist attacks on the homeland, such as the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but no American alive today has ever had foreign soldiers march across his or her property, has ever had to hide in a shelter while bombs rained from above, or has ever experienced the death of a child on U.S. soil at the hands of an enemy army. Nevertheless, the record of human history stands in sharp contrast to the view of peace as the norm.

The Prevalence of War and Violence

The United States, in its relatively brief history as a nation, has fought in a dozen major interstate wars and has been involved in countless smaller-scale military conflicts. The average number of years between American involvements in major wars has been less than two decades, and the result is that every American generation since the American Revolution has lived through years of America at war. Well over 1 million American soldiers have died in battle, and the number of wounded is many times that number (see Table 4.1).

The global record is even worse. Political scientist J. David Singer and his associates in the Correlates of War Project have been collecting and analyzing data on modern (nineteenth- and twentieth-century) war for more than four decades.³ Despite defining war very conservatively as sustained military combat with a minimum of 1,000 battle deaths—a definition common among political scientists—the record of the past two centuries is sobering. According to the

TABLE 4.1

AMERICA AT WAR

War	Duration	Deaths of U.S. Military Personnel
American Revolution	1775–1783	4,435
War of 1812	1812–1815	2,260
Mexican War	1846–1848	13,283
Civil War	1861–1865	364,511 (Union) 198,524 (Confederate)
Spanish-American War	1898	2,446
World War I	1917–1918	116,516
World War II	1941–1945	405,399
Korean War	1950–1953	36,574
Vietnam War	1964–1973	58,220
Persian Gulf War	1990–1991	383
War on Terror*	2001–present	973†
Iraq War	2003–present	4,365†
Total Deaths	1775–present	1,207,889

Note: The table includes major wars but not smaller-scale conflicts, interventions, or peacekeeping operations. The figures are for deaths of military personnel in battle and (except for the American Revolution and War of 1812 for which reliable nonbattle deaths are not available) from other causes such as war-related accident, disease, and suicide.

*Includes deaths in Afghanistan, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere.

†Through February 6, 2010.

Sources: Anne Leland and Mari-Jana Oboroceanu, "American War and Military Operation Casualties: Lists and Statistics," Congressional Research Service, February 26, 2010. Source for Confederate deaths in the Civil War is United States Civil War Center, "Statistical Summary: America's Major Wars," <http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cwc/other/stats/warcost.htm>.

Correlates of War data, 401 wars occurred during the period 1816 to 1997. Those wars were of three types:⁴

- **Interstate wars:** those pitting two or more legally recognized sovereign states against one another. World Wars I and II and the 1991 Persian Gulf War are obvious examples. There were 79 of these wars from 1816 to 1997.
- **Extra-state wars:** those in which at least one participant is a nonstate actor. In many cases, these have been wars of independence waged by colonies against imperial powers. Examples include the Franco-Algerian War of 1954 and the Portuguese-Angolan War of 1975. There were 108 of these wars from 1816 to 1997.
- **Intrastate wars, or civil wars:** those fought among groups within the borders of a sovereign state. Examples include the 1992 fighting among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in Bosnia as well as the conflict in Chechnya. This is the largest group, with 214 wars from 1816 to 1997.

Collectively, there is an average of 2.22 new wars per year.⁵ When one considers that most wars last more than one year, the average number of wars in progress around the world at any time is even higher. Indeed, it would be hard to find a day in the past two centuries when at least one war was not taking place somewhere.

coercive diplomacy

■ Threats and small-scale demonstrations of military power designed to send a signal and impact the behavior of other actors in the international system.

Military power and violence come in forms other than war. **Coercive diplomacy**—threats and small-scale demonstrations of military power short of war—remains a frequent backdrop to international politics. The Correlates of War Project captures this lower-intensity use of military power in its data on militarized interstate disputes (MIDs). MIDs are defined as “conflicts in which one or more states threaten, display, or use force against one or more other states” and thus include wars plus a much larger number of cases of coercive diplomacy.⁶ Since 1816 more than 4,000 such disputes have occurred—meaning that, among other things, forces have been mobilized, military alert levels have been raised, warning shots have been fired, or small-scale skirmishes between opposing forces have taken place (see Theory in Practice 4.1).

Most of those 4,000-plus militarized disputes never escalated to war as we have defined it (a sustained conflict with 1,000-plus battle deaths), and the sum total of death and destruction wrought by them pales in comparison to full-scale warfare. But each clearly involves the use of military power and self-help, and in combination with the actual wars that break out, the prevalence of coercive diplomacy contributes to the realist characterization of world politics as a Hobbesian war of all against all.

The human cost of all this war and violence has been staggering. The 412 wars from 1816 to 1997 produced more than 53 million battle deaths.⁷ Yet even that horrifying total grossly underestimates the human carnage produced by war, as it does not account for civilian casualties. In World War II alone, estimates of total deaths, civilian and military, range anywhere from 35 to 60 million, with most estimates in the 50 million range.⁸ Thus, once you add in civilian deaths, the total cost in human life of World War II equaled all the military combat deaths in all the 412 wars of the past two centuries. Total deaths (military and civilian) produced by twentieth-century wars have been estimated at approximately 87 million worldwide.⁹

THEORY IN PRACTICE 4.1

Coercive Diplomacy in the Taiwan Strait



Since the Chinese Revolution of 1949, tension has prevailed in the Taiwan Strait, with China insisting that Taiwan must be reunited with the Communist mainland, Taiwan insisting on retaining its autonomy, and the United States caught between its commitment to protect Taiwan and the economic and military challenges of its relationship with Beijing. Through it all, China, Taiwan, and the United States have used coercive diplomacy as a way of signaling intentions and drawing lines in the sand. Recent examples include:

- April 1, 2001:* U.S. spy plane operating off the coast of China collides with a Chinese fighter jet. China detains the U.S. crew for 11 days and the plane for 3 months.
- April 2001:* Bush administration approves first U.S. arms sales to Taiwan since 1974.
- June–July 2001:* Chinese war games simulate an attack on Taiwan.

- November 19, 2003:* China warns it will use force if Taiwan pursues independence.
- January 2004:* Taiwan announces referendum on acquisition of antimissile weapons unless China removes the missiles it has targeted at Taiwan.
- February 2004:* China warns of confrontation should the missile referendum take place, and begins new military exercises over coastal areas opposite Taiwan.
- February 2004:* United States deploys bombers to Guam.
- April 21, 2004:* U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs warns that the possibility of the United States becoming involved in a cross-Strait conflict “is very real.”
- November 16, 2004:* Vice minister of China’s Taiwan Affairs Office says that armed conflict with Taiwan may be unavoidable.
- March 8, 2005:* China’s People’s Congress passes a law authorizing the use of force if necessary to prevent Taiwan from acquiring formal independence.
- March 22, 2008:* Taiwan holds presidential election and same day referendum on whether Taiwan should be readmitted to UN. China had warned of the high risk of a military incident should the referendum pass or pro-independence party win.
- 2008:* United States deploys three aircraft carrier strike groups to waters near Taiwan in response to Chinese election period warning.
- 2009–2010:* Failure of referendum and defeat of pro-independence party leads to reduction of tensions, but China continued to increase the number of missiles deployed across the strait from Taiwan.

- What are the risks and benefits to a state engaging in coercive diplomacy in comparison

(continued)

THEORY IN PRACTICE 4.1 (continued)

with the use of other means to assert national interests?

- Under what circumstances is coercive diplomacy likely to succeed? Explain.
- Think of a recent case in which a state engaged in coercive diplomacy. Did it succeed or fail? Explain.

Sources: Map from <http://archives.cnn.com>. Chronology from PBS *Frontline*, "Dangerous Straits: Chronology," <http://www.pbs.org>; "Taiwan Confrontation: Introduction," <http://www.globalsecurity.org>, *Washington Times*, April 17, 2008; and Ted Galen Carpenter, "Taiwan Strait," Cato Institute, January 7, 2010. ■

War and Morality

For realists, the absence of a higher authority makes it difficult to establish and enforce standards of morality in the conduct of interstate relations. Recall the quote from Hobbes at the beginning of Chapter 1: "Where there is no common power, there is no law; where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues." Thus, in the realist view, the frequency to which states resort to war to settle disputes is predictable, if not always desirable. It is, as Clausewitz suggested, the "continuation of policy."

This view does not, however, imply that war for states is always the preferred option for protecting national interests. War, for realists, is a matter of the rational calculation of costs and benefits. The implicit question that any realist would ask before going to war is, "Are the interests that can be successfully protected or promoted worth it in comparison to the potential costs?" Those costs might include money expended, economic assets destroyed, political goodwill lost, and the number of one's soldiers likely to be killed. In some cases, the calculation might lead one to choose war as a necessary and prudent act. In other cases, the costs might be seen as too high.

For example, John Mearsheimer, one of the most outspoken contemporary realists, and one of the theorists quoted at the beginning of this chapter, opposed the U.S. decision to go to war in Iraq precisely because he did not believe the cost–benefit calculation added up in favor of war. In his view, continued UN sanctions, coupled with the threat of massive American military retaliation in the event that Iraq acquired and used weapons of mass destruction against the United States or its allies, were sufficient to contain Iraq at a much lower cost than going to war.¹⁰ His opposition to the war was not simply that people would be killed but, rather, that American interests would not be served. Others, including other realists, disagreed with Mearsheimer's analysis of the Iraq case. The point, however, is that the realist view of war as inevitable and useful does not apply to every particular war.

For many, this cold, calculating cost–benefit approach to war can be morally troubling, especially when discussing an activity in which millions of lives are at stake. But one might counter that this approach to warfare is really not so exceptional. Consider, for example, the case of the automobile. In 2003 there were 42,643 traffic deaths in the United States,¹¹ and since the beginning of the automobile age early in the twentieth century, close to 3 million people have been

killed due to automobiles in the United States.¹² In contrast, the number of U.S. military personnel killed in all of the major U.S. wars of the twentieth century was approximately 617,000 (see Table 4.1), or about one-fifth the number of automobile-related deaths. Likewise, the 486 U.S. soldiers killed in the Iraq War in 2003 represented just 1 percent of the number of people killed in U.S. traffic deaths that year.¹³

Given such numbers, one might reasonably suggest that the human cost of the automobile rivals or even exceeds that of war. Yet while people commonly oppose war in general and individual wars in particular on moral grounds, few picket General Motors or call for governments to ban automobiles on such a basis. We need automobiles; they are essential to our modern economy and way of life, and they may even save some lives by allowing quick transport to hospitals and easy access to foods or medicines. But one can make a similar case for war as an activity sometimes needed to defend one's territory, to ensure access to vital resources, or to defeat aggressors who would do harm to one's people. In fact, one might reasonably argue that the loss of a life on a field in France fighting Nazi aggression is more noble and, in a sense, less tragic than a death in a car crash while picking up a pizza.

