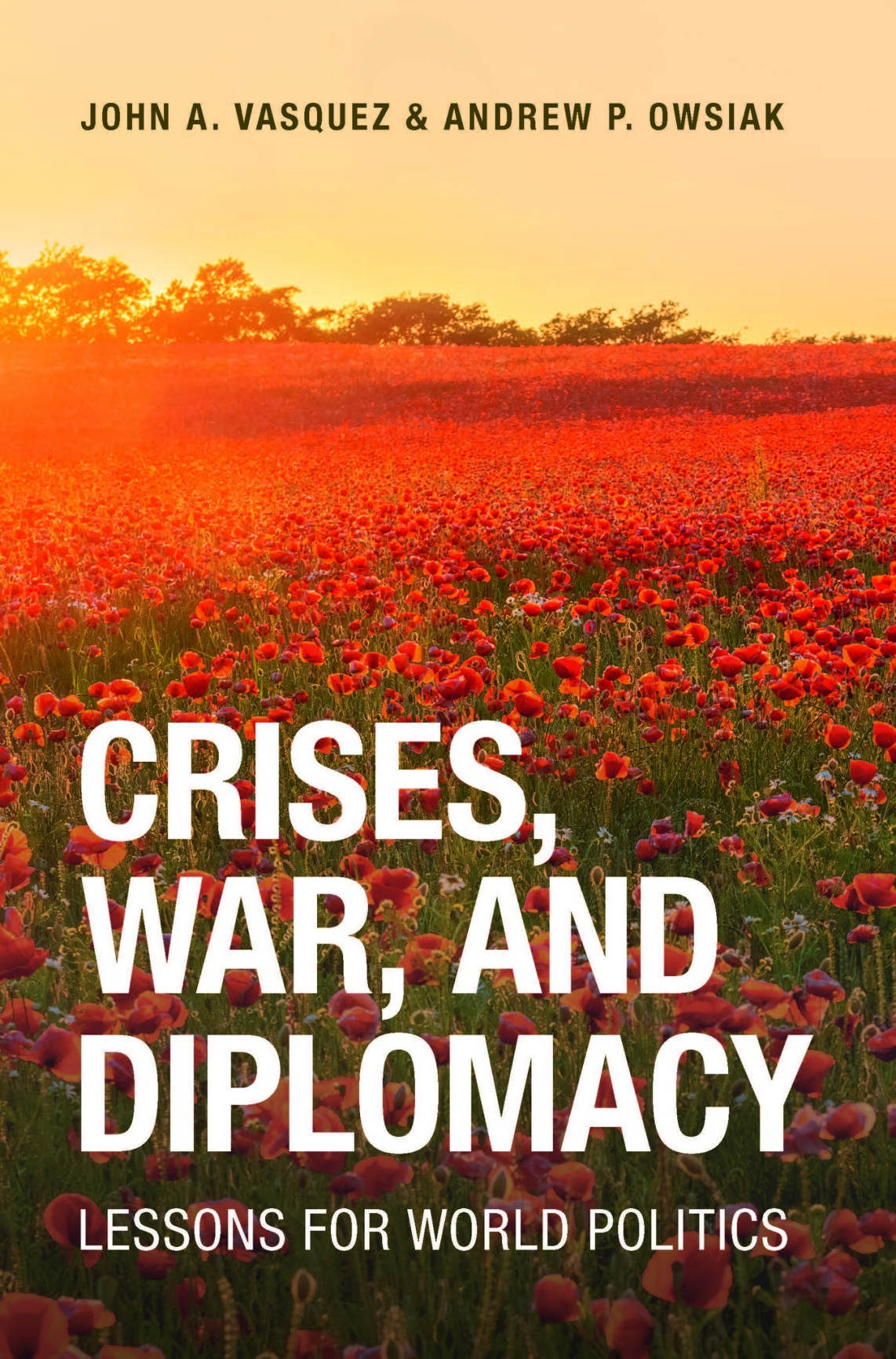
JOHN A. VASQUEZ & ANDREW P. OWSIAK



CRISES, WAR, AND DIPLOMACY

LESSONS FOR WORLD POLITICS

Crises, War, and Diplomacy

Why do some international crises between major states escalate to war while others do not? To shed light on this question, this book reviews fifteen such crises between 1815 and the present day, including the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Russia–Ukraine War. Each chapter places the crisis at hand in its historical context, provides a narrative of the case's events that focuses on the decision-makers involved, theoretically analyzes the case's outcome in light of current research, and inductively draws some lessons from the case for both scholars and policymakers. The book concludes by exploring common patterns and drawing some broader lessons that apply to the practice of diplomacy and international relations theory. Integrating qualitative information with the rich body of quantitative research on interstate war and peace, this unique volume is a major contribution to crisis diplomacy and war studies.

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Crises, War, and Diplomacy

Lessons for World Politics

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009652094

DOI: 10.1017/9781009652063

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009652063

First published 2026

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Vasquez, John A., 1945– author | Owsiak, Andrew P. author
Title: Crises, war, and diplomacy : lessons for world politics / John A.
Vasquez, Andrew P. Owsiak.
Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge
University Press, 2026. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2025018969 (print) | LCCN 2025018970 (ebook) |
ISBN 9781009652094 hardback | ISBN 9781009652063 ebook
Subjects: LCSH: Crisis management – History – 19th century | Crisis
management – History – 20th century | Diplomacy – History – 19th century |
Diplomacy – History – 20th century | World politics – 19th century |
World politics – 20th century | Military history, Modern – 19th century |
Military history, Modern – 20th century
Classification: LCC JZ5595 .V37 2026 (print) | LCC JZ5595 (ebook)
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025018969
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2025018970

ISBN 978-1-009-65209-4 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-009-65207-0 Paperback

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56, 1°, 28003 Madrid, Spain, or email eugpsr@cambridge.org

To Avery and Gavin, my grandkids – the sparkle of life

jv

To Andrew, Paula, Doris, and Ash – sources of constant support

ao

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Preface

Why do some international crises go to war, while others do not? This question motivates our book, and we search for an answer within the diplomacy that states use to manage the crisis at hand. More specifically, we examine a set of fifteen historical crises (from 1815 to the present), focusing on the decisions that leaders took during each crisis. We then systematically compare the crises that escalate to war with those that do not – to see what factors distinguish the crisis diplomacy that ends in war from that which avoids war.

Over the last fifty years, many scholars – ourselves included – have addressed our research question through the statistical analysis of data. Although we agree that such an approach has value, we think that the more traditional approach of examining historical cases also has much to contribute. Brecher recognized this; indeed, he started the International Crisis Behavior project as a way to combine quantitative and case study analysis (see Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997). We are, to a certain extent, following his lead; yet we created this study for a second reason as well. In our opinion, quantitative scholars – and our students – should know at least one historical period in depth to understand and appreciate the statistical findings they uncover more fully. We hope that our in-depth review of various historical crises provides not merely a cursory understanding of the international history of the post-Napoleonic era but also one that interprets this history in a way that incorporates the best insights from the scientific study of peace and war. By analyzing historical crises in light of statistical findings, we hope to provide an explanation for the decisions that have led to or avoided war.

Although we use this book as the main text in our courses on crisis diplomacy, others may use it as supplementary reading in other international relations (IR) courses. To aid instructors in this endeavor, Table P.1 provides a list of the cases that they can assign in their introductory and general courses, organized according to prominent IR concepts.

Table P.1 *Prominent IR concepts and crisis cases*

Concept	Crisis cases
Alliances	• First Moroccan Crisis, Chapter 7 • July 1914, Chapter 9 • Munich, Chapter 10 • Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11 • Cod Wars, Chapter 14 • Crimea annexation and Russia–Ukraine War, Chapter 15
Balance of power	• Franco-Prussian War, Chapter 5 • Danzig–Poland, Chapter 10 • Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11
Realism	• Crimean War, Chapter 3 • Franco-Prussian War, Chapter 5 • 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis, Chapter 8
Role of domestic politics	• Eastern Crisis 1839–1841, Chapter 2 • Crimean War, Chapter 3 • Franco-Prussian War, Chapter 5 • Russo-Japanese War, Chapter 6 • First and Second Moroccan Crises, Chapter 7 • Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11
Deterrence failure	• July 1914, Chapter 9 • Danzig–Poland, Chapter 10 • Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11
Nuclear deterrence	• Berlin Crises, Chapter 12 • Cuban Missile Crisis, Chapter 13
Nationalism	• Italian War of Independence 1859–1860, Chapter 4
Foreign policymaking	• Crimean War, Chapter 3 • Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11 • Crimea annexation and Russia–Ukraine War, Chapter 15
National interest	• Crimean War, Chapter 3
Norms	• Second Moroccan Crisis, Chapter 7 • Munich, Chapter 10 • 1971–1973 Cod War, Chapter 14
Democratic peace	• Eastern Crisis 1839–1841, Chapter 2 • Crimean War, Chapter 3 • Franco-Prussian War, Chapter 5 • Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11 • 1971–1973 Cod War, Chapter 14
Liberalism	• Munich, Chapter 10 • 1971–1973 Cod War, Chapter 14
International law	• 1971–1973 Cod War, Chapter 14
International organization	• Eastern Crisis 1839–1841, Chapter 2 • Crimean War, Chapter 3 • Italian War of Independence 1859–1860, Chapter 4 • 1971–1973 Cod War, Chapter 14
Civil war and international relations	• Eastern Crisis 1839–1841, Chapter 2

Table P.1 (*cont.*)

Concept	Crisis cases
Diplomacy	• Second Moroccan Crisis, Chapter 7
Coercive diplomacy	• 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis, Chapter 8 • Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11 • Berlin blockade, Chapter 12 • Cuban Missile Crisis, Chapter 13
Bargaining and negotiation	• Crimean War, Chapter 3 • Second Moroccan Crisis, Chapter 7 • Munich, Chapter 10
Conflict resolution	• Crimean War, Chapter 4 • Second Moroccan Crisis, Chapter 7 • Munich, Chapter 10
Economic sanctions	• Pearl Harbor, Chapter 11
Nonstate actors	• Eastern Crisis 1839–1841, Chapter 3 • Italian War of Independence 1859–1860, Chapter 4 • July 1914, Chapter 9 • 1971–1973 Cod War, Chapter 14
System structure	• Eastern Crisis 1839–1841, Chapter 3 • Crimean War, Chapter 4 • First and Second Moroccan Crises, Chapter 7
Imperialism and colonialism	• Russo-Japanese War, Chapter 6 • First and Second Moroccan Crises, Chapter 7

Notes For reading on the causes of war, see Chapters 4–6, 9, and 11. For reading on peace and avoiding war, see Chapters 3, 7, 8, 10, and 12–15. For reading on the major IR concepts we use in the cases (e.g., domestic politics, rivalry, arms races, and constructivism), see the index.

Acknowledgments

As with all authors, a number of able people assisted us, and each have been generous with their time and wisdom. First, several research assistants aided us over the past six years. We owe a special thanks to Jinwon Lee, a doctoral student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, for her data analysis on several questions. We are also indebted to numerous undergraduate and graduate students who worked tirelessly and expertly on research queries related to our case studies: Yixin Bao, Jackson Barnett, Monica Bielawiec, Victoria Chen, Evelyn Cho, Noah Fears, Alex Rivard, Malia Sayad, Elaine Sine, Mina Urbina, and Yanina Villagomez. With four exceptions, each of these students previously took our Crisis Diplomacy course, and we thank the several hundred other students who did so as well over the twenty years that we have been teaching it with the book by James Richardson (1994). Many had the good fortune of taking it as a study abroad course in Vienna. Their questions and insights have made this book better.

Two organized panels discussed our manuscript in 2022 – one on April 9 at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) and another on September 16 at McGill University, graciously sponsored by the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies (CIPSS) and organized by T. V. Paul and Jennifer Welsh. Joe Clare, Paul Hensel, Carly Wayne, and Jennifer Siegel read various chapters for the MPSA panel. T. V. Paul, Jennifer Welsh, Jack S. Levy, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, William Mulligan, Emilia Justyna Powell, and William R. Thompson each read significant portions of the revised manuscript for the McGill workshop. In addition, Levy and Mulligan provided detailed comments on revised chapters that were most helpful. Finally, along the way, Sarah Halko and Victoria Hembel Thompson edited the chapter on the Cuban Missile Crisis, Tom Walker reviewed selected chapters, and Navida Chun-Han Wang used early drafts of some chapters in the classroom. Each of these individuals supplied valuable feedback – insights, comments, and suggestions – that improved the final product. We owe them our immense thanks for both sharing their wisdom and investing

their time in our work. In addition, special thanks go to T. V. Paul, Jennifer Welsh, and CIPSS at McGill University for organizing, hosting, and sponsoring a forum on the manuscript. Lastly, a few weeks after this manuscript went to press, Brandon Valeriano, who aided us on the Russia–Ukraine case, unexpectedly died. He was Vasquez's dissertation student and coauthor, as well as a friend to us both. We miss him.

Numerous institutions have also financially supported this project, and without their support the book would have taken much longer to complete. In this regard, Vasquez thanks the European University Institute in Florence, which appointed him as a visiting fellow in spring 2019. This fellowship permitted him to start the book in a collegial and stimulating intellectual environment. Special thanks go to the Department of Political and Social Sciences there for providing an office and logistical support, and especially to Ulrich Krotz, Vasquez's faculty sponsor. Additional financial and research support was provided by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign – particularly through Vasquez's appointment as the Thomas B. Mackie Scholar for International Relations, which allowed us to acquire research assistants. Finally, Vasquez offers special thanks to Thomas Rudolph, chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, for creating an atmosphere conducive to serious research.

Owsiak received institutional support from two additional sources. First, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame appointed him as a visiting faculty research fellow in 2020–2021. This greatly accelerated his work on the project, offering him the logistical space, a collegial environment, and – most importantly – the time to write. Second, the University of Georgia supplied sustained research support. A special thanks go to Dean Matt Auer and Amanda Murdie, who have always found ways to support Owsiak's research, even amidst tightening budgets.

We wish to thank our acquisition editor at Cambridge University Press, John Haslam, for all he has done for us throughout the process. He is really an exceptional person with whom to work. Our thanks also to three individuals: Carrie Parkinson, senior editorial assistant at Cambridge, Claire Sissen, senior content manager, and Manikandan Sekar, project leader – typesetting, for preparing the manuscript for production. We appreciate the efficiency and work of these individuals in transforming our laptop pages into a real book. A special thanks to our copy-editor, Virginia Hamilton, for a thorough job on a long manuscript. We thank Amanda Speake as well for preparing the indexes.

Lastly, we need to recognize two special people in our lives. Vasquez wishes to thank Marie T. Henehan. After forty-five years of marriage

and twenty-three books, she has endured much – with grace and good humor – and given more support than anyone would have a right to expect. Having another academic in the house makes it a lot easier to navigate the trials and pitfalls in the process of producing such a work and teaching the course abroad, including arranging visits with international organizations when the Crisis Diplomacy course was taught in Geneva and Vienna.

Owsiak owes a debt of gratitude to Ash Thompson. Writing a book like this takes several years, during which Ash provided constant support and exhibited great patience.

This book is dedicated to my grandkids – Avery, age 7, and Gavin, age 10. Through all the tears, emotions, and struggles of growth there shine the sincerest smiles, the joy of life, great achievements, and the enduring love of family.

John Vasquez

This book is dedicated to my father, mother, grandmother, and spouse – the four most important people in my life (in no implied order). Some never saw the final product; others did. Each influenced it in ways they may never fully appreciate.

Andrew Owsiak

Part I

Foundations

Introduction

War between major states has been a focus of international relations (IR) inquiry in the West since the time of Thucydides. In the first half of the twentieth century, war presented a recurring problem – including two catastrophic world wars. The advent of nuclear weapons then made war a potential threat to the very existence of advanced industrialized civilization. The discipline of international relations was born between the two world wars in 1919 with the creation of the first chair in international relations at Aberystwyth (Porter 1972: ix). Since then, scholars have learned much about the causes of war and how to avoid it. Nevertheless, much still remains to be learned. We have not found definitive answers either to the question of what causes war or to the question of how leaders can manage crises so as to avoid war.

Our book addresses these deficiencies by investigating the factors that distinguish crises that escalate to war from those that do not. This query has, since Bremer (1992), guided much of the quantitative analysis of peace science. We, however, adopt a case-based approach, in which we compare seven historical crises that escalated to war with eight crises that did not. Each case considers systemic factors, the foreign policy interactions of states, and internal factors, with a focus on crisis decision-making. Through such an analysis, we aim to see what lessons we can derive from the included crises – in particular, what these crises tell us about the diplomacy of war and peace, as well as international relations theory more broadly. We ask what decisions leaders made in each crisis, why they took the actions they did, and how these decisions and actions led them closer to or away from war.

This study builds on James Richardson's (1994) *Crisis Diplomacy: The Great Powers since the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. As Richardson did, we only examine major-state war. We therefore consider only cases that involve major states (i.e., the strongest states in the system) on opposing sides of the crisis – with an eye toward whether and how these major states avoid war with each other. We define a crisis that "escalates to war" as one in which the major states fight a war against one another.

Not all major-state crises end in a war between major states. The latter often involve situations in which minor states fight a local war and major states may be diplomatically involved, but they do not go to war with one another. For example, in the 1839 Eastern Crisis, the Ottoman sultan fights his vassal – Muhammed Ali, pasha of Egypt. Britain and Austria attack Muhammed Ali. This leads France to threaten war, but it ultimately decides against doing so. When, as here, the major states involved in a crisis do not go to war with one another – even if a major state fights a minor state – we consider the crisis as one that "does not escalate to *major-state* war." We then analyze how and why the local war did not expand into a war between major states.

Despite this similar research design decision, we deviate from Richardson in an important respect. Unlike Richardson, we use the extensive statistical findings in international relations to understand our cases – particularly the factors known to affect the probability that a crisis escalates to war or settles peacefully (see Mitchell and Vasquez 2025). This allows us to incorporate certain hypothesized generalizations to see both if these factors shape the interactions among our crisis actors and whether the case fits a well-understood pattern. Our in-depth analyses of each historical case tell us whether and how these statistical factors translate into actual decisions. This, in turn, permits us to evaluate whether related theoretical notions hold or prove anomalous in each case. Any anomalies often become a subject of discussion in the "Theoretical Analysis" section of each case-based chapter. Thus, although we follow Richardson's emphasis on case studies as a way to address key questions, we deviate from his theoretical focus on bargaining to explain why crises escalate to war (see J. Richardson 1994: ch. 13).

Our limited number of cases prohibits us from systematically testing theories in terms of a "logic of confirmation." Our inquiry is therefore better justified in terms of a "logic of discovery" (see Freyberg-Inan et al. 2016). The latter requires what Clarke and Primo (2012: 92) classify as an "exploratory model," in which the researcher operates "with an eye toward explaining the events surrounding a specific case or small number of cases, or to ask and answer counterfactual or 'what if' questions regarding events such as the Cuban missile crisis." Whether one can interpret the results of our empirical investigation as "discovering" a possible pattern that generalizes to other cases is an open question and not predetermined theoretically. We simply expect that our fifteen cases will help us "discover" possible factors that distinguish the crises that go to war from those that do not. In Chapter 16, we aggregate our within-case knowledge across cases (Goertz 2017). This yields some generalizable patterns, but these must be considered

hypotheses that scholars will need to test systematically in the future using the logic of confirmation.

Our focus on decision-making has empirical advantages – chiefly, that we can directly observe what leaders and members of the various polities actually did and, in some cases, thought. It also gives us a certain theoretical leverage. For each crisis that escalates to war, we can use counterfactual reasoning to determine if (and how) war could have been avoided, as well as to understand why leaders were unable to avoid it. Similarly, for each crisis that does not escalate to war, we can consider the conditions under which the crisis might have ended in a war – and why it did not when it could have done so. By addressing such questions, our project aims to learn from actual historical cases about why and when war between major states occurs and how diplomacy might avoid it.

Our main research question consequently involves a search for generalizations; yet, we hope to do other things with our cases as well. We examine each case to see not only whether it might illustrate possible patterns that repeat but also whether it illuminates the particular factors that pushed the crisis toward or away from war. We are, in other words, interested in deriving lessons for future diplomacy from leaders' decision-making in each individual case. As we pursue this task, we strive to keep an open mind about what the evidence in each case might be trying to tell us. We therefore do not deductively develop a list of possible lessons and then search for them within our cases; instead, we proceed inductively to see what lessons "emerge."[1] The lessons we derive range from "cautionary warnings" and mistakes that leaders should avoid to successful behavior that leaders might emulate if their goal is to avoid war.[2] Through these lessons, we also explore whether the cases vindicate certain, accepted theoretical notions within the IR discipline – or alternatively, whether and why a case proves anomalous in light of such notions. These various lessons appear in the "Lessons" section of each case-based chapter; we justify our derivation of these lessons in the "Methodological Appendix."

The seven cases in our study that escalate to a major-state war are: the Crimean War, the Italian War of Independence of 1859–1860, the Franco-Prussian War, the Russo-Japanese War, July 1914, Danzig 1939, and Pearl Harbor. The eight cases that do not result in a *major-state war* are: the 1839 Eastern Crisis, the Second Moroccan Crisis, the 1908–1909

[1] This is the opposite approach from the one we use to examine the key variables that influenced crisis behavior, where we are guided by a set of explicit questions that we derive before we examine the cases (see Chapter 1).

[2] Of course, leaders sometimes seek war, rather than to avoid it. Hitler perhaps reveals this behavior in 1938, where he felt he had been cheated out of his war (see Chapter 10).

Bosnian Crisis, Munich, the Berlin crises, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cod Wars, and the 2014 Crimea seizure and its related Russia–Ukraine War. In the latter, the United States and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) did not intervene to fight militarily against Putin, so it is not considered a war between major states.

For each case, we explore why the decisions that leaders took led to or avoided war. We then explore historically and theoretically why they made those decisions. We typically begin each case analysis with a "Background" section that places the crisis within a wider context. The "Historical Events" section then reviews the major interactions within the case that made it a crisis and shaped whether it went to or avoided war. The most significant events appear in a "Nutshell Summary." Next, a "Key Variables" section reviews the prominent factors that research suggests should distinguish the crises that go to war from those that do not – including their relative potency. This systematizes the analysis across cases. A "Theoretical Analysis" section then identifies the major theoretical questions that the case presents. Finally, each case study concludes with a set of "Lessons" for diplomacy, as well as broader implications for IR theory.

Five major parts comprise this work. Part I contains the foundations – namely, this Introduction and Chapter 1, which presents the book's theoretical framework and research design. Parts II, III, and IV present our crisis cases individually in three groups – those from the post-Napoleonic nineteenth century, those from the twentieth century through World War II, and those from what we call the nuclear era. To explore the role of nuclear weapons in greater detail, this latter section contains four crises: two that directly involve nuclear weapons and two that do not. Finally, Part V offers a conclusion, consisting of two chapters that delineate the major lessons for world politics, in terms of the patterns present, what each crisis tells us, and general lessons for diplomacy and IR theory. To reach these conclusions, we compare our analyses and lessons across cases and integrate the insights gleaned into a set of overarching general lessons for world politics. We end with a brief discussion of the book's implications for peace and the use of diplomacy to avoid war.

1 Theoretical Framework and Research Design

At the outset, we need to point out that this is a book by political scientists about history and differs in significant ways from what historians do. First and foremost, it uses the work of historians, including their reconstruction of events, to make inferences about why certain things happen and other things do not; it does not seek to make a contribution to the actual reconstruction of past events. In this sense, this book cannot be considered an original contribution to the field of history because it does not use archives to look at the past. It relies on the immense work of others who have painstakingly sifted through these archives and other primary sources to get at the historical events that make up the case material we present.

Second, this book is a political science analysis in that its focus is on the "causes" and underlying factors that shape why events occur the way they do. Although many historians engage in this kind of analysis, it is more typically at the heart of what political science attempts to do. A single, overarching question motivates this study: What distinguishes the interstate crises that escalate to war from those that do not? This chapter sets the foundations necessary for exploring an answer to such a question. It first defines the key concepts embedded within the question and then identifies the individual crises that we analyze in the study. It next highlights our theoretical focus, which stresses foreign policy decision-making. We hope that through an in-depth analysis of how leaders make decisions during individual crises we will be able to discern how those decisions lead to war or the avoidance of war.

After defining our concepts, we next lay out the key variables in our study and elaborate the questions that guide us as we search for the presence and impact of our key variables. In the last section we address how we select the crises we analyze in the study. General readers not interested in methodological questions and can go ahead to the cases starting in chapter 2 and come back to chapter 1 later.

Conceptual Foundations

The Concept of Crisis

What distinguishes the interstate crises that escalate to war from those that do not? To address this question we first must define a "crisis." We adopt Hermann's (1969) conceptualization of the term, which considers a crisis to exist when decision-makers experience a situation that poses (i) a high level of threat, (ii) a short time in which to decide, and (iii) surprise.[1] This conceptualization takes a decision-maker perspective; a crisis is present when decision-makers perceive all three of a crisis's essential characteristics.[2] Such a perspective poses a problem in that it requires scholars to get into the minds of decision-makers.

An alternative approach might instead identify a crisis by observing interstate interactions. This generates more reliable criteria, since researchers need not place themselves in the shoes of individual decision-makers. McClelland (1961: 191) adopts such an approach. He presumes that behavior within a crisis involves "recurring forms in the sequence of interactions," which can be "traced and studied." As a result, he collects data from newspapers and, using operational criteria, measures the cooperative and conflictive interactions between pairs of states. A crisis reflects both a great increase in the frequency of these interactions and a shift from the average cooperation–conflict mix of interactions to a more conflictive one.[3] Crisis behavior is conceived as a deviation from two states' "normal relations range" of cooperation–conflict (Azar 1972: 184). Thus, McClelland (1961) interprets the 1948 and the 1961 Berlin crises as authentic because of their behavioral profile; the 1958–1959 deadline crisis, however, is excluded because it lacks that profile. Ideally, one could use both the decision-making and the behavioral approaches, which would allow each approach to verify the other. Unfortunately, apart from Berlin, we lack systematic crisis data under McClelland's approach, but this remains an agenda for future research in the field.