Critics of realism do not accept, without discussion, this view of war as a cost-benefit calculation based purely on national interests. Located at the extreme opposite end of the spectrum from realism, **pacifism** is the position that any use of violence employed with the intent to kill or do physical harm to other human beings is morally unacceptable. It is an absolutist perspective that allows for no exceptions. No good cause or vital interest can, from this perspective, ever justify the purposeful killing of another human being.

Unlike realists, who distinguish between someone's personal morality and the morality that person employs as leader of a sovereign state, a pacifist sees no such distinction. Pacifists operating within the Judeo-Christian tradition might well argue that the commandment "thou shalt not kill" contains no footnote specifying that political leaders are free to kill, or to order others to kill, if democracy, or oil supplies, or security from terrorist attacks are on the line.

Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist who once served in the Russian army and who wrote about war in his novel *War and Peace*, became an ardent pacifist later in his life. At the age of 80, he stated the pacifist position on war quite clearly in his famous 1909 Address to the Swedish Peace Congress:

War is not—as most people assume—a good and laudable affair, but . . . like all murder, it is a vile and criminal business. . . . With regard to those who voluntarily choose a military career, I would propose to state clearly and definitely that notwithstanding all the pomp, glitter, and general approval with which it is surrounded, it is a criminal and shameful activity; and that the higher the position a man holds in the military profession the more criminal and shameful his occupation. In the same way with regard to men of the people who are drawn into military service by bribes or by threats of punishments, I propose to speak clearly about the gross mistake they make— . . . when they consent to enter the army . . . they enter the ranks of murderers contrary to the Law of God.¹⁴

pacifism ■ View that war and other forms of violence that bring death and harm to human beings are morally unacceptable.

Tolstoy's words can be uncomfortable. Applied to our own times, everyone involved in the U.S. military establishment, from the secretary of defense down to the army reservist who finds him- or herself unwillingly fighting in Baghdad, must, in Tolstoy's view, be considered a criminal and murderer.

Critics of pacifism argue that it is an unacceptable position for two reasons. First, it denies any right of self-defense in the face of violence. Realists, in particular, would suggest that any state that adopted a pacifist position in a world where anarchy prevails and where other states are willing to use or threaten violence would find its interests trampled. Second, and even more important, pacifism denies the right to use violence when needed to defend other innocent lives. Thus, critics of pacifism might ask, if someone had the opportunity to kill Hitler but refused to do so, wouldn't that person have the blood of the 6 million innocent Jews who perished in the Nazi death camps on his or her hands?

The unyielding morality of pacifism seems unacceptable to many because it does not accept the need to confront aggressors and evil-doers with force or even the threat of force. Consequently, the norm of pacifism has never diffused on a broad scope, as most observers have maintained a need to use violence in world politics from time to time (see Theory in Practice 4.2).

Far more influential have been the norms embedded in the **just war doctrine**, a perspective on war and morality that (1) accepts, in contrast to pacifism, that war can sometimes be both necessary and just, but (2) allows, in contrast to amoral realism, that ethical and moral considerations must be part of determining when and how to fight. For a war to be considered "just," the human costs must

just war doctrine ■
Perspective which accepts that war can be both necessary and just, but allows that moral considerations must be part of determining when and how to fight.

THEORY IN PRACTICE 4.2

Are You a Pacifist?

Many people claim to be pacifists. But hard cases, like saving innocent victims of genocide in Darfur, sometimes make it difficult and put one's pacifism to the test. Take the following test to see if you might qualify as a pacifist:

- Should Abraham Lincoln have used military force to preserve the union and abolish slavery in the U.S. Civil War?
- Do you think it was right that the Allies went to war to stop Nazi aggression in World War II?
- Would you have endorsed a covert assassination plot against Hitler in the early 1940s if you thought it could halt the Holocaust?
- Knowing now what happened on September 11, 2001, do you wish that the Clinton

administration had launched a successful missile strike against al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and killed Osama bin Laden?

- Would you support use of military force to rescue victims of genocide in Darfur?

If you answered NO to all these questions, you might qualify as a pacifist. But if you answered YES to even one, you cannot call yourself a pacifist.

- Is pacifism a morally defensible position?
- Is it possible to be a pacifist and still fight to make a better world? How so?
- Is it indeed the case, as suggested in this chapter and in the test above, that pacifism must be absolute? Explain. ■

be assessed, and those human costs extend beyond a narrow concern with the impact of war on military personnel and their fighting capabilities. Instead, in the just war perspective, human life is valuable in itself and must be factored into the equation.

Versions of the just war doctrine exist in most societies, cultures, and religious traditions. The Judeo-Christian variant makes a distinction between *jus ad bellum* (“justice of war”) and *jus in bello* (“justice in war”). **Jus ad bellum** is concerned with the circumstances in which it is morally acceptable to enter into a war. There are six criteria:

1. *Just cause.* Going to war for reasons of legitimate self-defense or to repel and punish aggression are considered just reasons for war. The protection and promotion of human rights might also be a just cause.
2. *Right intention.* War should be fought solely to attain that just cause and not for additional, unspoken purposes of promoting self-interest.
3. *Last resort.* Before going to war, less violent means of resolving the problem must be exhausted, or a reasonable conclusion must be reached that those other means will be futile.
4. *Probability of success.* Even when fought for a just cause, war is a waste of human life if the objectives of the fighting cannot be met. Thus, there must be some reasonable expectation that the goals of the war can be successfully obtained.
5. *Limited objectives.* Fighting must cease once the just cause is obtained. Further fighting to take advantage of the weakness of one’s opponent or to exact retribution for the misdeeds of one’s adversary would unnecessarily threaten further human life.
6. *Legitimate authority.* The only actors with the legitimacy to use violence in world politics are sovereign states and those international organizations duly authorized by the world community to use force (e.g., the United Nations). Nonstate actors are not authorized to wage war on the grounds that chaos would result if any actor with a good cause had a green light to use violence.

Jus in bello is concerned with the way one conducts and fights a war once it is under way. There are two criteria of *jus in bello*:

1. *Discrimination.* Those conducting and fighting a war must take all reasonable efforts to discriminate between soldiers and civilians, and to attempt to limit harm to the latter.
2. *Proportionality.* The degree of violence used must be proportionate to the just cause pursued. For example, dropping atomic bombs on Baghdad in 1991 to force Iraq out of Kuwait would have been a disproportionate response.

In order for a war to be considered just, all the criteria of the just war doctrine must be met. A doubt about any one of them puts the justice of that war in jeopardy.

While the just war doctrine might seem like an acceptable compromise between amoral realism and unequivocal pacifism, the doctrine has its critics. A major problem is the inherent difficulty of reaching a consensus when applying the criteria. Well-intentioned individuals might, for example, honestly disagree as

jus ad bellum ■

(Latin for “justice of war”) The circumstances in which it is just to enter a war.

jus in bello ■ (Latin for “justice in war”)

The criteria for how a war must be fought in order to remain just.

to whether a particular cause is just or whether war is really a last resort in a particular case. And given that the “probability of success” criterion involves speculation about the future, how can certainty be possible? Thus, pacifists and amoral realists might well agree that the just war doctrine, with criteria loose enough to justify almost any military engagement, does little more than legitimize and give moral cover to the decision to fight. Still, just war theorists maintain the value of entering moral considerations into the calculation. War by its very nature is an uncertain enterprise, and virtually every calculation of war’s results and impact—military, political, economic, and moral—is subject to falsification as events unfold. But that does not relieve us of attempting a good faith calculation in each area.

Moreover, constructivist and liberal critics of realism might well argue that just war doctrine has had an impact on the actual behavior of states as they contemplate both whether to fight and how to fight wars. For constructivists, just war doctrine is a good example of how powerful norms, developed and diffused over the centuries, can shape and constrain state behavior. For liberals, it is the institutionalization of those just war norms as formal laws, monitored and enforced by international institutions, that is key. For example, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 seek, among other things, to formalize the *jus in bello* principle of “discrimination” by specifying in great detail the measures that states must take to protect civilians in times of war. Though states often violate that principle in practice, it is not irrelevant to their war planning.

A good illustration is the U.S. war in Afghanistan. Some critics argued that the U.S. “rules of engagement” in Afghanistan (the formal rules governing when and how soldiers can use force in conducting operations) were too restrictive, giving insurgent fighters an advantage over U.S. forces. But the concern of military planners was to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties. Those casualties could turn Afghan public opinion against the United States and, because they would violate the norm of discrimination, could also delegitimize the U.S. war effort on a global level. That the U.S. military felt the need to pay homage to that discrimination norm in its war planning is a good illustration of the power of such norms.

THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN WAR

Even when constrained by just war considerations, war has always been a brutal enterprise. But as the achievements of the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution spilled over into the military realm, the brutality of warfare increased. The result was a twentieth century that historian Niall Ferguson characterized as “the bloodiest era in history.”¹⁵ It was the era of “total war,” underlined by the introduction of nuclear weapons.

The Emergence of Total War

Not only has war been a frequent element of world politics; it has also become more lethal over time. To be sure, many horrible conflicts with enormous loss of human life occurred well before the twentieth century. The Thirty Years War

(1618–1648) devastated central Europe and led to the deaths of millions of noncombatants as armies plundered and ravaged everything in their path. And the war that took the most American lives was not one of the world wars of the twentieth century but the U.S. Civil War. However, in the twentieth century, the pace and efficiency of killing raised the destructive potential of warfare to an entirely different level.

In large part, this change is related to the evolution of technology. Prior to the twentieth century, most battle deaths resulted from close contact between soldiers. As horrible as such battles could be, the efficiency of killing with a sword, a bayonet, or a single-shot rifle cannot be compared to the efficiency of the machine gun, which was introduced in battle on a mass scale in World War I. Likewise, the twentieth-century emergence of the airplane as a tool of war that could deliver increasingly powerful explosives from high altitudes made it possible to almost instantaneously produce hundreds, even thousands of deaths.

Technology, however, is not the entire story. Thinking about warfare also evolved and, specifically, thinking about the relationship of the government and the military to the civilian population. In much of premodern Europe, wars were essentially battles among monarchs, with little emotional attachment between rulers and ruled. Insofar as they were in the path of battle, civilians often suffered greatly, but they had little of the modern notion of patriotism that would lead them to care much about which monarch ultimately won. And the soldiers were often mercenaries who worked for pay rather than love of queen or country.

By the twentieth century the relationship among civilians, the military, and the government had all changed. All three were now bound in a common cause. Hans Morgenthau, the most influential modern realist thinker, suggested that the twentieth century was the century of **total war**, which he described as war of, by, and against total populations.¹⁶

War “of the total population” implies that the people have an emotional attachment to the war, the cause for which it is fought, and who wins and loses. This attachment stems first from the growth of the modern nation-state in post-Westphalian Europe and the sense of nationalism that accompanied it. This attachment would be strengthened even further in those states that adopted forms of democratic governance, as citizens in those states came to see an even tighter connection to their government and its wars.

War “by the total population” reflects the fact that twentieth-century wars were no longer fought by mercenaries, but by large, often conscripted, armies drawn from the nation’s population. For example, in the course of World War II, more than 15 million men and women served in the U.S. armed forces.¹⁷ Furthermore, in the twentieth century, domestic economies were heavily militarized, with significant portions of the population, including an increasing number of women, working in factories that provided the means of fighting a war. Indeed, the American success in World War II was arguably due as much to the fighting prowess of “GI Joe” as it was to the production efficiency of “Rosie the Riveter.”

Finally, if war is both “of” and “by” total populations, it follows logically that it must also be fought “against” total populations. To the extent that modern states seek the emotional support of their citizens in battle, attacks on those

total war ■ Wars of, by, and against total populations; characteristic of the great wars of the twentieth century.

citizens can undermine morale and their support for the war effort. Seen in this light, the Nazi bombing of civilian targets in London in World War II was less the result of a barbaric madman than a predictable extension of the logic of modern war. If the bombing of London led British citizens to question whether the fight against Hitler was worth the cost, then Hitler's task would be made that much easier. Likewise, to the extent that the factories in Germany were churning out guns and tanks and fighter planes, then the American and British bombing raids on those factories might be considered necessary, despite the fact that many such factories were located in highly populated areas. That U.S. factories, because of geography, were immune to attacks by the German air force was a huge advantage for the Allied forces.

The net result of war of, by, and against total populations was more than 22 million dead in World War I,¹⁸ and, as previously noted, approximately 50 million dead in World War II. Never before had so many been killed so fast. The majority of the dead in each case were civilians.

Enter Nuclear Weapons

A new age in international relations began on August 6, 1945, when a U.S. bomber nicknamed "Enola Gay" dropped an atomic bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. In one respect, nuclear weapons represented a departure from the logic of total war. One no longer needed a mass army, or war "by" total population, to cause massive harm to one's adversary. A few planes carrying nuclear bombs and some missiles in silos tipped with nuclear warheads could do the job using only a fraction of the workforce represented by a conventional military campaign.

But in a more significant sense, nuclear weapons represented the culmination of the logic of total war. Because they were weapons of mass destruction, they were the perfect weapon for war "against total populations." According to one U.S. estimate published in 1946, in Hiroshima, a city of 350,000 people, an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 died because of the bombing.¹⁹ More recent data collected by the Hiroshima city government indicate that by the end of 1945, 140,000 had died as a result of the atomic bomb. From 1946 to 1951, an additional 60,000 deaths from injuries and radiation produced by the bomb are estimated, leaving a grand total of 200,000 deaths directly related to the dropping of a single, and by today's standards, relatively small atomic bomb.²⁰

Despite these numbers, opinions vary as to how much of a revolution in our thinking about international relations and the role of warfare the atomic age mandated. For some, not much had changed, and atomic bombs were just the latest step in a continuing process of innovation in military technology. After all, as political scientist Thomas Schelling once noted: "Japan was defenseless by August 1945. With a combination of bombing and blockade, eventually invasion, and if necessary the deliberate spread of disease, the United States could probably have exterminated the population of the Japanese islands without nuclear weapons. . . . Against defenseless people, there is not much that nuclear weapons can do that cannot be done with an ice pick."²¹

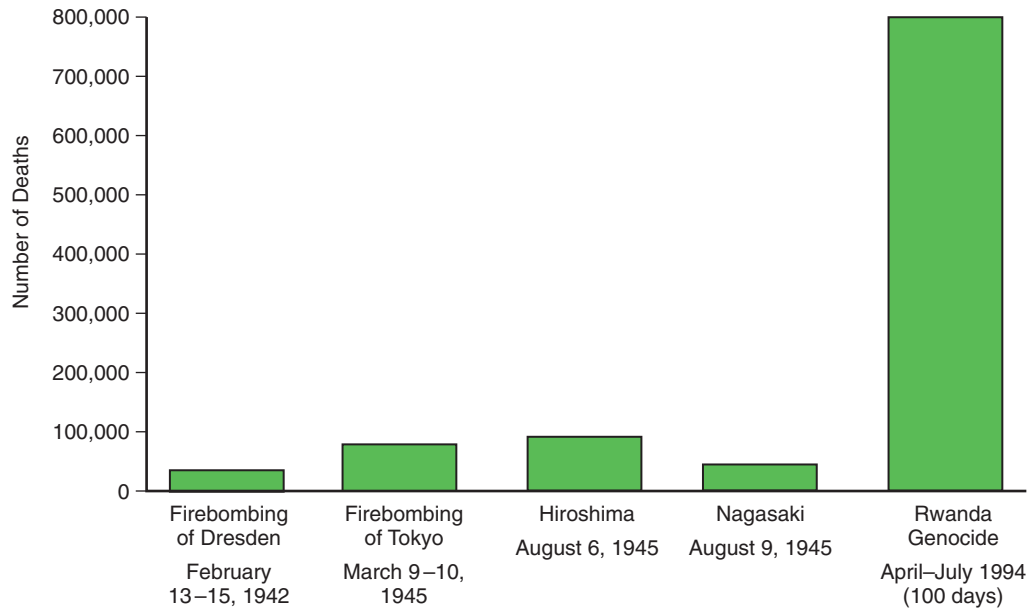


FIGURE 4.1

Deaths Produced by Various International Events.

Note: Death figures vary by source. The figures cited here are midrange estimates of immediate deaths found in Rudolph Rummel, "Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Twentieth Century Hemoclysm," <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat1.htm>.

Recent events have demonstrated Schelling's point all too tragically. In the East African country of Rwanda in 1994, approximately 800,000 people (many times the number killed at Hiroshima) fell victim to genocide in 100 days. While firearms, especially early in the genocide, were used in the killing, less sophisticated weapons, including knives, machetes, clubs with protruding nails, screwdrivers, hammers, and even bicycle handlebars, all eventually became a part of the technology of killing.²² (See Figure 4.1 for a comparison of deaths produced by nuclear weapons in Japan and other conventional modes of killing.)

On the other hand, some sensed early on that nuclear weapons were more than just another step in the technology of warfare. It was the speed and the efficiency of the destruction that made nuclear weapons unique. More people may have died from knives and machetes in Rwanda than from the bombing of Hiroshima, but the Rwanda slaughter resulted from thousands of individuals engaging in sustained killings over several months. In Hiroshima, the deaths were all produced by one bomb dropped in an instant from one airplane.

As early as 1946, U.S. military strategist and scholar Bernard Brodie observed that the nuclear age required us to rethink our approach to war and international relations in general: "Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose."²³ For Brodie, nuclear weapons had

mutual assured destruction (MAD)

■ A condition of mutual deterrence in which, in the event of a nuclear war, each side has the capability to inflict an unacceptable level of damage on the other.

second strike capability

■ Ability to ride out an initial nuclear attack with enough nuclear retaliatory capability left intact to do unacceptable damage to one's adversary.

deterrence ■ The ability to dissuade another state from acting against one's interests by the threat of harm one might do in response.

stability/instability paradox

■ Idea that states will engage in conventional war precisely because they feel secure that it can never escalate to nuclear war among the superpowers.

rendered obsolete Clausewitz's notion of war as the continuation of policy. Why? Because no policy benefits could outweigh the massive cost that nuclear war, especially one fought between two or more similarly equipped nuclear powers, might now entail.

This view was codified in the concept of **mutual assured destruction (MAD)**. MAD was based on the assumption that as long as each side retained a **second strike capability**—that is, the ability to ride out a first strike with enough retaliatory capability intact to do unacceptable damage to one's opponent—neither side would have an incentive to strike first. MAD relied exclusively on **deterrence**. It assumed that the threat of retaliation would deter each side from launching a first strike, but it provided for no defense from the other side's nuclear attack should deterrence fail. In fact, MAD proponents argued against even trying to defend from a nuclear attack. In part, this was due to doubts about the feasibility of defensive systems. Even more important, defenders of MAD were concerned that the illusion of defense from a nuclear attack might make each side feel less vulnerable and thus more likely to use nuclear weapons. Defense, they feared, might undermine deterrence.

Thus, many came to view nuclear weapons as the basis for a somewhat perverse but stable global peace. The cost of nuclear war, the theory went, was so high that it became unthinkable. Moreover, even a conventional war between the two superpowers had to be averted for fear that once war started, it could escalate to the nuclear level. Thus, while the Cold War was filled with superpower crisis and tension, it was also the longest period of peace among the great powers in modern history.

Clausewitz was not yet completely dead, however. During the Cold War, smaller conventional wars remained a part of the international landscape. Some of these "limited wars" were actually not so limited, often involving one of the superpowers and high casualties. The United States sacrificed close to 100,000 soldiers fighting limited wars against Communism in Korea and Vietnam, with the total casualties—soldier and civilian—on all sides in those two conflicts running in the millions. Likewise, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 produced 10 years of fighting in which at least 15,000 Soviet soldiers were killed along with a million Afghans.²⁴ Some scholars have noted the **stability/instability paradox**, in which states feel free to engage in conventional war precisely because they feel secure in the assumption that it can never escalate to nuclear war among the superpowers.