A third definition of crisis derives from the work of Snyder and Diesing (1977: 6), who conceptualize an interstate crisis as "a sequence of interactions between the governments of two or more sovereign states

[1] Brecher and Wilkenfeld's (1997: 3) definition of "foreign policy crisis" contains similar characteristics: "a threat to one or more basic values … a finite time for response … and a heightened probability of involvement in military hostilities." See also J. Richardson (1994: 11) for a discussion of this definition.

[2] The perspective here is that of the target. Both sides need not fulfill all three criteria for a crisis to exist. In fact, it is unlikely that the initiator will experience surprise.

[3] Brecher and Wilkenfeld's (1997: 4–5) conceptualization of "international crisis" incorporates certain aspects of McClelland's approach.

in severe conflict, short of actual war, but involving the perception of a dangerously high probability of war." Because James Richardson (1994: 11–12) adapts this definition in his work – and our study builds on Richardson as a foundation – such a definition deserves serious consideration here. Nevertheless, it contains a critical weakness: It incorporates the notion that a crisis exists only in the presence of a significant risk of war. This potentially biases the pool of interstate crises in favor of cases that are more apt to escalate to war.[4] Given our dependent variable (the escalation of a crisis to war or avoidance of war), we prefer not to rely on the risk of war as part of the case selection criteria for what situations constitute a "crisis." Some crises will have a lower probability of escalation to war, and we want to study these cases as well – to understand why they have that lower probability.

Of course, some situations have little to no chance of escalating to war because the issues or actions provoking them are not serious enough. We need to employ selection criteria to remove these "crisis" situations from serious consideration. Hermann's criterion that decision-makers perceive a "high level of threat" should achieve such a purpose. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that Hermann provides few precise guidelines about (and no operational definition for) what qualifies as "high" threat, other than that it involves a threat to the security of a state or a state's vital interests (which Morgenthau [1952: 973] defines as a state's territorial integrity and sovereignty). Likewise, Herman does not indicate what qualifies as a "short time" in which to make a decision, although the implication is that decision-makers all tend to agree that the time available seems shorter than usual. The identification of a "surprise" is even more imprecise, although the Cuban Missile Crisis offers a clear illustration of the role of surprise.[5] In the end, we employ Hermann's definition as a conceptual device – one useful for theoretical purposes rather than as an operational definition – to serve as a basis for compiling a precise list of crises to include in the study. So long as the crises we include seem plausible using Hermann's definition, we accept them as crises.[6] That definition, however, may still capture a few crises biased toward escalation to war in that on a handful of occasions decision-makers try to provoke war via a crisis, as evident in their expressed fear that the crisis will *not* escalate

[4] James Richardson (1994: 11–12) also recognizes this as a potential problem, but reaches the opposite conclusion.

[5] At the other end, Danzig–Poland elicits little surprise in England and France, since it was widely anticipated after the Prague invasion, which was a surprise.

[6] They also appear in all major diplomatic histories, so we do not think we have included any noncrises by mistake. See the Methodological Appendix.

to war.[7] Bismarck's behavior in 1870, as well as Hitler's behavior during the 1938 Munich Crisis, illustrate such a dynamic.

To aid in the identification of crises, we employ the two main datasets that purport to capture interstate crises: the International Crisis Behavior dataset (ICB; Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997) and the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset (Gibler 2018; Palmer et al. 2022). The ICB project confines itself to crises, while the Correlates of War project's MID data is much broader. It collects data on every threat, display, or use of armed force between two recognized nation-states. We consult each dataset primarily to determine which cases neither Richardson nor we have included (see the Methodological Appendix at the end of this book). This provides a prima facie indicator of how biased our sample might be. Nevertheless, we ultimately decide which crises to include in our study – and which to recommend for future research – on the basis of, inter alia, whether they fit Hermann's conceptual definition of a crisis, not their appearance in these datasets.

As in James Richardson (1994), we confine our analysis to crises between major states in the post-Napoleonic order. The list of major states comes from the Correlates of War project (Small and Singer 1982: 45; for the current list, see Sarkees and Wayman 2010: 35). We then create a list of major-state pairs (i.e., dyads) to isolate the relevant population of potential cases that include at least one major state on opposite sides of a crisis situation. Table 1.1 lists the cases we analyze in this study – including the crisis year(s), name, participants (both major and minor states), type,[8] and outcome (war or not). We asterisk (*) the cases that we have added to James Richardson's original list.

War, Peace, and Their Explanation

In conventional usage the terms "peace" and "war" are very broad, but they carry more technical meanings in policy, legal, and scholarly circles. Major media, for example, labeled the repeated crises between Iceland and the United Kingdom the "Cod Wars." Scholars, however, do not consider these conflicts to be "wars." The extensive body of statistical research on war that peace science scholars have generated over the last fifty years (see Mitchell and Vasquez 2025) is based on a specific *operational* definition. Within this community, the scholarly consensus is that an *interstate war* exists when two or more states' organized armed forces engage one another in "sustained combat, … resulting in a minimum of

[7] Our thanks to Jack S. Levy for this point.
[8] Crisis "type" is discussed in the Methodological Appendix.

Table 1.1 *Crises analyzed in this study*

Date	Crisis	Participants†	Type	Outcome
1839–1841	Eastern Crisis	Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia (Ottoman Empire)/France (Muhammed Ali)	Major-state rivalry	No major-state/ major-state war
1853–1856	Crimean War	Britain, France (Ottoman Empire)/Russia	Major-state rivalry	War
*1859–1860	Italian Wars of Independence	France (Piedmont)/Austria	Nationalism	War
1870–1871	Franco–Prussian War	France/Prussia (Spain)	Major-state rivalry	War
1903–1905	Russo–Japanese War crisis	Japan/Russia	Colonial rivalry	War
1905–1906	First Moroccan Crisis	France/Germany	Colonial rivalry	No war
1911	Second Moroccan Crisis	France/Germany	Colonial rivalry	No war
*1908–1909	Bosnian Crisis	Austria–Hungary, Germany/Russia (Serbia)	Major-state rivalry, nationalism	No war
*1914	July 1914	Austria–Hungary, Germany/Russia, France, Britain (Serbia)	Nationalism, major-state rivalry	War
1938	Munich	Germany/Britain, France (Czechoslovakia)	Nationalism,major-state rivalry	No war
*1939	Danzig/Poland	Germany/Britain, France (Poland)	Nationalism, major-state rivalry	War
1941	Pearl Harbor	Japan/US, Britain (China)	Empire building, economic sanctions	War
1948, 1958–1961	Berlin Crises	USSR/US, Britain, France	Nuclear deterrence, aftershock (1948), major state rivalry (1958–1961)	No war
*1962	Cuban Missile Crisis	USSR/US	Nuclear deterrence, major-state rivalry	No war
*1971–1973	Cod Wars	Britain/(Iceland), US	Maritime	No war
*2014, 2022	Annexation of Crimea, 2014; Russia–Ukraine War	Russia/US, NATO (Georgia, Ukraine)	Major-state rivalry, new state entry	No major-state/ major-statewar

† Minor actors in parentheses.

* Cases that have been added to those listed by J. Richardson (1994).

1,000 battle-related fatalities within a twelve-month period" (Small and Singer 1982: 55). A crisis *escalates to war* if its actors fulfill this criterion when handling the issue(s) that produced the crisis. If the crisis instead ends without actors crossing that threshold, then the crisis does *not escalate to war*.[9]

Since at least Lewis Richardson (1960b), widely considered to be the founder of modern peace science, a growing number of scholars have used the scientific approach to uncover the factors that increase the statistical probability of war. These include the role of proximity, territorial disputes, rivalry, alliances, and arms races in bringing about war. A series of midrange theories underlie these dyadic factors, with some even linking the various factors together (see Senese and Vasquez 2008). We give preference to these midrange theories, primarily because it was when the field turned to analyzing the dyad that it began to have more success in finding statistically significant relationships (cf. Rummel 1972 vs. his earlier studies, see Vasquez [1998: 194–195]).

The Theoretical Focus: Foreign Policy Decision-Making

In each of our cases we focus on the question: What decisions led to war or the avoidance of war? In doing so, we ask why leaders took the actions they did. We seek to identify the critical moment when actors moved their collectivity over the threshold of war or pulled it away from the brink of war. These decisions, of course, are a result of an interactive process. One side in a crisis must decide to go to war, and the other side must decide to respond in kind. Our analysis consequently considers not only the key states that bring about war (or prevent war) in a particular instance, but also whether and how other states respond. To obtain a deeper understanding of the causal process underlying these various decisions, we conduct a counterfactual analysis within each crisis case we examine. If war was avoided, what would have had to occur for war to come about, and if war occurred, how could it have been avoided? Put another way, what alternative decisions might have brought war about or prevented it?[10]

To study the decision-making associated with war, we adopt a two-level game approach (Putnam 1988). The first level stresses the interaction (or game) between the main states involved (e.g., France and Prussia during the Franco–Prussian War). Here, we examine how the two sides behave toward one another – their use of threats and armed

[9] This is a simple, dichotomous conceptualization of war/no-war.
[10] On counterfactual analysis, see Tetlock and Belkin (1996) and Levy (2015).

force, their reaction toward the counterpart's acts, and so forth. The second level incorporates the domestic situation that the leaders of each side must confront and how that situation affects the actions they take at the first level. What is the role of the public, the legislature, or significant policy influencers? Does a split exist domestically between those who want to go to war and those who do not, and if so, which camp prevails and why?

Despite adopting a two-level game approach, we are interested less in determining which level is more important than in assessing the conditions under which decision-making brings about or avoids war. We therefore look at how the levels interact. Specifically, we try to identify what *factors* (regardless of level) produced the decision. In-depth case analysis provides the best means through which to explore the decision-making–war relationship. It allows us: to determine why policymakers decided in favor of (or against) war; to trace how underlying factors (like system structure or type of issue) transfer into actual decisions about war; to incorporate the strategic interaction of crisis participants (i.e., how one actor responds to another's actions); and to assess the relative potency of various outside influences on decision-makers. This constitutes one of our study's main original contributions to the existing research on interstate war and peace.

The Theoretical Framework

To compare the myriad crisis cases that we examine, we must apply a common *theoretical framework*. This framework contains a number of factors (or independent variables) that researchers frequently associate with war – such as the type of issue under dispute, the domestic political situation in which decision-makers act, the bargaining strategy of the actors, and so forth. We then analyze each crisis with reference to those factors. This allows us to unearth any variables that commonly distinguish the crises that escalate from those that do not. The two concluding chapters of the book then use the framework to derive cross-case patterns from the analysis, as well as to generate new hypotheses that future researchers might pursue.

We organize the framework according to various levels of analysis (see Singer 1961; Levy and Thompson 2011; Cashman 2014). Based on Singer (1961) and Waltz (1959), there are three common levels of analysis: the individual, the state, and the system.[11] Scholars thereafter searched for the correlates of war at one of these levels. Singer and

[11] Cashman (2014) adds the substate level, which we do not include.

Waltz took disparate approaches when studying international politics; yet they produced remarkably similar answers about which level of analysis would most likely explain why war occurs – namely, the system level. Both missed what turned out to be the most important level, which sits between the second (state) and third (system structure) levels – a 2.5 level, if you will. Scholars today call this the dyadic level (Bremer 1992). It considers how members of a pair of states (a dyad) interact with one another. This level recognizes that interactions between states vary significantly, depending on the dyad's members. The interactions (and therefore relationship) between the United States (US) and Costa Rica, for example, differ significantly from those between the US and North Korea. Singer's and Waltz's original three levels, in other words, prove insufficient.

In light of this discussion, we build a framework around the four levels that scholars most commonly use. The first is the *system structure*, or the characteristics of the system that scholars believe to be most determinative of interstate behavior in light of current findings. We assume – along with Waltz (1979) and realists generally – that a system of anarchy (i.e., the absence of a government that holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of force) privileges force and war as a way to make binding decisions in international politics (see Vasquez 2009: 49).

Unlike Waltz (1979: 114–116), however, we do not assume that the distinction between anarchy and hierarchy is a pure dichotomy. We agree with Bull (1977) that degrees of order exist in the international system – in particular, that a system of governance can exist among the major states in the system without necessarily producing a full-fledged world government (see Rosenau and Czempiel 1992). The more order in the system, the more opportunities states have for making binding decisions, which can affect the likelihood of going to war (see Wallensteen 1984).

Just below the system level sits the *dyadic* or *interactive* level, which considers how pairs of states interact with each other – both at present and in their recent history. Interactions merit attention because they produce a dyad-specific relationship. We assume that the relationships between each pair of states involved in the crisis necessarily underlie the crisis events, thereby significantly influencing whether decision-makers decide to go to or avoid war. According to peace science research, the most war-prone relationship is interstate rivalry. Dyadic relationships affect the propensity for war in other ways too, though. Crisis participants who have allies to support them may escalate to war due to a perception of strength; they are emboldened (e.g., Serbia in July 1914). Similarly, participants engaged in an arms race are also more apt to go to war (on each of these factors, see Senese and Vasquez 2008).

The third level in our framework is the *state* level. Within each state, different branches of government or bureaucratic entities argue for their preferred policy (e.g., the executive, the legislature, the military; see Allison and Halperin 1972), as do various policy influencers and organized groups.