Wars completely below the level of the superpowers have also continued. To cite a few examples, India and Pakistan went to war in 1947, 1965, and 1991. And in 1999, two months of fighting erupted between the two countries over the disputed region of Kashmir, despite the fact that both sides now had nuclear capability. The Iran-Iraq War from 1980 to 1988 cost a million lives, and what has been dubbed "Africa's First World War" has raged in Central Africa since 1998, barely noticed by the world at large despite the fact that it has involved at least six countries and has claimed almost 4 million lives.²⁵

Even at the nuclear level, some have attempted to resuscitate Clausewitz and restore relevance to his view of war as the continuation of policy. During the 1980s, for example, supporters and critics of MAD engaged in a heated debate

over nuclear strategy. The critics were uncomfortable with MAD because it assumed that each side in the superpowers' nuclear "balance of terror" was a rational actor with the same approach to ethics and the value of human life. If that assumption was wrong and an irrational or ethically callous leader came to power in a nuclear state, those weapons might very well be used.

In light of this concern, the Reagan administration in the 1980s pursued a nuclear strategy that emphasized ways to fight, survive, and even win a nuclear war. Critics labeled the Reagan strategy NUTS—an acronym for **nuclear utilization theories**. The Reagan strategy aimed to limit the damage of nuclear war by relocating people to more rural locations in case of a nuclear confrontation and by development of more accurate offensive missiles that could destroy Soviet missiles before they were even launched. But the centerpiece of the Reagan approach was the **Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)**. Dubbed "star wars" by its critics after a popular science fiction movie of the time, SDI was a multibillion-dollar research program intended to find ways to defend the U.S. homeland from a nuclear attack by destroying enemy offensive missiles before they could hit their targets.

The debate is whether the NUTS approach makes the unthinkable more thinkable. Those who see MAD as a successful deterrent say "yes." The more convinced one is that nuclear war can be survived and won, the more one might tempt fate and try it. Plus, one country's preparation for limited nuclear war might frighten others to launch a preemptive strike on it. NUTS proponents say "no." Even a limited nuclear war will be destructive enough to deter most rational leaders, and if other leaders with nuclear weapons are irrational, the need for a nuclear defense becomes even more crucial. The more prepared one country is to fight and win a nuclear war, the less another will be likely to start one.

With the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 and the end of the Cold War, the debate over nuclear strategies simmered down a bit and, to some observers, seemed increasingly irrelevant in a world where Russia and the West were enjoying more friendly relations. But by the end of the decade, the mood had changed considerably. Russian-U.S. relations were turning cool again, concerns about the rise of China were escalating in some circles, and fears of a new round of nuclear proliferation were growing.

Nuclear proliferation is the spread of nuclear weapons to nonnuclear countries. At the beginning of the nuclear age, some anticipated the rapid spread of nuclear weapons to perhaps dozens of countries. In fact, by the 1960s only five countries (the United States, the USSR, China, Britain, and France) were members of the nuclear club. In 1968 the nuclear **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** was adopted and eventually signed and ratified by the vast majority of countries. The treaty prohibited nonnuclear countries from developing nuclear weapons and banned existing nuclear states from transferring nuclear weapons technology to nonnuclear states. The treaty further provided for inspections by the UN-related International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure that peaceful nuclear technologies were not being diverted to weapons development.

Among the handful of countries not originally party to the NPT were Israel, Pakistan, and India. In all three cases, there was an intention to develop nuclear weapons, by the 1970s and 1980s weapons testing and development were under way, and by the 1990s it was clear that all three had nuclear weapons capability.

nuclear utilization theories (NUTS) ■

Strategies for fighting, surviving, and winning a nuclear war in the event that deterrence fails.

Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) ■

Reagan administration initiative designed to develop and deploy a system of nuclear defense that would render harmless enemy missiles before they could hit their targets.

nuclear proliferation ■

The spread of nuclear weapons to previously non-nuclear states.

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ■

A 1968 treaty that sought to limit the spread of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visits the Natanz uranium enrichment facility. While most believe a nuclear Iran will be an emboldened and more aggressive actor in the region, setting off a chain reaction of proliferation, others suggest that a nuclear Iran will be deterrable and that nuclear proliferation might inject a note of caution into a historically volatile region.



In 1998 India and Pakistan each engaged in tit-for-tat nuclear tests designed to demonstrate their capabilities, raising a new round of concern about further proliferation. The focus of that concern in recent years has been on North Korea (which withdrew from the NPT in 2003) and Iran (which remains a party to the NPT). The challenge is not only those two countries but also the chain reaction they could produce among their neighbors. In Asia, a nuclear North Korea might provoke a rethinking of Japan's policy on nuclear weapons and also stimulate proliferation in South Korea and Taiwan. In the Middle East, recent International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and CIA reports note some evidence of unreported nuclear experiments in Egypt.²⁶

For a discussion of the consequences of nuclear proliferation and suggested policy responses, see Stephen P. Rosen, "After Proliferation: What to Do If More States Go Nuclear," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006, 9–14.

Some have suggested that this proliferation can be a stabilizing force, injecting a dose of caution into and inducing resolution of historically volatile conflicts, such as those between Israel and its Arab neighbors or between India and Pakistan. These proliferation optimists suggest that if the threat of mutual assured destruction could prevent war between the United States and USSR for half a century, it could have a similar impact elsewhere.

Others are not so confident.²⁷ These proliferation pessimists are concerned that as the number of nuclear states increases, the statistical probability of nuclear deterrence breaking down will increase. That breakdown can result either from a purposeful decision to use nuclear weapons or from a loss of command and control in which nuclear weapons fall into the hands of terrorists or other rogue actors.

WAR IN DECLINE?: THE POST–COLD WAR ERA

Newspaper headlines about wars and threats of war, combined with the increasing lethality and violence associated with modern weapons of mass destruction, lead, understandably, to the popular perception of a world that has become steadily more dangerous over time. In fact, recent trends provide at least some reason for cautious optimism, as some data suggest a decline in interstate war in the post–Cold War era. Scholars working within different paradigms provide different assessments of the cause of this trend and of its long-term significance. In this section, we will begin by describing the recent decline in interstate war and then compare a few alternative explanations that have been offered.

Declining Frequency of War

The first optimistic trend to note is that, in the years since the Cold War ended, the trajectory has been an overall decline in warfare across the globe. Putting aside the years 1990 and 1991 when the Cold War was ending and intrastate, or civil, wars surged, such wars have since fallen back roughly to their Cold War era frequency. At the same time, interstate war has declined from an average of 1.6 new wars per year during the Cold War to 0.8 new wars per year in the period from 1991 to 2006.²⁸ The net result, as illustrated in Figure 4.2, is that the number of states experiencing any sort of warfare rose consistently over the Cold War era, reaching a peak in 1991 of close to 30 percent of states. After 1991, however, the trend has been consistently downward, with only 15 percent of states involved in any form of warfare by 2005. By 2009 the overall level of warfare across the globe was at its lowest level since the 1960s.²⁹

Second, the trend toward avoidance of the most destructive kinds of wars—those involving direct clashes among the great powers—has continued in the post–Cold War era. While those great powers have continued to fight wars against weaker states and to treat those wars as proxy fights against other great powers, they have not fought one another directly since the end of World War II. This is

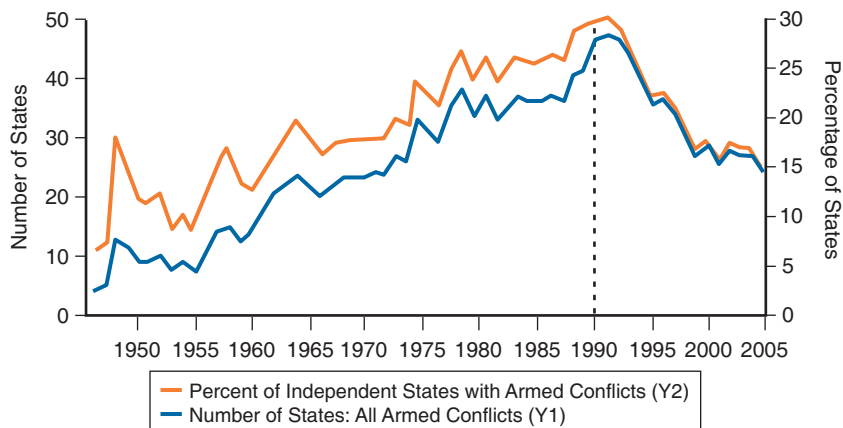


FIGURE 4.2

Trends in Warfare, 1946–2006.

Source: Graph, “States Experiencing Warfare, 1946–2006” from Center for Systemic Peace. “Global Conflict Trends” online, www.systemicpeace.org. Adapted by permission of Monty G. Marshall.

long peace ■ The era from the end of World War II through the end of the Cold War and continuing into the early twenty-first century, during which there has been no great power war.

security community ■ Group of states that have ruled out the use of war and violence as a means of resolving conflicts with one another.

not a small accomplishment, given the lethality of wars waged by the great powers. Thus, in labeling the post–World War II era as the **long peace**, historian John Lewis Gaddis might not be literally accurate, but he does capture an important and positive characteristic of the period.³⁰

Finally, some countries have essentially taken war off the table as an option in their relations with certain other countries. In particular, according to political scientist Robert Jervis, the United States, Canada, Japan, and the countries of Western Europe have created what he calls a **security community**—a group of countries that no longer threaten or fear war with one another.³¹ His idea of a security community seems to trump the realist notion of the security dilemma and the feelings of mutual insecurity that it generates. No one in France, for example, fears British nuclear weapons, and no one in Canada fears the arms of the world’s greatest superpower just to their south. Indeed, this security community, already in evidence during the Cold War, has since expanded as several post-Communist states of central Europe have joined Western institutions such as the European Union and NATO, and can now be included in that group of states among whom war is virtually unthinkable.