Finally, our framework moves to the *individual* level, focused on the characteristics of human beings that may bring about war. As Waltz (1959) discusses, the initial explanations of war based on human nature often degenerated into discussing human evil or, even more simplistically, blaming evil people. More recent work at this level has moved away from human nature toward identifying the specific characteristics of individuals who make the decision to go to war or who are prone to advocate such a decision. These characteristics involve political beliefs, such as a belief in the merits of hard-line foreign policies, or psychological tendencies – such as risk propensity or "motivated bias," where decision-makers tend to see things they want to see. Unlike the dyadic level, research findings on individual characteristics remain limited, which constrains a detailed application of a common framework at this level. Nonetheless, we find the distinction between hardliners and accommodationists and their struggles with each other to be useful in seeing if decisions move the state toward war or away from it.

The key variables used in this study along with their levels of analysis are summarized in Table 1.2. To identify the key variables of interest at each level, we provide a set of questions to guide us in our analysis of each individual crisis (see the Methodological Appendix). When investigating cases, we keep these questions in mind, determine whether the variables are present in the case, and if so, try to determine how they might affect the "Historical Events" within the crisis. Each crisis chapter contains a section entitled "Key Variables," in which we assess the variables' impact on crisis decision-making. Variables of particular importance also receive a more detailed treatment within each chapter's "Theoretical Analysis" section. At the end of the study, we revisit the variable list once again to see if we can generalize across the crises. The goal is to determine whether any broader patterns emerge – particularly, to see which variables best differentiate the crises that escalate to war from those that do not.

Our study's most original contributions occur at the individual level of analysis, where we focus on the role of decision-making in bringing about or avoiding war. Case analysis allows us to examine the decision-making process in great detail, which is important for two main reasons. First, limited findings currently exist at this level. A case-based, inductive approach therefore promises to add significantly to our understanding

Table 1.2 *Summary of variables used in crisis analyses*

Level	Variable
System structure	System structure
	Norms
Dyadic	Nature of issue
	Proximity
	Bargaining strategy
	Previous history
	Rivalry
	Alliances
	Arms races
	Relative capabilities
	Democracy (democratic peace at dyadic level; the role of public opinion and constraints at the state level)
State	Domestic politics (hard-liner/accommodationists; collectivity at the state level, individuals at the individual level)
Individual	Hostility
	Wishful thinking/Overconfidence

of crisis diplomacy. Second, through such an approach, we can trace how latent factors, such as system structure or the nature of the issue under dispute, translate into actual decisions for or against war. James Richardson (1994: 3) makes a similar point; one of the purposes of his investigation was to determine the extent to which the outcome of a crisis depended on "structural factors" as opposed to "crisis diplomacy – on decisions and interactions during the crisis itself." Richardson's task merits further attention. Many scholars maintain not only that war is multicausal but also that numerous latent factors affect a state's propensity for war. Whether and how decision-makers account for those factors when managing a crisis remains underexplored.

Case Selection

Justification

Any book of case studies necessarily covers only a few of the many cases that embody the causal process of interest. In this study, for example, we analyze fifteen crisis – seven that escalate to war and eight that do not – of the approximately ninety-five interstate wars from 1815 to 2007 (Sarkees and Wayman 2010: 75) and two hundred or so interstate crises (MIDs) that do not escalate to war. The question, of course, is how generalizable the findings from our fifteen crises are to the larger population.

Generalization only becomes a problem when testing hypotheses. This is the typical procedure in what philosophy of science refers to as the *logic of confirmation* (Freyberg-Inan et al. 2016). Our limited sample, however, makes hypothesis testing impossible; thus, we instead adopt a more inductive approach. We look at a series of crises, each of which we believe can teach us something about why war or its avoidance occurs. This belief comes from our theoretical predispositions about what makes crises escalate. The inferences we draw therefore do not constitute firm conclusions about why war occurs, but rather serve as potential hypotheses that scholars will systematically need to test (or confirm) using a more appropriate sample (typically through a large-N statistical analysis). Our study, in other words, really involves the search for common patterns as part of a larger inductive approach. The philosophy of science refers to this as the *logic of discovery* (see Freyberg-Inan et al. 2016; James 2022: 14–15, 42, 45; see also Scheffler 1967).

Of the two logics, the logic of confirmation is better known. It follows a process with clear and explicit rules. The researcher deductively derives hypotheses from theory and subsequently examines evidence (e.g., by analyzing statistical data) to see if it can falsify the hypotheses. The logic of discovery, in contrast, is much less constrained. It includes any explicit attempt to review evidence with the intent to find patterns that may lead to the formation of new hypotheses. Researchers must test such hypotheses in subsequent studies – with the logic of confirmation – before the field can accept their veracity.

The logic of discovery better fits what we do in this study, and in qualitative analysis scholars recognize the logic of discovery as a legitimate basis through which to justify inquiry and to select cases (see Levy 2008; Clarke and Primo 2012; Goertz 2017). Levy (2008: 3), for example, identifies four types of case studies: hypothesis-generating, hypothesis-testing, idiographic, and empirical probes. Hypothesis-generating case studies are those that often try to identify the causal processes that lead to a particular phenomenon (Levy 2008: 5; see also Eckstein 1975), such as what brings about war or what decisions can avoid war when this is a real possibility. They can also, however, look for patterns that are not confined to causal processes, but could include any repetitious behavior that might be associated with war or its avoidance, even if it is not a clear cause or cannot be established as a cause. In these types of cases, as Levy (2008: 8) notes, some case selection issues that are crucial in hypothesis-testing cases are of less concern when looking at hypothesis-generating cases. But the logic of discovery goes beyond generating new hypotheses; we use it specifically to derive "lessons for diplomacy," which may not be highly generalizable, but valuable in only a small number of cases.

Our Cases

In selecting our cases we initially follow and adopt a number of decisions by James Richardson (1994: 3–4). He focuses only on crises in which major states (the "Great Powers") oppose one another. Beyond that, he selects cases on the basis of several criteria: (i) less familiar cases, so as to increase the diversity of cases in the study; (ii) cases that can take advantage of archival evidence; (iii) cases in which historians agree there existed a serious risk of war; and (iv) dispersion of cases across five historical periods from 1815 through the nuclear era.

Although these criteria motivate Richardson to explicitly omit certain well-studied crises (e.g., July 1914), they ultimately produce a list of four cases that go to war and four that do not, including one nonwar case that he sees as a respite before war (Sudetenland-Munich 1938). The inclusion of each case has advantages for his study (J. Richardson 1994: 5). The 1839 Eastern Crisis and the Crimean War are the most serious crises that occur during the Concert of Europe period; they offer insight into that peace system's operation. The Franco–Prussian War illustrates the period in which the Italian and German nationalist wars of unification dominated the global agenda. The Russo–Japanese War incorporates a crisis between an imperialist European state and a non-European one. Agadir is not only the first crisis in the pre-First World War era, but also the one in that historical period "in which brinkmanship came closest to escaping from control" (J. Richardson 1994: 6). The Sudeten (or Munich) crisis comes closest to war in the interwar period; alternatives, in his view, had little risk of escalating to war (e.g., the Rhineland crisis). Pearl Harbor again brings non-European states into the mix, though in a later historical period. Finally, he chooses the two Berlin Crises because they constitute the most serious nuclear crises – with the exception of the well-studied Cuban Missile Crisis.

We include all of Richardson's cases in our study for three reasons. First, diplomatic historians widely consider these cases to be important and include them in standard diplomatic histories of the Great Powers – or, as we refer to them, major states (e.g., Albrecht-Carrie 1958; Rich 1992, 2003; Bridge and Bullen 2005). Second, Richardson's study draws on rich, archival research. His historical analyses are therefore highly detailed, which facilitates the type of crisis decision-making analysis that we wish to undertake. Finally, we seek to take a long second look at each of Richardson's crises in light of the extensive theory and research in peace science and quantitative international politics, much of which Richardson did not utilize given his own methodological proclivities.

Additionally, we seek to expand and update his study. He has eight cases (four that go to war and four that do not) and we have expanded that list to fifteen – seven crises that go to war and eight that do not.[12] We follow Richardson by including only crises that diplomatic historians believe are the most important and serious among major states. We begin by adding the two cases that Richardson rejected for being overstudied: July 1914 and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Besides being pivotal cases, the field knows more about them now than when Richardson originally wrote. We next add the Second Italian War of Independence (1859–1860). Germany becomes a major state through the Franco–Prussian War, a case that Richardson includes. Italy likewise becomes a major power through its wars of independence, but Richardson excludes this case. We incorporate it for three main reasons: (i) it promises greater insight into German unification (by comparison); (ii) it gives us a crisis where Italy (here Piedmont) plays a significant role; and (iii) it is the most serious crisis in the period between the Crimean War and Franco–Prussian War. Of the four Italian wars of independence, we single out the second because it most threatened to alter the map of Europe.

To these, we add two cases in proximity to the First World War. The first – the 1908 Bosnian Crisis – is a nonwar case relevant to the coming of the First World War. In many ways, this case sets precedents for July 1914. The second is the Danzig–Poland crisis, which complements the Munich crisis. After Munich and the events that occur in its aftermath, Britain and France decide to stand up to Hitler's territorial expansion. They therefore form an alliance with Poland to deter German aggression, and the failure of this deterrence strategy results in the onset of the Second World War.

Finally, we add two, more recent cases. The first of these is the 1971–1973 Cod War. Of all the crises we examine, this was the least likely to escalate to war; yet it did involve military actions that could have escalated into more severe armed action, particularly against Iceland. We interpret it as a crisis between major states in that the US gets drawn in on the side of Iceland. As the crisis unfolded, Iceland threatened a strategic installation of great importance to the US, and the US later pressured Britain into settling. The Soviet Union also loomed in the background. It took satisfaction from any disagreement among members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and, under the right

[12] We are not too concerned with having one more case that does not go to war, given that there are many more cases that do not escalate to war than go to war. In fact, three of our nonwar crises – Morocco, Berlin, and Ukraine – have two crises each, so that our actual number of nonwar cases is eleven. See Table 16.2.

circumstances, might have intervened, even if only indirectly (as it did in Iceland's 2008 financial crisis).

Two main considerations drove our decision to include this particular case. First, unlike the Berlin Crises or the Cuban Missile Crisis, this was largely *not* a Cold War disagreement. Cold War dynamics lurked in the background, to be sure, but the US did not directly confront the Soviet Union here. Second, the Cod Wars concern a disagreement over maritime issues. Scholars argue that state leaders perceive maritime issues as less salient than territorial ones (see Hensel and Mitchell 2017), which should affect their crisis bargaining. Including a maritime dispute allows us to compare crisis decision-making across these two contexts – a particularly relevant undertaking given ongoing maritime disagreements in the Arctic and the South China Sea. In addition, the Cod Wars occurred before the international community finalized the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Had UNCLOS existed earlier – that is, had its "rules of the maritime game" predated the crisis – the Cod Wars arguably would not have occurred at all.

Our second contemporary case is the recent, post-Cold War interrelated set of confrontations between Russia and Ukraine. In the first confrontation, Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Since the Second World War, annexation has all but disappeared as a tool of statecraft (Hathaway and Shapiro 2017). This raises critical questions: Do decision-makers pursue annexation for the same reasons that they did in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Do the "rules of the game," which currently frown upon annexation, constrain decision-makers in any way, and if so, how? Do decision-makers respond to annexation today as they did in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Our analysis of this case allows us to see what patterns persist across time – from the earliest crises in our study to the present.

The second confrontation is Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. This case is very recent and information is incomplete; nonetheless, we include it because it raises important theoretical issues, especially when seen in relation to Russia's earlier actions toward Georgia in 2008. We interpret the 2022 invasion as a "nonwar" between major states. The US and its allies have not (yet) taken an active role in fighting Russia, although there is a real risk that this could happen as US and NATO aid stymies Russia's complete conquest. The two confrontations, as well as Russia's 2008 incursion into Georgia, can all be treated as local wars between Russia and former nations of the federated Soviet Union. As such, they fit a well-known pattern uncovered by peace science research; they are examples of the modal war that has occurred in the international system since 1815 – namely, a dyadic war between neighbors over territory.

Theoretically, we can say that the unwritten Cold War norms that governed superpower intervention into an ongoing war (from Korea to Afghanistan) are key to whether such wars will expand to a major-state war. In the end, this leaves us with fifteen total cases to analyze – seven crisis that go to war and eight that do not (see Table 1.1 for the list of included cases). The Methodological Appendix at the end of the book discusses a number of research design matters in more detail, including the question of generalizing from a small sample.

Part II

The Post-Napoleonic Nineteenth Century

The French Revolutionary Wars that began in 1792 and the ensuing Napoleonic Wars were the most severe wars in Europe since the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). The victors of these wars forced Napoleon to abdicate in April 1814, exiling him to the island of Elba off the coast of Italy. They then convened at the Congress of Vienna to forge a peace settlement. After the festivities, including several balls, they began to bicker and (later) disagree vehemently over various questions concerning the future of Europe. Amidst this disagreement, Napoleon escaped from Elba, landed on the southern coast of France with about 1,000 men, and moved toward Paris. Along the way, former soldiers joined him, and full regiments defected to him. By the time he reached Paris, he had reassembled much of his army, and the king of France, Louis XVIII, had fled to Belgium.