Explanations of Peace

The evidence, discussed above, of a decline of interstate war provides cause for some to suggest both the declining utility of the realist paradigm and a cautious basis for hope that the era in which war is “the continuation of policy” may be coming to an end. Realists, however, would caution that war continues to be an instrument of policy and that the recent downturn in interstate war can be explained within the parameters of the realist paradigm.

A REALIST EXPLANATION OF PEACE Central to the realist explanation of both war and peace is the distribution of power. John Mearsheimer, for example, has argued that the “long peace” among the great powers that characterized the Cold War era was a result of the bipolar balance of power between the United States and the USSR.³² In his view, a bipolar system is especially stable and less likely to lead to great power war than a multipolar system. Because multipolar systems have more players, they are more complex with more pairs of states with potential conflicts, more opportunity for the imbalances of power to develop, and more opportunity for miscalculation.³³ Bipolar systems, by comparison, are simpler. There is only one other state to worry about and whose power must be assessed and balanced.

Reinforcing that tendency was the impact of nuclear weapons. The reality of mutual assured destruction created extra incentive for both the United States and USSR to prevent the many Cold War era crises from evolving into hot wars. Even as other countries (China, France, and the United Kingdom) acquired nuclear weapons, the gap in nuclear capabilities between the two superpowers, on the one hand, and the smaller nuclear powers, on the other, was so large that the essential bipolarity of the international system remained unaltered.

For better or worse, the distribution of power in the post–Cold War era looks very different from that of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union

For elaboration on the “security community” idea and perspectives on it offered by competing international relations paradigms, see Robert Jervis, “Theories of War in an Era of Leading-Power Peace,” *American Political Science Review* 96:1 (2002): 1–14.

effectively ended the bipolar, Cold War era. However, the immediate result was not multipolarity. Bipolarity was replaced, at least temporarily, by an international system in which one superpower, the United States, seemed to be in an unchallenged position of **hegemony**, or dominance, in world affairs. Observers began to talk about a “unipolar moment,” and well-known scholars published books on the consequences of a new period of American empire. Indeed, the American dominance not only in military power but also in economic, political, and cultural influence seemed so overwhelming in the 1990s that a French foreign minister thought it necessary to coin a new word—“hyper-puissance” or hyper-power—to fully capture the multifaceted nature of U.S. hegemony after the Cold War.³⁴

U.S. hegemony helps explain the decline of interstate war during the 1990s. As many realists have long argued, hegemony begets peace, as other countries are wary of the power of the hegemon. At the same time, while hegemony might explain peace in the short run, it is not something that will last indefinitely. As realists would also argue, periods of hegemony eventually end, and other states do eventually attempt to balance the power of the hegemon. Such periods of challenge can be very dangerous, with great power tension and, potentially, great power war. According to the **power transition** theory, the international system is particularly prone to great power war when the prevailing dominant power is challenged by a rising power that is unsatisfied with the existing distribution of influence.

Anticipating precisely such a challenge to the United States from the emerging power of China, some observers have suggested that we may one day look back on the 1990s as a period of calm before the storm.³⁵ Depending on how things play out, a resurgent Russia, an increasingly integrated European Union, a militarized Japan, and a newly emergent India might all, along with the United States and China, be key players in an increasingly multipolar twenty-first century that reverses the peaceful trends of the 1990s.

Realists, in short, would argue that the post–Cold War era is not quite two decades old, a mere blip on the radar screen of history. While the entire era of the long peace among the great powers from 1946 to the present is notable, it too is a relatively short period in the wider sweep of world history. Thus, what some see as a long-term transformation of world politics may be little more than a short-term cyclical downturn in war and violence. Indeed, in other eras, war was thought to be in decline, only to reemerge. The 1920s, for example, were an era of relative global peace, but the most destructive interstate war in the history of humanity soon followed.

A LIBERAL EXPLANATION OF PEACE As noted in Chapter 1, the Kantian triangle suggests three potential sources of peace in world politics. The development of international institutions that reduce anarchy is one of those sources, and it will be the subject of Chapter 5. Economic interdependence is yet another explanation of peace among nations, and it will be addressed in Chapter 7. Here, the focus will be on the third point of the Kantian triangle: how change in domestic regime type affects the way the world works. Specifically, according to liberal internationalists and the democratic peace theory, the goal of eliminating, or at least substantially reducing, the use of violence to resolve differences is best served by the spread of democratic government.

hegemony ■

Situation in which one great power dominates the international system by virtue of its capability and will to establish and enforce the rules of world politics.

power transition ■

A shift in power (especially military power) from one country or group of countries to another. Some see such transitions as periods of instability that are prone to war.

For a challenge to the view that war, even great power war, is a thing of the past, see Niall Ferguson, “The Next War of the World,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006, 61–74.

The notion that democracy is the antidote to warfare is, as noted in Chapter 1, traceable to Immanuel Kant's argument that a zone of "perpetual peace" can emerge from a "pacific union" of free states (republics). Over the past quarter-century, this Kantian view has been reinvigorated and widely discussed and debated in light of two important empirical facts: (1) democratic governments tend not to fight wars with one another, and (2) the number of democratic regimes around the world is at an all-time high.

Let's take up the first point—that "democracies very rarely, if ever, make war on each other."³⁶ How absolutely one views that assertion is, in large part, a function of how one defines democracy and then applies that definition to individual states. Most contemporary discussions of **democracy** define it as a political system characterized by three essential elements:

democracy ■

Political system characterized by:
 (1) the right of political participation,
 (2) political competition and meaningful electoral choice;
 (3) civil liberties.

1. *Participation.* The right of all adults to take part in the political process, including the process of electing public officials.
2. *Contestation.* Competition among political parties and individuals that allows for meaningful choice in the election of public officials.
3. *Civil liberties.* At least a minimal package of freedoms (e.g., free press, free speech, free association) essential to ensure that participation is informed and that the integrity of the democratic process is upheld.³⁷

When the definition of democracy is applied most strictly, the observation that democracies do not fight wars with one another appears close to being an absolute law. One scholar, applying a strict definition of democracy, could find only one exception to the rule—the 1999 conflict between India and Pakistan.³⁸ But even that exception is debatable both because India and Pakistan were, at best, flawed democracies, and because the conflict itself was small-scale, barely meeting the 1,000 battle deaths minimum necessary to categorize a conflict as a war.³⁹

Even if democracies tend not to fight with one another, they do frequently fight wars against nondemocratic regimes. The American experience with warfare provides ample testimony. As we saw in the 2003 U.S. preemptive attack on Iraq, democracies are not necessarily unwilling to fire the first shot in wars against authoritarian states. Thus, if the democratic peace is to prevail on a global level, the expansion of the number of democratic states becomes the key.

The last quarter of the twentieth century witnessed an impressive wave of democratization around much of the world. It was, according to political scientist Samuel Huntington, the third such wave of democratization: the first long wave was in the nineteenth century, the second wave was in the years following World War II, and the **third wave** began in 1974 with democratization in Spain and Portugal, spreading to most of Latin America, post-Communist Europe, and parts of Asia and Africa.⁴⁰ Another political scientist, Francis Fukuyama, was so impressed by the global democratic trend that he famously declared, in 1989, that we had reached **the end of history**, or the point at which the grand political debate about how best to organize ourselves politically had been resolved once and for all in favor of democratic government.⁴¹

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the number of countries democratically governed was at an all-time high. According to Freedom House, a non-governmental organization that publishes a yearly survey of the state of democracy

third wave ■

Wave of democratization that began in 1974 with Spain and Portugal and then spread to other parts of the world, including Latin America, Eastern Europe, and parts of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

end of history ■

Phrase coined by Francis Fukuyama at the end of the Cold War to describe what he thought was the end of ideological debates about how to organize economic and political affairs with the triumph of the ideas of democracy and market capitalism.

TABLE 4.2**GLOBAL TRENDS IN FREEDOM, 1979–2009**

Year	Free Countries	Partly Free Countries	Not Free Countries
1979	51 (32%)	54 (33%)	56 (35%)
1989	61 (37%)	44 (26%)	62 (37%)
1999	85 (44%)	60 (31%)	47 (25%)
2009	89 (46%)	58 (30%)	47 (24%)

Note: “Free countries,” as defined by Freedom House, can for most intents and purposes be considered consolidated democracies; “partly free countries” are essentially equivalent to semidemocratic regimes; and “not free countries” are authoritarian regimes.

Source: Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2010*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.

and political freedom around the world, the number of “free countries”—those that are more or less the equivalent of democracies—has increased significantly as the number of “not free” (or authoritarian regimes) has declined (see Table 4.2). When you marry the observation that democracies have tended not to fight one another with this reality of an expanding global community of democratic governments, the realist notion that interstate war is inevitable comes into question.

However, realists and other critics of democratic peace theory are not quite prepared to concede the argument. Their challenge comes on multiple levels. First, they contend, even if one accepts that democracies tend not to fight one another, the world still has a significant number of nondemocratic states. Despite the democratic gains of the “third wave” era, Table 4.2 still shows less than half of states in the “free” category. Indeed, in comparison with the impressive democratic gains of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the trend toward democracy since 2000 appears to have stalled. Among the remaining nondemocracies are some fairly important countries, including China with its population of over 1 billion, its dynamic economy, and its steady improvement in military capability. Likewise, the Middle East has been largely bypassed by the third wave and remains a hotbed of both terrorism and interstate strife.

Second, realists point to the prospect of backsliding among countries currently categorized as democratic. Huntington notes that the first two waves of democratization were followed by reverse waves in which some newly democratic states reverted to authoritarian rule. The same has happened following the third wave. Perhaps most significantly, in light of political trends under Russian leader Vladimir Putin, in 2004 Freedom House downgraded Russia from “partly free” to “not free.”⁴² Since even one nondemocratic country with sufficient military capability can upset the democratic peace, betting on the obsolescence of war might be a losing wager.

Third, some realist critics argue that the core assumption that democracies will not fight one another, though largely true to this point in time, has not been sufficiently tested. Modern democratic government, after all, does not have a very long history. If we view the United States as the first modern democracy, then

modern democracy is barely two centuries old. Even the early United States and other fledgling nineteenth-century democracies would be considered largely undemocratic by current standards, given the limitation of democratic rights to white male property owners. In the view of realists, then, we still lack sufficient data to conclude that form of government is the key factor restraining democracies from going to war with one another. Perhaps it was the existence of a common enemy, the Soviet Union, that kept the democracies at peace with one another during the Cold War. Moreover, most democracies of the Cold War era were Western countries that shared a common European cultural identity. As the world's democracies become more culturally diverse, one cannot rule out the possibility of differences in the ways these new democracies interact with each other.

A CONSTRUCTIVIST EXPLANATION OF PEACE While the realist explanation of peace emphasizes the distribution of power, and while the liberal democratic peace theory stresses the impact of structural changes in domestic regime type, constructivist explanations of peace would give more attention to changes in global norms. Though the prevailing norm in world politics has long held that war is an acceptable “continuation of policy,” competing norms have challenged or at least sought to limit that view.

Though his work on the decline of war predates the constructivist turn of the 1990s, John Mueller, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, provides an analysis of the long peace and the decline in the frequency of war that is consistent in many respects with the constructivist paradigm. On the one hand, Mueller rejects the realist view that the long peace of the post–World War II era was just a temporary reflection of a particular balance of power. Like liberals, Mueller sees in the long peace a more fundamental and a more permanent change in how the world works.

However, for Mueller the recent absence of great power war and, arguably, the more general decline in the incidence of interstate wars of all types have little to do with the Kantian triangle stressed by liberals. With respect to the impact of economic interdependence and international institutions, he suggests that the traditional liberal view most likely misinterprets cause and effect. For Mueller, peace is the cause rather than the effect of expanding trade and the proliferation of institutions. As for democratic peace theory, Mueller points out that it cannot explain the central element of the long peace—the absence of a great power war between the authoritarian USSR and democratic America.⁴³

Instead, for Mueller, what he calls the growing “obsolescence of major war” is a result of the fact that human beings in much of the world have concluded in ever-larger numbers that tanks and bombers are no longer acceptable means of resolving problems for civilized nations. Once viewed as an occasion for honor and glory, war is increasingly viewed as an evil to be avoided. This change in perception was facilitated by the emergence of an active peace movement beginning in the late nineteenth century and by the work of individual “idea entrepreneurs” in promoting and diffusing this presumption against war on a global basis.⁴⁴ Mueller predicts that the increasing psychological and physical costs of war, clearly demonstrated in World War I and underlined in World War II, may cause it to go out of fashion in much the same way that dueling and slavery, once

viewed as acceptable institutions, would no longer be endorsed by any reasonable, modern individual.

Constructivist scholars would further add onto Mueller's explanation the role played by common identities in facilitating peace in the post-Cold War world. Thus, for constructivists, the important thing about the spread of democracy in the 1990s was less the structure of democratic institutions than the fact that democratic states see themselves as part of a common community. To the extent that shared sense of a common identity breaks down (e.g., between two democracies for whom the salient source of identity is less their common political order than their different religious traditions), constructivists would no longer expect democratic institutions by themselves to be the guarantor of peace.

THE FUTURE OF WAR

Let's assume, for the moment, that the "long peace," and the absence of the great power war to which it refers, continue for the indefinite future. Let's also assume the decline in interstate wars characteristic of the post-Cold War era also persists. Those assumptions seem to imply a more peaceful future. Or do they? Not according to the military historian Martin van Creveld. Van Creveld agrees that the era of interstate war is over because in the era of nuclear weapons states cannot fight one another without risking mutual suicide. War itself, however, will continue in a different form fought not by the armies of states "but by groups we today call terrorists, guerrillas, bandits, and robbers."⁴⁵ According to van Creveld,

War will become a much more direct experience for most civilians, even to the point where the term itself might be abolished, or its meaning altered. War will affect people of all ages and both sexes. They will be affected not just accidentally or incidentally or anonymously from afar, as in the case of strategic bombing, but as immediate participants, targets, and victims. Practices that for three centuries have been considered uncivilized, such as capturing civilians and even entire communities for ransom, are almost certain to make a comeback.⁴⁶

Welcome to the era of asymmetric war.

Asymmetric Warfare

An **asymmetric war** is a war in which there is a fundamental difference (or asymmetry) in the nature of the participants, and in their goals, capabilities, and tactics. In a conventional (or symmetric) war, the participants are all sovereign states and their goals are to defend their national interests. While one side may be stronger than the other (have greater capabilities) and while there is often some variation in their military tactics, they are basically playing the same game with varying amounts of what are essentially the same kinds of weapons. They also tend to be fighting (though with varying degrees of concern) under the same international rules governing the ethics of warfare. To use a sports analogy, two basketball teams may have different levels of talent and may adopt different

asymmetric war ■ War in which there is a fundamental difference (or asymmetry) in the nature of the participants, and in their goals, capabilities, and tactics.

offensive and defensive schemes, but both play the same game with the same ball on the same court governed by a common set of rules.

In asymmetric war, some or all of those symmetries disappear. The participants are not all sovereign states but a mix of states and nonstate actors. The goals, therefore, are not simply national interests as defined by sovereign states, but also tribal interests, promotion of religious beliefs, or, perhaps, private financial gain. The capabilities of the participants can also vary widely not only in the number but in the type of weapons. One side may use highly sophisticated technologies, while the other uses primitive weapons from centuries past. And those differences in capabilities give rise to varying tactics guided by very different moral rules. To return to the basketball analogy, it is as if one side, unable to match the talent level of the other, begins to play a different game with tactics that violate the traditional rules of the game in order to compensate for its weaknesses.

Two examples will illustrate the concept of asymmetric war: the Kosovo War of 1999 and the Gaza War of the winter of 2008 and 2009.

Kosovo On March 24, 1999, President Bill Clinton addressed the American people and announced that NATO airstrikes against the former Yugoslav republic of Serbia were under way.⁴⁷ In making the case for war, Clinton pointed to the brutal treatment of Kosovar Albanians by Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. Given NATO's primary emphasis on human rights as the reason for war, Kosovo was a new kind of war (and we will return to this aspect of the war in Chapter 6). It was also a new kind of war with respect to the manner in which it was fought.

In one respect, Kosovo was very much a conventional conflict given that it was a war fought between sovereign states. But in other respects notable asymmetries were in evidence. Most significant was the asymmetry in capabilities. At least for one side (NATO), it was a high-tech war fought largely with the use of "smart weapons." Smart weapons or, more precisely, **precision-guided munitions (PGMs)** are missiles, bombs, or artillery shells equipped with sophisticated electronic guidance systems that direct the explosive toward a predetermined target. Whereas it required 108 bombers dropping 648 bombs to destroy a specified target at the end of World War II, that same target can now be destroyed with just a few PGMs.⁴⁸

For NATO forces, the result was what one observer has called a "virtual war" in which pilots spent their time looking at video screens in cockpits well out of range of enemy fire and for whom death was largely removed from the experience of battle.⁴⁹ In fact, for the United States and its NATO allies, the result was remarkable: not a single life was lost in combat.⁵⁰ Civilian casualties produced by NATO air raids were also, due to the accuracy of PGMs, relatively low. According to Human Rights Watch, during approximately 10,000 strike missions in a 78-day bombing campaign conducted by NATO against targets in Serbia, about 500 civilians were killed.⁵¹

For Serbia, the result was different. Unlike their NATO counterparts, Serbian forces did not escape the experience of battle. Hundreds of Serbian forces were killed and the infrastructure of the Serbian state and economy was decimated. Because they could not retaliate in kind, the asymmetrical response of Serbian

precision-guided munitions (PGMs)

■ Also called "smart weapons," missiles, bombs, or artillery shells with sophisticated guidance systems that direct the explosive toward a target with great accuracy.

forces and their associated paramilitary units was to seek revenge against Kosovar civilians, killing many and driving hundreds of thousands more into exile.

GAZA The Gaza Strip is a small, densely populated territory between Egypt and Israel that is home to approximately 1.5 million Palestinians. After changing hands several times in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1956, and 1967, control of Gaza was formally ceded to Israel after the 1967 war. As a result of the intifada of the late 1980s (the Palestinian uprising against Israeli control of Gaza and the West Bank), Israel ceded control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority in the Oslo Accords of 1993. Despite Oslo, Israel retained a military presence in Gaza until 2005 when it evacuated in order to ease tensions with the Palestinian Authority. In 2007 fighting between the two primary Palestinian factions in Gaza, Fatah and Hamas, resulted in the victory of Hamas. The more radical of the two factions, Hamas has called for the elimination of the state of Israel and is officially labeled by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist organization.

The prelude to the winter 2008-2009 war was a series of skirmishes in which Hamas would launch missiles into Israel, and Israel would respond with air attacks on Hamas forces and infrastructure. When a cease-fire brokered by Egypt in June 2008 broke down six months later, Israel commenced an air, naval, and ground assault on Gaza on December 27, 2008.

The ensuing conflict was a classic example of asymmetric war. The fighting pitted a state (Israel) against a nonstate actor (Hamas). Though Hamas had access to rockets and other weapons smuggled into Gaza from the outside, its military capabilities were no match for those of Israel's high-tech military. The result was a wide asymmetry in casualties, with approximately 1,400 Palestinians killed (the vast majority of them civilians) and only 13 Israelis (military and civilian combined) dead.⁵²

Israelis and Palestinians debate the responsibility for that wide disparity in casualties. The Israeli military blamed Hamas for violating the rules of war by hiding its fighters among the civilian population and by the absence of uniforms that would allow the distinction between civilians and fighters to be clear. Hamas blames Israel for indiscriminate attacks on densely populated urban locations. Indeed, a highly controversial UN report on Gaza (the "Goldstone Report") assigned blame to both parties and was criticized by commentators on each side of this debate. Questions of moral culpability aside, scholars of asymmetric war might argue that the results were predictable. In an asymmetric war the side with technological superiority will be able to shield its forces from harm. The weaker side thus will respond with tactics like those employed by Hamas, placing the onus of the decision to engage in attacks that will inevitably kill civilians back in the hands of the stronger party.

Terrorism

If the high-tech military campaigns waged by NATO in Kosovo and Israel in Gaza paint one image of how twenty-first-century warfare will be waged, the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States paint a radically

The Gaza War of 2008 and 2009 fought by Israel and Hamas is a good example of asymmetric warfare in which differences in the nature of the actors and their capabilities led to differences in tactics on the two sides.



different picture. On the one hand, you have combatants largely protected from harm as they fight from 15,000 feet in the air; on the other, you have suicide attackers whose death is assured and accepted in advance. On the one hand, you have highly accurate, if imperfect, weapons designed in large part to minimize civilian casualties; on the other, the very purpose of the mission is to maximize civilian deaths. On the one hand, you use high-tech, multimillion-dollar weapons systems; on the other, the weapon of choice is a one-dollar box cutter.