The victors set aside their differences to reassemble their grand coalition and confront Napoleon. After defeating Napoleon a second time at Waterloo, they again exiled him – this time to St. Helena, off the coast of Africa – and reconvened the Congress of Vienna. Here, they created the Concert of Europe and what has been called the Vienna Peace System. The Concert settled the major outstanding issues from the wars. It was a system of consultation, through which the victors hoped to settle their outstanding issues and prevent any future disagreements from resulting in destructive wars among the major states. Unlike the United Nations, it did not intend to prevent war altogether, but rather only among the major states. It defined "peace" in those terms. Wars between major and minor states, as well as among minor states, were permitted. The Concert saw no way to prevent or prohibit such wars; it reasoned that these wars constituted a potential concern only if they could disrupt the system. If the major states acted collectively, however, the Concert could short-circuit any possible disruption. Thus, in many ways, the Concert of Europe functioned as a form of collective rule, in which the major states would deal with international problems and issues. It was, in effect, governance without government. The major

states consciously designed a set of "rules of the game" to manage their relations toward each other so that they could govern the system in their collective interests.

The Concert generally followed three norms. First, "territorial arrangements" and redrawing the map of Europe were to be done collectively by the victors (J. Richardson 1994: 228–229). The Concert settled the main territorial issues on the international agenda. They decided on the frontiers of France; the borders of the Netherlands; the status of Switzerland, Poland, and Saxony; and Austrian possessions in Italy. This is a preeminent example of governance, and a very important one since the handling of territorial issues is seen as key to war and to peace (Vasquez 2009: ch. 4; Owsiak 2012; Owsiak and Vasquez 2021).

The second norm was that "unilateral changes in the status quo" were ruled out (J. Richardson 1994: 229). Problems of change would be dealt with by a system of conference diplomacy, whereby the major states would come together, in concert, to resolve the issue. This created a new system whereby there would, in effect, be rule by great power consultation. Management of conflict was a collective responsibility.

The third and last norm of the Concert was to keep legitimate rulers in power and to stop revolution and usurpers. The three monarchies in the Concert in particular – Russia, Austria, and Prussia – wanted to keep revolutionary leaders like Napoleon from coming to power and disturbing the peace of Europe. Thus, one of the first things the Concert did was to restore the Bourbons to power in France in the form of Louis XVIII. In the early years, the Concert agreed that revolutions in Spain and Italy would be put down. It also dealt with the Belgium revolution of 1830. Castlereagh of Britain had severe reservations about this norm, and later ideological divisions between Britain and France, on the one hand, and Russia, Austria, and Prussia, on the other, made this norm the weakest of the three.

The purpose of the Concert was to prevent war among the major states. It succeeded in this until 1853–1854 with the outbreak of the Crimean War, although the legacy of the Concert and its norms can be seen as surviving right down to the last weekend of July 1914 when the First World War broke out. One of the questions this book will address in the cases up to 1914 is to what extent the Concert worked, and why it failed in certain instances. It was able to manage some territorial issues, like Greek independence, but when territorial demands became too great and extensive, as in the Italian wars of unification, the Concert could not manage conflict. We turn now to the first major crises that the Concert had to address – those concerning the Eastern Question.

2 The Eastern Crisis 1839–1841

The Eastern Crisis (1839–1841) offers an example of a major-state crisis that begins without initial major-state involvement. The major states at the time neither trigger the crisis nor participate in it as disputants in the early stage. Instead, a territorial dispute within the Ottoman Empire places the empire at risk of collapse, thereby threatening major states' interests and prompting their intervention to preserve the Ottoman Empire. In this case, the Concert of Europe operates largely as it should – with disagreement occurring among the major states not over *what* to achieve, but *how* to achieve it.

This chapter begins with a Background section placing the crisis in context. In that section we outline the nature of the Eastern Question and the immediate events that lead to the Eastern Crisis of 1839–1841 – namely, the Greek revolt, the Russo–Turkish War of 1828, and the Eastern Crisis of 1831–1833. A Historical Events section next reviews the main events of the 1839–1841 crisis in detail and discusses why it does not go to war. The key points are succinctly listed in a Nutshell Summary. The Theoretical Analysis identifies the major theoretical questions presented by the case. The chapter concludes with Lessons that can be derived from the case.

Background

The Eastern Question

The Eastern Question – that is, how to handle the weakening position of the Ottoman Empire, including its control of strategic sea routes – has roots that extend well before the Eastern Crisis of 1839. The Ottoman Empire historically covered a large geographic area, which included modern-day Turkey, the territory surrounding the Black Sea, Hungary, Greece, the Balkans (modern-day Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Romania), portions of the Middle East (segments of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, including the holy cities of Mecca and

Medina), and large swaths of the North African coast (Egypt, and parts of Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria). By 1816, Ottoman control had receded from its height. The Austrians expanded their empire into Hungary and the Balkans by the 1700s – at the expense of the Ottomans. Russia did likewise, capturing the north coast of the Black Sea, Crimea, and large parts of key rivers flowing through Europe (e.g., the Danube) by 1812. Despite these encroachments, Ottoman holdings remained substantial and important.

European major powers held competing preferences over how to deal with Ottoman lands. Those with major trade interests, like Britain, wanted the overland trade routes from Europe to Asia that passed through Ottoman territories to remain in friendly hands. Maritime considerations had led Russia to acquire the Crimean Peninsula in 1783 and subsequently to build a naval base in Sebastopol. The greatest difficulty with using a Black Sea port for economic and military purposes concerned passage into and out of the Black Sea itself. This passage occurred through the Dardanelles and Bosporus Straits, which fell within the heart of the Ottoman Empire and allowed it to control transit between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Holding these straits, especially in times of war, would preoccupy Russian foreign policy throughout the 1800s; in particular, Russia feared that the Ottomans – either independently or under the influence of another major power – would trap its navy within the Black Sea should war break out.

Competing with the desire to hold Ottoman lands, however, was that of maintaining the Ottoman Empire as a buffer state. An attempt to grab Ottoman lands may provoke other major states to do the same; indeed, the Eastern Crisis and the Crimean War feature major states jockeying for influence within these lands, with one major state's behavior encouraging others to intervene too. Preserving the Ottoman Empire became the most prudent policy capable of balancing the preferences of the major European states. The Russians and Austrians, in particular, relied upon the weaker Ottoman Empire as a buffer to ensure that another, stronger state did not establish itself on their southern borders.

The Greek Revolt and the Russo–Turkish War

The Eastern Crisis of 1839–1841 actually constitutes one of several crises, going back to the 1820s. The Eastern Question was one of the first threats to the map of Europe that the newly formed Concert of Europe faced. A major crisis began in 1821, when the Greeks declared independence from the Ottoman Empire, followed by a full-blown revolt between 1823 and 1825. The Greeks lobbied for assistance from the

major states, and the strategic importance of Greece aroused the latters' interest (Rich 1992: 49).

Alexander I, the hero of Napoleon's defeat, was frustrated with his allies (Schreoder 1994b: 637). He felt others in the Concert had gained by Russia's assent to help them – Austria in Italy, France in Spain, Britain in Latin America – but that in Russia's sphere (in the East) they used the alliance to limit Russian expansion into the Ottoman Empire (see Schroeder 1994b: 637). With the Greek revolt Russia called for a conference, where the tsar proposed to press the sultan to grant the Greeks three principalities that would be protected by the European states. The tsar argued that if the sultan could not be persuaded, then he should be coerced. The other powers could not agree to this and a subsequent conference on the Russian proposal ended in failure (Schroeder 1994b: 638–641).

In 1825, Sultan Mahmud II called upon his vassal Muhammad Ali[1] to bring an army and navy to Greece to crush the revolt. Ali had been secretly urging on the Greeks in the hopes of being called in by the sultan and receiving a territorial reward for his efforts. By the 1820s Muhammad Ali had turned Egypt into a modern state, built it up economically, expanded its territory, and gained de facto independence from the sultan.

Ali's forces advanced on Greece and were very successful. It appeared as if the revolt would collapse. In August 1825, the provisional Greek government appealed to the British government to save it. George Canning, the foreign secretary, rejected the appeal. Britain and Russia were now drawn together to deal with the situation; however, Alexander I died in late 1825 and was succeeded by Nicholas I. Liberals in the army who opposed Nicholas' conservative views led the Decembrist revolt, which was crushed. The revolt made Nicholas more anti-revolutionary and thus more hostile to the Greeks, so a period of drift ensued while Russia and Britain decided what to do. In the end, Nicholas had other grievances with the Turks, and these prevailed. In July 1827, Russia and Britain agreed that they would demand an immediate armistice, and if the Turks refused, they would use their joint naval strength to compel them. Austria abstained and Prussia stood with Austria (Schroeder 1994b: 650–651). France joined the Anglo-Russian coalition, and the three countries both signed the Treaty of London on July 6, 1827, and agreed to send combined naval forces. The pasha's forces pushed ahead,

[1] James Richardson (1994: 39) spells this as Mehmet Ali. Others, like Schroeder (1994b: 641), have spelled it as Mohammed Ali.

and on April 27, 1827, Athens fell. There were now only a few strongholds left, and it looked like the Greek revolt would be crushed.

Meanwhile, the joint naval forces arrived at Navarino Bay in Greece, where they faced the Egyptian navy of Muhammad Ali. On October 20, the two sides engaged in a naval battle. No one knows how it started, but at the end of it the Egyptian fleet was destroyed, with 4,000 killed. Greece was now effectively independent. In November, Russia imposed demands for peace, which the sultan, for internal reasons, could not accept. This led to the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–1829.

After slow going, Russia eventually won. The defeat of Turkey produced "near panic in Europe" (Schroeder 1994b: 658) at the prospect of the Ottoman Empire collapsing and raised the question of the disposition of its possessions, especially the straits. The Concert, however, was able to allay these fears with the Peace of Adrianople, which ended the war. The pact consisted of three main points. First, Greece was made an independent state with its frontiers and form of government established by the Concert. This is a preeminent example of how the Concert was a form of global governance without government. Second, it was agreed that all Ottoman territory that Russia conquered would be restored except for a strip on the east coast of the Black Sea and the Danube Delta. Lastly, the Ottoman Empire was saddled with a huge indemnity, with Russia occupying the Danubian principalities until it was paid.

The Eastern Crisis 1831–1833

After the defeat at Navarino Bay, Muhammad Ali wooed France and Britain (Schroeder 1994b: 727). He also expected the sultan to pay him for his losses. The sultan gave him Cyprus, but not Syria, which is what he wanted. In October 1831, Muhammad Ali picked a quarrel with the pasha of Syria over Egyptian refugees and sent his army to attack, under the command of his best general and son – Ibrahim. After six months of battle they won, but both were stripped of their titles by the sultan.

Ali waited to see what the European powers would do, and when they did nothing he ordered Ibrahim to attack the Ottoman army in Turkey proper. By December 1832, Ibrahim had destroyed the sultan's army, leaving Constantinople defenseless. He wanted to go on, but he was restrained by Ali. Delays in the transmission of Ali's orders gave Ibrahim an excuse to advance.[2] The sultan panicked and called for Russian aid.

[2] This is an example of bureaucratic politics in foreign policy. Allison and Halperin (1972) argue that foreign policy is not made just according to the national interest, but that the interest of bureaucratic actors also can guide decisions and sometimes undercut them.

Russia sent an army and the Black Sea fleet. The arrival of the fleet in Constantinople on February 20 shocked Europe, especially France. However, Nicholas I, who is often depicted as wanting to take the capitol, did not do so at this time; he regarded Constantinople as a potential *damnosa possessio* (damned possession), a phrase he applied to Poland as well (Schroeder 1994b: 728).

From February to July 1833, France, Britain, and Austria tried to pressure Ali and the sultan into a settlement. The outcome of the 1831–1833 Eastern Crisis was that Pasha Ali had his titles and possessions restored and was given temporary sovereignty over all of Syria, plus Cyprus and a few other areas. Russia signed the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi with Turkey, which gave it special influence in Turkey; in particular, Turkey agreed in a secret clause to close the straits to non-Russian warships in times of peace (Schroeder 1994b: 730). Once he found out about this clause, Palmerston, the British foreign secretary, vowed to get this provision removed in the future.

Historical Events

The Eastern Crisis 1839–1841

In May of 1838 Muhammad Ali indicated that he was going to declare his independence from the sultan. He wanted hereditary rule over Syria, which had eluded him. Now that he was seventy this had become a more pressing concern. He wanted to be able to pass on his possessions to his son, Ibrahim.

Palmerston immediately called together the Concert ambassadors to try to forge a common position. In April 1839, a year after Muhammad Ali declared his intention, Sultan Mahmud II attacked Pasha Muhammad Ali's forces in Syria. On June 24, the Ottoman army was defeated. The sultan then died of natural causes on June 30. The new sultan (Abdul Medjid) was only sixteen years old. Shortly after, the Ottoman fleet deserted to Ali. These four events in close succession – the defeat of the army, the death of the sultan, his replacement by a sixteen-year-old, and the defection of the navy – constitute a crisis of the highest proportions, not only for the Ottoman Empire but also the Concert. They reflect a high threat, a short time for decision-making, and surprise – the key elements of Hermann's (1969) definition of crisis. The collapse of the empire seemed imminent.