WHAT IS TERRORISM? “Terrorism” is a politically loaded word, used often to characterize the actions of one’s adversary while generally avoided in describing one’s own behavior or that of one’s allies. As the often repeated cliché suggests, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” For purposes of analysis, therefore, we need a definition of terrorism that we can apply regardless of how we assess any particular cause. A useful starting point is the U.S. State Department’s official definition of **terrorism** as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”⁵³

Much of the State Department definition is uncontroversial. Most observers would agree that terrorism involves premeditated violence distinguishable in its political goals from ordinary crime. Likewise, most observers would agree that in its purposeful targeting of noncombatants to influence its audience by spreading fear and alarm (i.e., terror), terrorism is also distinguishable from ordinary warfare, where noncombatant deaths are usually (though not always) the unfortunate by-product more than the purposeful intent. More contentious is the part of the

terrorism ■ Politically motivated violence aimed at civilian targets in order to spread fear and alarm.

State Department definition that associates terrorism with “subnational groups or clandestine agents” like **al-Qaeda**, but that thereby exempts such purposeful World War II attacks on civilians as the Nazi blitz of London, the Allied fire-bombing of Dresden, and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many would argue that based on those events, terrorism is a tactic that states use as well (see Theory in Practice 4.3).

WHY TERRORISM? Among Western publics, the popular view is that terrorism is an irrational activity engaged in by mentally unbalanced zealots with a fanatical devotion to their cause. It is difficult for most people to come to terms with the fact that someone would strap explosives to his or her waist and detonate them in a crowded restaurant, or crash a fully loaded plane into an office building with both the terrorist and many innocent passengers on board. Indeed, it may well be the case that some individual terrorists are, in fact, irrational and mentally unbalanced.

However, the overall record of terror suggests that it is, in fact, a rational, purposeful activity. To call it rational does not imply endorsement or justification of terror. Instead, it merely suggests that terror is utilized as a means to a larger strategic end. It is a form of asymmetric warfare employed by weaker parties in a struggle with a stronger adversary.

Take the terror attacks of 9/11 as an example. Over the years, Osama bin Laden has articulated a long list of grievances against the United States. A Saudi by birth and a self-described devout Muslim, he was particularly enraged by the continued presence of American troops in the holy land of Saudi Arabia long after the 1991 Gulf War. Added to the list were complaints about U.S. support of Israel, neglect of Palestinian rights, and economic sanctions against Iraq in the

al-Qaeda ■ (Arabic for “the base”) Radical Sunni terrorist organization headed by Osama bin Laden and composed of a loose grouping of semiautonomous terrorist cells located around the world.

THEORY IN PRACTICE 4.3

Terrorism or Warfare?

Suicide airplane crashes were not invented by al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001. In World War II Japanese suicide pilots, or “kamikazes,” purposely flew their planes into American ships, sinking or damaging more than 30 U.S. ships and producing more than 15,000 U.S. casualties. Thousands of other kamikaze planes were held in reserve to respond to a U.S. naval attack on the Japanese islands, but they were never used, due to President Harry S. Truman’s decision to end the war by using the atomic bomb.

Those Japanese kamikaze attacks would not fit the definition of terrorism because their targets were military ships, not civilians. But suppose

Japan had adopted a different tactic. Suppose the Japanese leaders had had the will and capability to fly a thousand planes into office buildings and other civilian targets in the United States, producing 100,000 or more civilian deaths.

- Would you label such a tactic terrorism? Explain.
- Would you see a difference between such a tactic and the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Explain.
- Would such a tactic differ from the one al-Qaeda used on September 11, 2001? Why or why not? ■

1990s that caused many deaths of Iraqi civilians. His strategic calculation was fairly simple. Since he could not expel the U.S. Army from Saudi Arabia or change U.S. policy in the Middle East by conventional military means, he would pressure the U.S. government indirectly. By attacking the World Trade Center and other U.S. targets, he would raise the price of U.S. policy for Americans in the hope that they would pressure the U.S. government to change course. If Americans had to worry about going to work, shopping in a mall, or sending their children to school, they might decide that it was not worth the price to maintain the current policies in a place far from U.S. shores.

Indeed, in a larger study of the motivations behind suicide terrorism, political scientist Robert Pape found that the common thread was an effort by militarily weaker groups to use terror to expel foreign troops from their territory by raising the price for the civilians of the occupying country.⁵⁴ Such tactics are not guaranteed to work—indeed, they can backfire and provoke even greater intervention by one’s adversary. However, Pape’s study suggests that the terror strategy works more often than not and is, at the very least, a calculated risk that many terrorists think worth taking.

THE IMPACT OF TERROR As suggested above, the goal of terror is to spread fear and alarm in an effort to pressure one’s adversary to change course and policy. The spectacular nature of many terror attacks and the amount of television coverage they receive help to fuel the sense of fear that terrorists seek. Almost 3,000 people died on 9/11. A 2004 train bombing in Madrid killed 191 commuters; a 2002 hostage-taking in a Moscow theater by Chechen rebels left close to 200 dead; and the 2004 tragedy in Beslan, Russia, where Chechen rebels took over a school, left 300 people, including many schoolchildren, dead in a botched rescue attempt. The human cost of terrorism can indeed be horrific.

However, the number of casualties produced by terrorism remains, in comparison with ordinary warfare, relatively low. One study counted 3,299 deaths from international terrorism in the 39 most developed countries from 1994 to 2003, most of which occurred on 9/11.⁵⁵ Most informed observers agree that the risk of any one of us being killed in a terrorist attack is far lower than our risk of drowning in a swimming pool, being killed in a car crash, or getting struck by lightning on a soccer field or baseball diamond. In other words, we tend to exaggerate the risk entailed in dramatic events that receive a lot of television coverage and to underestimate the risk of common everyday activities.⁵⁶ Terrorists count precisely on this exaggerated reaction to produce that echo of fear and alarm that can cause their grievances to be taken seriously and addressed.

Nonetheless, our post 9/11 preoccupation with the threat of terrorism is not entirely unreasonable. In particular, two aspects of twenty-first-century terrorism combine to make it especially worrisome. First is the increasingly explicit willingness by some individuals, groups, or even states to embrace the technique of terror in pursuit of a cause and to treat anyone as a potential target. This was not always the case. Political philosopher Michael Walzer notes that the “terrorists” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were often guided by a “political code” that caused them to focus their bombing and assassinations on

For an argument that the threat of terrorism is exaggerated, see John Mueller, “Terrorphobia: Our False Sense of Insecurity,” *American Interest* 3:5 (2008): 6–13.

political leaders and government targets rather than random civilians.⁵⁷ Compare that with Osama bin Laden's argument that the taxes U.S. citizens pay to their government make them complicit in their government's actions and, thus, legitimate targets. In 1998 bin Laden declared, "To kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."⁵⁸ In video and audio statements since 9/11, he has embraced the terrorist label even more explicitly: "Our terrorism is a good accepted terrorism because it's against America, it's for the purpose of defeating oppression so America would stop supporting Israel, who is killing our children."⁵⁹ In short, bin Laden's political morality explicitly rejects both the "just war" principle of discrimination between combatants and noncombatants, and the parallel "political code" of an earlier generation of political assassins.

The second worrisome aspect of contemporary terrorism is the potential for terrorists to access weapons of mass destruction. A terrorist with a conventional bomb can certainly bring grief to the lives of victims and their families, but for the nation as a whole, that threat is usually much less significant than one posed by the conventional armies of enemy countries. In fact, for a superpower like the United States, that kind of terrorism might be viewed as a mere nuisance—one of the costs of a superpower doing business in the world. Even a tragedy as significant and dramatic as that of September 11, 2001, need not, as long as one does not overreact, threaten the sovereignty, political order, or economic prosperity of a superpower like the United States. The Soviet threat during the Cold War was a threat on a completely different order of magnitude in comparison to what happened on 9/11.

However, add into the mix an al-Qaeda cell with even a small nuclear device, a dirty bomb, a vial of anthrax, or chemical weapons, and the threat calculation grows exponentially. The likelihood of the worst-case scenarios—detonation of an atomic device, willful spreading of infectious diseases such as smallpox, mass mailings of anthrax powder—is debated. But whatever the odds, the potential for mass casualties and serious disruption of our way of life is great enough that even unlikely scenarios have to be taken seriously.

Moreover, and unlike the situation during the Cold War, deterrence is unlikely to prevent nuclear terrorism. Mutual assured destruction can only work when the first strike is launched with a return address label attached. A nuclear bomb unloaded and detonated in a container in the port of Los Angeles will not be easily traced to a specific terrorist group abroad. And even if such a trace can be developed, retaliation would be problematic if those responsible are hiding among the population of a country whose citizens do not condone the terror and may even be friendly toward the United States.

Thus, new technologies combined with terrorism pose a very dangerous twenty-first-century threat. At one time, only the greatest of the major powers could produce mass casualties on a global scale. Now we live in a world where that threat can come from any number of sources wielding weapons ranging from anthrax powder to a nuclear device. For the most pessimistic observers, it is only a matter of time.

Implications for Realism

The proliferation of asymmetric wars and, in particular, the post-9/11 fears of an escalated terror threat pose some larger theoretical questions related to the debate between realists and their critics. First, critics of realism argue that terrorism and other forms of asymmetric war challenge the realists' assumption that states exercise a monopoly on the use of violence in world politics. In fact, more and more of the violence we see in world politics seems to be taking the form of asymmetric war pitting states against various nonstate actors with a variety of political, cultural, and economic grievances.