Here, Ibrahim had his own military interests and goals and went against what he knew would be his father's more "national" interest.

Louis Adolphe Thiers, premier of France, tried to persuade Ali and his son Ibrahim not to cross the Taurus Mountains into Turkey proper, to keep Russia from intervening (J. Richardson 1994: 43). The Taurus Mountains are the last geographical barrier to Constantinople. Ali opened negotiations with the new sultan, demanding hereditary rule over his possessions, especially Syria and Egypt.[3]

While this negotiation was going on, the Concert nations were discussing among themselves how to deal with Ali and the sultan. For those, like Palmerston, who were committed to saving the empire and the young sultan, this was a challenging situation since the sultan had lost all his military capability. Thiers constantly supported Ali, always demanding that the other Concert nations grant more concessions; he proposed giving Ali hereditary rule over both Egypt and Syria and opposed using coercion. The rest of the Concert did not agree and supported the sultan more fully. Russia and Britain reached an accord, which became the basis of a four-power accord (among Russia, Britain, Austria, and Prussia) that resulted in an ultimatum to Ali (J. Richardson 1994: 47):

1. Ali was offered rule over Egypt and Acre for life.
2. If he did not accept this in ten days, then the offer on Acre would be withdrawn.
3. In another ten days the Egyptian offer would be withdrawn, and the British and Austrian navies would attack.

The ultimatum was given to Ali on August 16, and the British commander at Alexandria waited for his reply. Ali refused to respond to the first of the three terms, and the Concert deemed that he had not accepted the other two (J. Richardson 1994: 47). The British–Austrian naval force bombarded Beirut on September 9–10 and then landed troops. With the support of the sultan's forces, Beirut was captured by early October, followed by Acre at the beginning of November. The armed intervention by the British and Austrians had nipped things in the bud. Palmerston had pulled the chestnuts out of the fire, and the situation of late June and early July had been reversed 180 degrees.

The only problem was that France had been excluded. Thiers was incensed that armed forces would be used against France's ally without France being consulted.[4] In the initial phases he did nothing, thinking Muhammad Ali would be able to resist the attack and that the allies would make another proposal. Neither event occurred and Thiers grew

[3] At one point the Ottomans were prepared to cede Syria to Ali in return for the Turkish navy, but the British prevented the agreement (J. Richardson 1994: 47).

[4] In the beginning this was also true of King Louis-Philippe (J. Richardson 1994: 48).

angry, as did the French public at large. Knowing that he was not a naval match with the British, Thiers threatened war on the Rhineland. This reflected the French desire to overturn the Congress of Vienna settlement that stripped it of what France considered its natural frontiers. The reasoning seemed to be that if the Concert was not going to include France in a major decision to go to war, France should not put up with the strictures of the Vienna settlement.

Shifting the focus of the crisis from the Middle East to Europe and the introduction of a territorial threat raised the stakes considerably. The Germans reacted, and nationalism was at a height with a war of poets going on in the press (see J. Richardson 1994: 48). Prussia was enraged, Austria was at her side, and Britain with them. Russia also could be expected to join them. It seemed that if war were to occur, the old grand coalition against Napoleon would be quickly reassembled.

King Louis-Philippe and other notables in his entourage became concerned as war fever within France spread.[5] The internal crisis reached a height when Thiers, as minister of the king, wrote a very inflammatory speech for the king to deliver to the chamber of deputies. At the same time, Thiers had called up reserves and began fortifying the capital. He also persisted in pursuing a policy of building armaments, about which the king was also concerned. Louis-Philippe believed that if he gave the speech Thiers had drafted, it would lead them down a path to war, from which it would be difficult to reverse course. He feared a slow entrapment in which honor would be at stake, for he thought the speech would arouse an unbridled nationalism and war fever within the legislature and the public. The threat to war would result in what today we would call some kind of game of chicken with the Concert and war would ensue.

Louis-Philippe wanted to prevent this, and he blocked the path to war by refusing Thiers' request and emphatically rejecting the inflammatory parts of the speech. That categorical rejection led Thiers to resign on October 21, followed by the resignation of his cabinet (Bury and Tombs 1986: 76; J. Allison 1926: 287; J. Richardson 1994: 48).[6] Louise-Philippe replaced Thiers with Guizot, a man who believed that security could be attained not through war but by economic strength (Pinkney1986: 132). Of paramount importance, Guizot was loyal to the king and in favor of bringing about peace with the Concert.

[5] Earlier, on October 15, as news of the attack on Beirut reached Paris, an attempt to assassinate the king was made by a man who gave "Beirut" as his reason (Bury and Tombs 1986: 74).

[6] Albrecht-Carrie (1958: 54) interprets these events as meaning that Louis-Phillipe "forced" Thiers' resignation.

Text Box 2.1 Nutshell Summary: Eastern Crisis of 1839–1841

1. A problem outside the central system of major states causes a disturbance.
2. The major states within the Concert of Europe split four to one on how to deal with it, which violates the norm of consensus, especially since one major state is not informed of the use of armed force against one of its minor-state allies.
3. The four major states (excluding France) give Ali an ultimatum that he refuses to accept.
4. A joint British–Austrian naval force bombards Beirut and then takes it and Acre, defeating Ali.
5. Louis Adolphe Thiers, premier and minister of foreign affairs of France, gets angry, threatens war on the Rhineland, and breaks up the Concert.
6. King Louis-Philippe dismisses Thiers, and war among the major states is avoided.

This was the key turning point in the crisis among the major states. From the time of the ultimatum to Ali, the crisis had been moving toward increased hostility between France and the rest of the Concert. The threat of war by Thiers greatly increased the probability of war. Louis-Philippe's decisive action ended that. Theoretically, war was avoided by an accommodationist reining in a hard-liner.

The key points of this case are presented in Text Box 2.1.

Key Variables

The key variable in preventing this crisis from going to war is the *domestic political situation*. War is prevented by an accommodationist (King Louis-Philippe) reining in the hard-liner (Thiers) who threatened war. This variable plays a more important role than the *system structure*, which plays only a minor role, because war is not prevented by the Concert of Europe but by the action taken by a domestic decision-maker. Nonetheless, system structure can be said to play an indirect role in that King Louis-Philippe decides to rein in Thiers because he sees remaining in the Concert as France's main interest.

At the same time, it could be said that the failure of the major states to reach a consensus within the Concert led to the isolation of France. In this regard, the stubbornness of French leaders and their unwillingness to compromise and modify their stance indicate that *bargaining strategy* played a role, albeit a moderate one, in moving the crisis toward war.

The failure of the bargaining process within the Concert led to Thiers threating to invade the Rhineland, which is the *issue* that seriously raised the prospect of war. This had a major impact on the nature of the crisis and changed its dynamic. The *previous history* of Napoleon losing the war in 1815 also played a role in the interactions of the states. The current crisis made Thiers think that if the Concert was going to ignore France, then France would not accept the territorial settlement of the Congress of Vienna. He thereby raised the Rhineland issue. However, the previous history of the grand coalition defeating Napoleon made King Louis-Philippe believe that if he followed Thiers' path, the grand coalition would be resurrected and France would be defeated once again. All in all, this makes previous history play a moderate role in the crisis. Of course, this previous history shows that there was still a *latent rivalry* between France and the victors over Napoleon despite the creation of a Quintuple Alliance in 1818 (see Thompson and Dreyer 2012).

The fact that the king was the accommodationist, and the prime minister and the legislature were the hard-liners, raises questions about the institutionalist explanation of the democratic peace, as will be discussed in the Theoretical Analysis. *Democracy* seems to play a moderate role in this crisis, but it works in the opposite direction to what theoretically would be expected – that is, by promoting war hysteria rather than peace.

Other variables that play a moderate role are the *nature of the issue* and *proximity*. There is no danger of war between the major states until Thiers raises the *territorial issue* of the Rhineland; then, the question of war comes to the forefront. Likewise, war occurs between the minor actors (namely the sultan and the pasha of Egypt) because of a territorial issue. *Proximity* in terms of the distance between the French navy and the battlefield (and the reduction that has on France's strength) plays a moderate role in Thiers' not intervening militarily to aid Muhammed Ali. The *relative capabilities* of the individual states play a comparatively minor role since all the states, individually, are relatively equal. Nevertheless, France could not stand alone against a coalition that was clearly superior. In this regard, *capability* plays a role in Louis-Philippe's decision, but overall it has a minor impact compared to the other key variables.

The case study does not find any significant discussion that arms competition played a role in the decision-making of either side. Likewise, the quantitative Susan Sample (1997) data show no arms race between Britain and Russia on the one hand and France on the other before or during the crisis (1839–1841). There is, however, a Diehl arms race between Austria and France before the crisis (in 1838), and one following the crisis (in 1843). Likewise, there is an arms race in 1842 between

France and Russia. These data seem to indicate that arms races do not play a role in the immediate onset of the crisis (with the possible exception of Austria and France), but that the crisis may have provoked military buildups afterward between France and the major Continental powers of Austria and Russia. The absence of an arms race with Britain makes sense, given that the latter is mostly a naval power with which France cannot easily compete during this time period. This despite the fact that the main military action in the Mediterranean involves naval action. There is no arms race before or after the crisis between France and Prussia, the immediate target of Thiers' threats. Similarly, there is no arms race between France and the minor state of the Ottoman Empire. Given the quantitative data, arms races are seen, at best, as playing a minor role in the onset of the crisis; this variable is listed as having a "minor" impact in Table 2.1. Nonetheless, it is plausible that the crisis itself seems to have had an impact on subsequent military spending among three of the land powers.

In summary, among the key variables, the domestic political situation has a major impact; the nature of the issue, bargaining, previous history, democracy, and proximity play a moderate role; and the system, rivalry, relative capabilities, and arms races play minor, but real, roles.

Alliances do not play any role in this crisis, since technically all the major states are in the same alliance that is governing the system. The disagreement is about what the alliance should do vis-à-vis Muhammed Ali. The fact that France takes Muhammed Ali's side in some of the

Table 2.1 *Variable summary for the Eastern Crisis: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Major		X
Nature of issue	Moderate	X	
Bargaining strategy	Moderate	X	
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Democracy	Moderate	X	
Proximity	Moderate		X
System structure	Minor	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Relative capabilities	Minor	X	
Arms races	Minor	X	
Alliances	None		
Hostility	None		
Norms	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

negotiations does not mean that the Quintuple Alliance underlying the Concert of Europe is a key variable in this case. *Hostility*, *norms*, and *wishful thinking* also play no key role.

Table 2.1 presents a summary of what variables are present in the Eastern Crisis and an estimate of their relative impact on the crisis not going to war.

Theoretical Analysis

Discerning the National Interest

A key theoretical question regarding international relations (IR) theory that can be raised about this and our other cases is how objective the national interest is in actual situations. For realists, like Morgenthau (1952), the national interest of the state should be clear to any rational actor. Morgenthau (1960: 5) says:

> We assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and the evidence of history bears that assumption out. That assumption allows us to retrace and anticipate, as it were, the steps a statesman – past, present, or future – has taken or will take on the political scene.

This means that, for a realist, the national interest can be read as a script known to all.

With regard to the Eastern Question, British decision-makers had difficulty specifying the national interest because they disagreed on how to define the Russian threat, including how that threat affected the state's specific interests. In addition, they differed on how to meet this threat (see Schroeder 1994b: 733). In the 1831–1833 crisis, for instance, Palmerston thought Russia wanted to partition the Ottoman Empire, and he became the main advocate of standing by the empire as a bulwark against Russia. Earl Grey, who was prime minister in the 1831–1833 crisis, was ready to write off the Ottoman Empire, which he saw as doomed to collapse (Schroeder 1994b: 732). While Grey viewed Russia as a rival, he did not see supporting the Ottoman Empire as necessarily in Britain's national interest. This disagreement continued in the 1839–1841 crisis, where Palmerston was even more insistent about supporting the Ottoman Empire as it began to weaken. In contrast, critics like the Earl of Clarendon, a member of the British cabinet, were more in favor of going with Muhammad Ali, whom they saw as stronger and the head of a more modern state. These were contradictory policies to say the least. Thus, at the most fundamental level, the key decision-makers could not discern the main goal and objectives of British national interest.

Nor could they agree on the means through which to achieve British national interest in the area. The cabinet gave Palmerston a hard time about his anti-French stance. If Russia was the enemy, why alienate the more ideologically sympathetic France? The cabinet split several times, with key members wanting England to take a more pro-French stance. At one point Palmerston had to threaten to resign to get the ultimatum to Ali (J. Richardson 1994: 47). Even after the landing of the Austro-British expedition, Lord John Russell, a member of the cabinet, challenged Palmerston and encouraged him to agree to some of the French conditions that would give Ali more (J. Richardson 1994: 48). Russell and Clarendon feared Palmerston would get them into a war with France.

The division of the cabinet in the 1839–1841 crisis shows that the national interest is not always easy to discern even in such highly salient issues of war and peace, where presumably the national interest would be clear. This suggests that realist assumptions that the national interest is objective and can be read like a script do not always hold in the reality of everyday foreign policymaking, whether in terms of goals or means. It cannot be said, as Morgenthau did, that the concept "allows us to retrace and anticipate, as it were, the steps a statesman – past, present, or future – has taken or will take" in either of the Eastern Crises.

Did the Concert Prevent War?

The Concert of Europe is typically seen as working from 1815 to 1853, when it breaks down because of the Crimean War. The criterion for determining whether it works is whether the major states avoid war with each other. The Eastern Crises through 1841 fit that criterion. The Concert was present; it engaged the problem of Muhammad Ali and the sultan; and there was no war among the major states, although war was threatened by Thiers.

But did the Concert actually prevent the threat of war from being actualized? It does not seem so. The Concert was not directly involved in preventing war. There was no Concert member who attempted to mediate, nor was there any negotiation to avoid war. Instead, war was avoided because Thiers was reined in by his king and resigned. King Louis-Philippe then appointed a new minster, who followed his more accommodationist policy. It was this domestic political action, not the Concert, that avoided war.

The Concert failed to work on two levels: First, members failed to work together in such a way that none of them would threaten to go to war with the rest, and second, they failed to directly defuse the threat once it was made. Domestic politics were the key to peace. Although,

domestic politics was the main factor that avoided war, it is theoretically interesting that the democratic elements in France worked in the opposite direction as the institutionalist explanation of the democratic peace would predict (see Maoz and Russett (1993); Bueno de Mesquita et al. (1999)). Instead of the "people" through their legislature restraining the executive, the opposite occurred – the king reined in the legislature and its prime minister. Of course, France was far from a full democracy at this time, given the power of the king; nonetheless, the democratic institutions that were present (and they were considerable for 1839–1841) acted to promote war, not peace. It is clear that the main theoretical factor in the domestic political situation was not the regime type but rather the balance of accommodationists and hard-liners.

Lessons of the Eastern Crisis 1839–1841

What have we learned from this case in terms of IR theory and diplomacy? We draw six major lessons from the Eastern Crisis.

1. The first is that, beginning in 1815 with the Congress of Vienna, Europe had a **system of major-state global governance in the Concert of Europe**. This illustrates that international relations do not always occur within the type of anarchic system that realists propose. Waltz (1979: 114–116) conceptualizes the structure of the international system in terms of a dichotomy between hierarchy and anarchy, and he emphasizes that it must be one or the other. For Waltz, the key element in anarchy is the absence of an authority capable of enforcing contracts between states (see also Milner 1991; Vasquez 1998: 201–202).

Waltz's idea of anarchy is very Hobbesian – a state of nature necessarily involving a war of all against all. This conceptualization underestimates the extent to which order can exist in the absence of global authority (see Alker 1996). Indeed, Bull (1977) and Wendt (1999) challenge this conceptualization. Bull, writing just before the publication of Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, demonstrates that order – which can be defined, at minimum, as rules by which states govern their relations – can exist theoretically and does exist empirically in the international arena. Rather than an anarchical state of nature, he sees an anarchical society complete with rules and norms. Wendt (1992) argues that anarchy is what states make of it. They can live within a Hobbesian culture or construct new cultures like a Kantian system of democracies.

Sometimes, neorealists fail to see the most basic constructs of the international system that make it far from a state of nature, like the system of sovereignty or the underlying capitalist economy (Vasquez 1998:

198–199). Bull (1977) sees sovereignty as shaping the relations of states, making them much more Grotian than Hobbesian. The most important principle of sovereignty is that "states accept one another's spheres of jurisdiction" (Bull 1977: 19). Campbell (1998:109) points out that a defining characteristic of the modern state system is capitalism, which is a construct quite different from other forms of political economy, like mercantilism.

However, even within systems of sovereignty and capitalism the level of order can vary. In the immediate period after the Napoleonic wars (1815–1853) we have a system of governance without government. At the Congress of Vienna the major states consciously came up with a set of rules of the game to manage their relations toward each other so they could govern the system as a whole in their collective interests.

In many ways, the earlier system was transformed into one of collective "rule" in which each of the major states attempted to govern collectively rather than just follow their particularistic interests (Schroeder 1994b: vii–xiv). This was a system of governance without creating a world government. In the two Eastern Crises discussed here the Concert was trying to deal with a problem of political change, which E. H. Carr (1939) sees as the fundamental problem in anarchy.

The construction of this system of global governance means that the system is not a self-help system for minor states. They can turn to major states for help. Nonetheless, at the same time major states seek to control them. Major states want to rule (see Lake 2009). This is what the major states do when Muhammad Ali declares independence from the sultan and plunges the Ottoman Empire into what we would today call a civil war.

2. The second lesson is that the **Concert can work** if the rules are followed, but it is hard. Each side pushed things to the limit. The issues were resolved, but armed forced against the minor states was used. France also threatened the other members of the Concert because it was not consulted in the decision to use force. However, it was not included because it was often stubborn and resisted the consensus. The bargaining strategy pursued within the Concert led to its breakdown and almost resulted in war.

3. The third lesson is that **it is easier to avoid war if there are no territorial issues**. The minor actors – the sultan and Muhammad Ali – had territorial disputes, and they went to war. For most of the crisis the major states did not have territorial disputes among themselves, and they did not go to war. Nonetheless, to avoid war all the major states had to agree that the Ottoman Empire should survive. Even with this, when Thiers threatened war he did so by putting a territorial issue on the

agenda – the Rhineland. This would undo the Congress of Vienna settlement on France's borders. Once the threat to war emerged, it appeared that the war would be highly contagious. A war between France and Prussia could have easily gotten out of hand and would have spread to all the Concert allies of Prussia, making France face the old grand coalition again. It was for this reason that Louis-Philippe stepped in and remained within the Concert and its territorial settlement.

4. **Lessons on Realism**. There are two lessons on realism that can be derived from this case. The first, which is critical of realist theory, is that the national interest often is not clear, as noted in the Theoretical Analysis section. For Morgenthau (1951), the national interest is seen as a law of international politics that is objective and universal (see also Morgenthau 1952). Realists think that *the national interest is a script that can be read by all and serves as a common guide to foreign policy*. However, this is not the case in the 1839–1841 Eastern Crisis. In England, there is a pretty severe disagreement over whether to side with Muhammad Ali and abandon the sultan, or support the sixteen-year-old sultan even though everything seems to be lost. These were incompatible goals. Palmerston was at odds with key members of the cabinet, like Russell and Clarendon, and had to even threaten to resign to get his way. The final policy was not made by a common consensus regarding how to read the national interest, but by Palmerston's insistence and dominance.

Disagreement over how to define the national interest was even sharper in France. Here, Thiers was outraged by his treatment in the Concert. He threatened war on his own, and he was prepared to scuttle the Concert of Europe and the Vienna settlement. Louis-Philippe saw things quite differently. He stepped in and restored the more traditional post-Napoleonic foreign policy. If the national interest is as objective as Morgenthau thinks, this sort of fundamental disagreement over what the national interest is should not happen.

The second lesson on realism is more supportive of it. This case illustrates how a sharp military intervention can nip things in the bud. The crisis facing the Ottoman Empire at the end of June and the beginning of July 1839 seemed hopeless. The army was defeated on June 24; the sultan died on June 30; and the navy defected on July 7. Nonetheless, precise and sharp military intervention completely turned things around died and was replaced by Alexander II in 1856.

5. **Someone must stand for peace**. This is the most important lesson from this case. To avoid war, there must be someone with the domestic authority and power to restrain hard-liners. As the tide for war mounted in the French decision-making elite, the legislature, and the press, someone had to step forward to stop it. If this did not happen,

the momentum for war would have become a war fever. Louis-Philippe knew that if he gave the speech that Thiers had written for him it would lead down a path to war from which it would be difficult to exit. Since war is frequently, but not necessarily always, contingent, individuals make a difference.

6. The final lesson is that **the role of domestic politics is often crucial**. In this case, domestic politics was the main reason war was avoided. Thiers was the main hard-liner, and if he had had his way war would have erupted. Louis-Philippe was the main accommodationist. He stood for peace and removed the hard-liner. That is what really avoided war, not the Concert. The role of the Concert was very indirect. Louis-Philippe chose to remain in the Concert because he believed that it was in France's interest and he knew France would lose a war against the Concert. Thus, even though this is a case where the Concert is involved and the crisis did not escalate to war, the reason it did not has more to do with domestic politics than with global governance.

3 The Crimean War

Historical Events

This crisis began when Louis Napoleon III, who first came to power in France in 1848, intervened in a low-level dispute between Roman Catholic and Orthodox clerics in the Holy Land. This was over control of certain holy sites, like those in Bethlehem. The Greek Orthodox clerics had excluded Catholic priests from the Church of the Nativity there, among other things, to which the Latin clergy objected strenuously (Mowat 1927: 95). Starting in 1850, Louis Napoleon (later Napoleon III) took up the cause of the Catholic priests; he supported the restoration of their rights, which had lapsed but were embodied in several treaties, the key one being in 1740 (Rich 1985: 21). In May 1852 he escalated the crisis dramatically by sending the warship *Charlemagne* through the straits – in violation of the 1841 Convention of the Straits, which prohibited warships from entering the straits when the sultan was at peace – to demand that the sultan grant the Latin clergy rights. He also offered the sultan backing if this led to problems with Russia (Rich 1985: 22; J. Richardson 1994: 71).

Although Napoleon III did not explicitly state his reasons for taking this action, some motives were clear. First, domestically, he wanted to gain more support from the clerical party. At a deeper and more long-term level, he wanted some major international victory that would challenge the Congress of Vienna settlement, especially against the Russian–Austrian coalition within the Concert of Europe, and loosen the straitjacket the Concert had placed on France. Indeed, the king, along with the French foreign minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, mentioned privately that this was the key motive, and the Holy Places dispute a means to this larger end (see Rich 1985: 20–21).[1]

The sending of the *Charlemagne*, by its very action, challenged the Concert directly. Sending a warship through the straits in times of peace

[1] Bridge and Bullen (2005: 132) maintain that this goal was an "*idée fixe*" throughout his reign and also affected his Italian policy in 1859.

was a violation of international law as well as a long-time norm. In addition, it was a unilateral act taken by France without first resorting to conference diplomacy or consulting with fellow Concert members. In a way, this could be seen as payback for France's isolation in the Second Eastern Crisis when Britain, Austria, and Russia decided to attack Muhammad Ali without consulting France (see Chapter 2). The beginning of this crisis was not unrelated to the previous crisis. Leng (1983) shows statistically that the loser in a previous crisis often initiates the next one, and Napoleon's actions in 1852 were consistent with that pattern.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the Bonaparte name and its legacy hung over Napoleon III. When he came to power there was a shudder throughout the major states of Europe. The former victors wondered what he would do as the nephew of the great usurper. Likewise, the French populace expected new glory, and Napoleon III no doubt felt under some personal ambition to live up to the name, although such psychological factors are difficult to discern. In addition, Tsar Nicholas I took umbrage at this nonroyal's proclaiming himself emperor and refused to address him as "brother" – something that on the personal level alienated and irritated Napoleon III (Bridge and Bullen 2005: 114; Figes 2010: 102–103).

Sending a warship through the straits and placing demands on the sultan constituted a direct challenge not only to Ottomans but also Tsar Nicholas I, since the Russians regarded the Ottoman Empire as within their sphere of influence. Historically, Russia had considered itself the protector of the Orthodox Church within the Ottoman Empire, although how much that extended to the entire Orthodox population and not just the Church later became a matter of contention (Rich 1985: 20). Within the empire there were hardly any Roman Catholics and most of these were the clerics in the Holy Land. Further, conceding to French demands implied that France was equal to Russia in the Ottoman Empire. Some historians have speculated that the sultan did not mind acceding to the demands since this undercut Russian influence (see Rich 1985: 22).

For reasons of status, the tsar had to respond to this French challenge and reassert both his rights over Orthodox Christians and the predominant influence of Russia within Ottoman affairs. He ignored France and the Concert and responded directly to the sultan. He decided to make demands that extended Russian rights to protect Orthodox Christians, parts of which he kept secret from Britain and France. The latter included pressure to accept a defensive alliance under which Russia would provide up to 400,000 troops and the fleet to defend the Porte (i.e., the

sultan and his collective government), in return to access to the straits (Seton-Watson 1937: 309). This would later be seen as a deception on the tsar's part and increase distrust of him (J. Richardson 1994: 72), leading many in the British and French governments to believe that the tsar really wanted to establish a protectorate.

Part of the problem was that the tsar at one point mused in front of the British ambassador Hamilton Seymour about what might happen if the Ottoman Empire collapsed, stating that Britain and the other Concert members should consider partitioning it (Figes 2010: 105–107). As James Richardson (1994: 72) notes, this talk about partition alarmed Seymour, as well as foreign secretary John Russell, but not Aberdeen, the prime minister, nor Clarendon, the new foreign secretary. Despite their alarming nature, these conversations did not reflect the immediate objectives of the tsar, who was not seeking partition or Constantinople at this time (J. Richardson 1994: 81; Figes 2010: 105).

The tsar took action against Turkey, beginning with a military and naval display in the Black Sea and then sent Menshikov with an ultimatum to the sultan. Menshikov arrived on the appropriately named warship *Thunderer*. He was not a diplomat but a military man, and he was sent to bring about a fait accompli before the other Concert states could react. He arrived in a bluster and refused to see the foreign minister, who was humiliated and resigned. While this was the kind of intimidation that was expected of him, in the end he took too long to accomplish his mission. He was supposed to give the sultan a five-day ultimatum, but he was delayed by the Turks.