Second, critics of realism suggest that the very status of states as the key actors is threatened by the changing nature of warfare. While powerful states are well equipped to fight off symmetrical threats from other similarly armed states, their conventional weapons are a lot less useful when it comes to fighting off hijackers armed with box cutters or terrorists with weapons of mass destruction with no return address that can be threatened in kind. Thus, if it is the case that the major states cannot fight one another because the cost of war in the nuclear age is too high and if they are also not particularly effective in fighting the kinds of asymmetrical threats that they now face, then the main reason for loyalty to states—their ability to provide security for their citizens—is potentially undermined.⁶⁰

The realist response is twofold. First, they would argue that the presumed decline in the utility of states' military assets is exaggerated. The high-tech military of NATO produced a victory in Kosovo. Though a more ambiguous case, some might also argue that the Israeli military was effective, notwithstanding the human cost of the war, against an asymmetric foe in the Gaza conflict. Moreover, despite post-2001 fears of follow-on terror attacks in both the United States and the world at large, and despite the fact that some attacks did indeed take place, al-Qaeda by many accounts was much weaker in 2010 than it was in 2001.

Second, and perhaps even more fundamental, realists respond that the key issues are the persistence of anarchy and war. The nature of the actors in the system and the kinds of wars they fight are less important. Thus, the realist paradigm could survive the decline of the state system. As John Mearsheimer notes, Thucydides and Machiavelli—two of the key intellectual ancestors of modern realism—wrote long before the 1648 emergence of the Westphalian state system. Mearsheimer adds: “Realism merely requires anarchy; it does not matter what kinds of political units make up the system. They could be states, city-states, cults, empires, tribes, gangs, feudal principalities, or whatever.”⁶¹ In short, for realists the image of future war described by van Creveld is entirely consistent with the world as understood by realism.

CONCLUSION

Despite the declining incidence of interstate war in recent decades, few scholars are prepared to argue that war is likely to disappear completely from the landscape of world politics anytime soon. Although some groups of countries seem to have taken war off the table as a means to settle their disputes with one another,

in the international system as a whole, war and the threat of war as a means to defend national interests remain central to how the world works.

However, once one gets past the general observation that the threat of war remains, scholars are divided as to what the degree and trajectory of violence in the twenty-first century will look like. Some suggest that the idea of war is becoming unfashionable, and they place their hope in an evolving moral consciousness that can render war less frequent. Others suggest that political change, specifically, the spread of democratic government, is our best bet for the emergence of a new, less violent world order. Still others, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 5 and 7, argue that international institutions and economic interdependence increasingly mitigate against violent solutions to international conflicts. At the very least, the optimists suggest, the combination of these trends might allow us to avoid the great power wars whose impact on the world is, especially in the nuclear era, most threatening.

Realists would argue, however, that in many fundamental respects, not much has changed in international relations since the days of Thucydides and the Peloponnesian Wars. In a world of anarchy, war and violence remain the ultimate recourse for states and other actors to protect their interests and to seek redress of their grievances. In their view, short-term cyclical downturns in the number of wars should not be mistaken for a permanent change in how the world works. The longer view of history suggests that despite changes in actors, the emergence of new forms of government, and the development of new and ever more lethal weapons of destruction, the one constant is that those weapons eventually are used.

This chapter examined high-stakes issues, potentially involving the lives and deaths of millions of people—even the fate of civilization as we know it. In all probability, however, the twenty-first century will not likely produce either the end of war or a global apocalypse. The difference between realists and their critics is not so much whether war or peace will prevail, but instead, how many wars will be fought, what kinds of war they will be, and where the explanations for both the amount and nature of twenty-first-century war can be found.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Which explanation of the recent decline in interstate war do you find most persuasive? Why? Is the decline likely to be permanent?
- How has technological innovation changed the character of warfare? To what extent has that technological innovation either challenged or reinforced Clausewitz's view of war as the continuation of policy?
- Is a great power war a real possibility in the twenty-first century? What might be the scenario for such a war?

KEY TERMS

coercive diplomacy 102
pacifism 105

just war doctrine 106
jus ad bellum 107

jus in bello 107
total war 109

mutual assured destruction (MAD) 112	Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) 113	democracy 118
second strike capability 112	nuclear proliferation 113	third wave 118
deterrence 112	Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) 113	end of history 118
stability/instability paradox 112	long peace 116	asymmetric war 121
nuclear utilization theories (NUTS) 113	security community 116	precision-guided munitions (PGMs) 122
	hegemony 117	terrorism 124
	power transition 117	al-Qaeda 125

NOTES

1. John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (Basic Books, 1989), ix.
2. John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Norton, 2001), 361.
3. Much of the data collected by Singer and his associates is available online at the Correlates of War homepage, <http://www.correlatesofwar.org>.
4. The terminology and counts are adopted from Meredith Sarkees, Frank Wayman, and J. David Singer, "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution over Time, 1816–1997," *International Studies Quarterly* 47 (2003): 49–70.
5. A useful recent summary of some of the Correlates of War data on the frequency of war may be found in Sarkees, Wayman, and Singer, "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars," 49–70.
6. Correlates of War datasets online, "Militarized Interstate Disputes (v3.02)," <http://www.correlatesofwar.org>. See also Faten Ghosn, Glenn Palmer, and Stuart A. Bremer, "The MID3 Data Set: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 21 (2004): 133–154.
7. Sarkees, Wayman, and Singer, "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars," 65.
8. "World War II," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://search.eb.com>.
9. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Out of Control* (Touchstone, 1995), 10.
10. John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2003, 50–59.
11. National Highway Traffic Safety Information, "Traffic Safety Facts 2003: 2003 National Statistics," <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov>.
12. Others have previously made and developed the comparison between war and the automobile. See Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday*, 267–269.
13. Number of soldiers killed in Iraq in 2003 calculated from data at the U.S. Department of Defense, Directorate for Information Operation and Reports, Statistical Information Analysis Division, "Military Casualty Information," <http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mm/id/casualty/castop.htm>.
14. Leo Tolstoy, "Last Message to Mankind," Address to the Swedish Peace Congress, Stockholm, 1909, <http://www.wagingpeace.org>.
15. Niall Ferguson, "The Next War of the World," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006, 61–74.
16. Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. (Knopf, 1985), 392–413.

17. "United States," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://search.eb.com>.
18. "World War I," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://search.eb.com>.
19. United States Strategic Bombing Survey, "The Effects of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki," 1946, <http://www.ibiblio.org>.
20. A Bomb WWW Museum, "Introduction: About the A Bomb," <http://www.csi.ad.jp/ABOMB/data.html>.
21. Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Yale University Press, 1966), 191.
22. Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (Perennial, 2003), 334.
23. Bernard Brodie, *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (Harcourt, Brace, 1946), 76.
24. Soviet casualty numbers are still debated. See Rafael Reuveny and Aseem Prakash, "The Afghanistan War and the Breakdown of the Soviet Union," *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 696–697. For the number of Afghans killed, see Human Rights Watch, "Backgrounder on Afghanistan: History of the War," October 2001, <http://www.hrw.org>.
25. International Rescue Committee, "IRC Study Reveals 31,000 Die Monthly in Congo Conflict," December 9, 2004, <http://www.theirc.org>.
26. Robert Windrem, "Is Egypt Ready to Go Nuclear," *MSNBC Online*, March 15, 2005.
27. See the debate on this question in Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (Norton, 2002).
28. Monty G. Marshall, Center for Systemic Peace, "Global Conflict Trends," <http://www.systemicpeace.org>.
29. Monty G. Marshall and Benjamin R. Cole, *Global Report 2009: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility, Executive Summary*, Center for Systemic Peace, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/peace.htm>.
30. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 1989).
31. Robert Jervis, "Theories of War in an Era of Leading-Power Peace," *American Political Science Review* 96:1 (2002): 1–14.
32. John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15:4 (1990): 5–56.
33. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 338.
34. *International Herald Tribune*, February 5, 1999, <http://www.iht.com>.
35. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, see especially ch. 10.
36. Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (Norton, 2001), 43.
37. See, for example, Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, *Politics in Developing Countries*, 2nd ed. (Lynne Rienner, 1995), 6–7.
38. James Lee Ray, *Democracy and International Politics: An Evaluation of the Democratic Peace Proposition* (University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 125. Discussed in Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*, 47–48.
39. See Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*, 48.
40. Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).
41. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *National Interest* (Summer 1989): 3–18.

42. Freedom House, "Russia Downgraded to Not Free," December 20, 2004, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.
43. John Mueller, *The Remnants of War* (Cornell University Press, 2004), 167–171.
44. Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday*, and Mueller, *The Remnants of War*, 2.
45. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (Free Press, 1991), 197.
46. Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 203.
47. "President Clinton's March 25, 1999, Address to the Nation," *Teaching Human Rights Online*, Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, <http://homepages.uc.edu>.
48. "What's New with Smart Weapons," February 7, 2005, <http://www.globalsecurity.org>.
49. Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (Metropolitan Books, 2000).
50. Nick Cook, "War of Extremes," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, July 7, 1999, <http://www.janes.com>.
51. "Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign," Human Rights Watch, February 2000, <http://www.hrw.org>.
52. Reuters, July 21, 2010.
53. U.S. Department of State, "Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003," April 29, 2004, <http://www.state.gov>.
54. Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terror," *American Political Science Review* 97:3 (August 2003): 343–361.
55. Nick Wilson and George Thomson, "The Epidemiology of International Terrorism Involving Fatal Outcomes in Developed Countries (1994–2003)," *European Journal of Epidemiology* 20:5 (2005): 375–381.
56. Jessica Stern, *The Ultimate Terrorists* (Harvard University Press, 1999), 32–36.
57. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 3rd ed. (Basic Books, 2000), 197–200.
58. "Text of Fatwah Urging Jihad Against Americans," originally published in *Al Quds al-Arabi* on February 23, 1998. English translation available online at the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism website, <http://www.ict.org.il>.
59. "New Osama bin Laden Video," originally broadcast on Al Jazeera, December 26, 2001. Translated excerpts available at Anti-Defamation League website, <http://www.adl.org>.
60. Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 192–205.
61. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 365.

PEARSON
myPolisciKit™ EXERCISES

Apply what you learned in this chapter on MyPoliSciKit (www.mypoliscikit.com).



ASSESSMENT Review this chapter using learning objectives, chapter summaries, practice tests, and more.



VIDEO Analyze recent world affairs by watching streaming video from major news providers.



FLASHCARDS Learn the key terms in this chapter; you can test yourself by term or definition.



SIMULATIONS Play the role of an IR decision-maker and experience how IR concepts work in practice.