The delay permitted Britain and France to send special ambassadors – Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe and Edmond de la Cour. Stratford, who was the cousin of George Canning,[2] had been ambassador at Constantinople for the previous twelve years and was now brought in for a special mission. As the crisis unfolded, he had the authority to bring up the British fleet from Malta if there was imminent danger, although Aberdeen had "misgivings" (Seton-Watson 1937: 309) about this unusual authority. Stratford was successful in delaying Menshikov further by convincing him to negotiate the minor issues regarding the dispute over the Holy Places before dealing with the larger issue of Russia's rights. The talks bogged down and Menshikov threatened to leave. When he presented the Porte with a five-day ultimatum, Stratford waited three days and told the sultan that "in case of danger he was instructed to request" the Fleet's commander to place the Fleet in the Mediterranean in a state of

[2] Foreign secretary 1822–1827 and briefly prime minister in 1827 before he died.

readiness. "This [according to Seton-Watson 1937: 310] had a magical effect, and the Russian demands were rejected."

Menshikov left at the end of May. The British cabinet saw this as a portentous sign and decided on May 31 to send the fleet to Besika Bay, just outside the straits. Palmerston[3] wanted to send it into the straits proper, but this proposal was rejected. On the same day, as anticipated, Russia increased the level of coercion on the Ottomans and now sent a formal ultimatum demanding recognition of its rights to protect the Orthodox Church and clergy (J. Richardson 1994: 71–72), with a deadline of one week. If the deadline was not met, then Russian troops would occupy Moldavia and Wallachia, as they had done on several occasions in the past. The sultan did not concede and rejected the demands on June 16. Russian troops moved in on July 2.

The failure of Menshikov and the subsequent ultimatum was another example, not only of the inefficacy of using coercion to produce compliance, but also of how coercion can increase hostility and escalate a crisis. This was in stark contrast to the sultan's compliance with Napoleon III's demands. Two reasons seem to explain this difference. The first was that it did not cost the sultan much to accept the French demands and, as some have speculated (see Rich 1985: 22), having France involved might have lessened Russian influence. The second was that the sultan knew he would get some support from the French and most likely Britain. The rejection was also popular within the Ottoman Empire. At any rate, rejecting the Russian ultimatum did not mean war right away, and there was still time to see what would unfold.

What unfolded, of course, was that the Concert intervened. Austria took the lead and crafted the Vienna Note, attempting to settle the dispute on an amicable basis and avoid war. It was accepted by all the major states on August 1, except for the tsar, who accepted it on August 5 (J. Richardson 1994: 75). This is a classic example of how the Concert was a form of global governance. There was a serious problem between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, in which France was involved. The Concert did not allow these three to deal with the question solely by themselves, nor did it permit the crisis to evolve on its own. It intervened in short order with key members of the Concert not just mediating but also drafting a solution to the crisis and the underlying question that gave rise to the crisis.

Stratford de Redcliffe was told to get the sultan to accept the Vienna Note. He followed the letter of the law, but actually made his opposition

[3] Palmerston was no longer foreign secretary, as in the Eastern Crisis, but was in the cabinet.

to the note clear. Schroeder (1972a: 60), one of the leading historians of this crisis, states:

> Encouraged by Redcliffe's private disapproval of the note, the Porte on August 19 demanded amendments to it … This demand for amendments … was tantamount to a rejection and blocked any settlement, while Redcliffe's attitude encouraged the Turks to expect more Western support.

The actual amendments were made after a meeting with the British and French ambassadors, with de la Cour helping to draw them up (Schmitt 1919: 63).

At the time, Clarendon, Aberdeen, and even Queen Victoria saw Stratford as a problem and blamed him for the sultan's nonacceptance of the Vienna Note (see Seton-Watson 1937: 318). Schmitt (1919: 63) rejects this view of Stratford as the main factor bringing about the rejection of the note, as more recently does Figes (2010: 126), who says that Stratford's influence was on the wane and war was in the air in Constantinople, with demonstrations calling for a "holy war." Likewise, Temperly (1936 [1969: 55]) says nationalism was so aroused that "[e]ven without Stratford, the 'Vienna Note' would probably have been rejected." Nonetheless, Figes (2010: 112–113) admits that earlier Stratford had "urged" the sultan's grand vizier to stand firm against Menshikov, "assuring him (on his own authority) that the British fleet would back him if need be," which is consistent with Schroeder's and Seton-Watson's view of Stratford emboldening the Porte. Why Stratford acted as he did is not entirely clear (see also Peterson 1996: 80). Some (see J. Richardson 1994: 75) think it might have been a matter of personal piqué. He had his own plan and he believed he was not sufficiently consulted. In the end, Turkey suggested amendments on August 20, in which de la Cour played a part (Schmitt 1919: 63).

The tsar was ready to accept some discussion of amendments, which is an indicator of his desire to avoid war. However, Nesselrode, his chancellor, got the tsar to reject this tack because of honor. The Ottoman Empire was not a major state and not in the Concert. It had no right to make amendments given its lower status. Further, the Ottoman Empire was supposed to be within the sphere of influence of Russia, which was at issue in the crisis. From Nesselrode's point of view, the tsar could not be seen as agreeing to Turkey's intervention.

Not to be outdone, the Austrians made the amendments the sultan wanted in the Olmütz proposals, which permitted the tsar to accept them in a meeting with Austria in the Olmütz Mountains. This provided a face-saving solution for the tsar and Nesselrode, whereby the substance of the amendments was accepted without Turkey making them. France

also said it would accept the Austrian proposals. The essence of the agreement seemed reasonable. As quoted by James Richardson (1994: 77), the proposals stated:

> The powers would assure Turkey that the Tsar 'demands nothing contrary to the independence and the rights of the Sultan, nothing which implies an intention to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire', but only 'the strict maintenance of the religious *status quo*', and equality of rights between the Orthodox and other Christian subjects of the Porte.

Clarendon, the British foreign secretary, rejected the Olmütz proposals, however, saying it could make Britain's position "false and embarrassing" if Turkey rejected them after Britain supported them.[4] This, in part, had to do with the "violent interpretation" of the Vienna Note, whereby some claimed that Nesselrode understood the note as stating that the Porte should be attentive to Russia's concerns about the Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire (J. Richardson 1994: 76). Clarendon understood the "violent interpretation" of the note as a Russian attempt at a protectorate (Rich 1985: 81). Temperley (1936 [1969: 60] points out, however, that the tsar, along with Nesselrode, rejected any violent interpretations in the meeting at Olmütz with Franz Josef, emperor of Austria. In the end, Clarendon can be seen as playing a large part in the process that led to war because he was the last person who could have avoided the war. All the major states had accepted the Vienna Note. Turkey wanted amendments and these had been made by Austria and incorporated in the Olmütz proposals, which the Tsar accepted. That should have settled the issue; instead, Clarendon rejected this solution even though it was closer to Turkey's position than the Vienna Note, which he had accepted before. With his rejection, the Concert's efforts collapsed.

The Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia on October 4, 1853, crossed the Danube, and attacked the Russians in the occupied principalities. Since Turkey was a minor state and considerably weaker than Russia, theoretically such a war would not be expected. As Bueno de Mesquita (1981: 72) argues, states do not normally initiate war unless they believe they will win. The anomaly can be explained away by the presence of alliances (Bueno de Mesquita 1981: 143–145), which enhance the weaker state's capability. In fact, Turkey was emboldened because it anticipated support from both Britain and France. It did not expect to fight alone (or at least without external support) and therefore

[4] He may have done this because he was worried about Stratford, his own ambassador. For a detailed analysis of all the factors that affected Clarendon's decision, see Schroeder (1972a: 78–80, cited in J. Richardson 1994: 77).

it did not expect to lose.[5] Nonetheless, on November 30, 1853, Russia destroyed a good part of the Turkish fleet at Sinope. Now there was huge pressure for Britain and France to intervene.

France called for war. In Britain, the press called for war. When the British cabinet did not take sufficiently strong action in response to Sinope, Palmerston resigned in protest (Rich 1985: 97–98; J. Richardson 1994: 79; Figes 2010: 146). Just before Christmas (December 19–22) France and Britain demanded that Russia's fleet return to Sevastopol. Russia was still willing to find a way to avoid war with Britain and France – especially since it had sunk the Turkish fleet – and asked if the demand to return to port also applied to Turkey. Clarendon rejected the Russian request for equal treatment of the fleets.[6] Napoleon III now proposed that France and Britain would withdraw from the Black Sea if Russia withdrew from the principalities. Tsar Nicholas rejected this proposal but did not declare war (see J. Richardson 1994: 80 for details).

Almost six months after the Ottoman Empire had declared war, Britain and France declared war on Russia on March 27–28, 1854. Throughout, the allies put pressure on Austria to join them in opposing Russia and then declaring war. Instead, Austria remained steadfast in not entering the war. Nonetheless, on June 3 it sent an ultimatum demanding that Russia evacuate the principalities and proposing that it would replace Russia's troops with its own (Langer 1980: 773; Smoke 1991: 52). The tsar, wanting to avoid war with Austria, complied, but the ultimatum greatly soured relations. Russia never forgave Austria for this action.

Up to this point there had been no full-scale fighting between the allies and Russia despite the legal state of war. The allies knew their naval power was greater than that of Russia in the Black Sea, so they hoped for a quick victory by sending an expeditionary force to Crimea and laid siege to Sevastopol.[7] The expeditionary force, however, got bogged down in an interminable stalemate for a year with heavy causalities. Once they landed, the allied force could not be withdrawn without the entire operation being seen as a defeat, which the public and leaders would not tolerate. So instead, they fought on from September 14, 1854, until September 11, 1855, when the Russians abandoned the fortress at Sevastopol.

[5] On findings that alliances can embolden weaker states, see Kang (2012, 2017).

[6] Smoke (1991: 51) sees this as a lost opportunity to control the crisis (and, one might add, to renew the peace process). Instead, the rejection deepened the British and French commitment to Turkey.

[7] Smoke (1991: 54–55; see also his earlier 1977) makes an important point that after the allies declare war in March 1854 there are important events involving the creation of the expeditionary force that further escalate the war beyond what the parties intended.

Text Box 3.1 Nutshell Summary: Crimean War

1. Napoleon III sends a warship to Constantinople in May 1852 to demand that France be recognized as the protector of Roman Catholics in the Ottoman Empire.
2. Russia is insulted and demands that the sultan recognize its traditional rights as protector of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire.
3. The Concert intervenes in response to Russia's demands with the Vienna Note, which is accepted by all the major states.
4. Despite being told to get the sultan to accept the Vienna Note, Stratford, the British ambassador, makes his opposition to it known and leads the Porte to expect British support if they resist Russia. The sultan seeks to make amendments to the note.
5. Austria incorporates Turkey's amendments into the Olmütz proposals that are accepted by all the major states except Clarendon, Britain's foreign secretary, who feared that the sultan may reject them and make Britain's position "false and embarrassing." Clarendon is the last person in a position to avoid war.
6. The Ottoman Empire declares war on Russia in October 1853, feeling enabled by Britain and France. Britain and France declare war on Russia approximately six months later.

Also in January 1855, Piedmont sent troops to Crimea at Britain's request to curry favor for its Italian ambitions. Austria never entered the war; toward the end of 1855 and early 1856, after the fall of Sevastopol, it came close to threatening to enter in order to get Russia to sue for peace. It gave Tsar Alexander II an ultimatum to accept the allies' peace terms; otherwise, it would break off relations in six days (Figes 2010: 407–408; see Schroeder 1972a: ch. XIII for details).[8] This led to negotiations to end the war on the allies' terms.

Text Box 3.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

The key variable in bringing about war is the *domestic political situation*, particularly the role *hard-liners* play in Britain (see Table 3.1). Palmerston in London and Stratford on the ground in Constantinople not only subvert the *accommodationist* Aberdeen from avoiding war, but also overturn

[8] Figes (2010: 407) argues that "Alexander feared the prospect of a war with Austria more than anything else." The Austrian ultimatum also came at a time when there was concern that if there were no negotiations and the war dragged on, Sweden and Prussia might enter (Schroeder 1972a: 330–332; Figes 2010: 408).

Table 3.1 *Variable summary for the Crimean War: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Major	X	
Alliances	Major	X	
Rivalry	Moderate	X	
Democracy	Moderate	X	
Previous history	Moderate	X	
System structure	Moderate		X
Nature of Issue	Minor	X	
Bargaining strategy	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Arms races	None		
Proximity	None		
Relative capabilities	None		
Norms	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

the peaceful proposal of the Concert of Europe that should have resolved the crisis, making this an unnecessary war. Both Palmerston and Stratford act in terms of what they see as Britain's national interest, but they are also motivated by a clear *hostility* toward Russia.

Once again, the domestic political situation is more important than *system structure*. In the Eastern Crisis (see Chapter 2), we saw how domestic politics avoided war; here, however, we see how domestic politics works to bring about war. Nonetheless, it needs to be emphasized that the Concert of Europe system does work to create *peaceful proposals* that are accepted (in the Vienna Note) and in this way the system structure plays a moderate role. The proposals should have worked, but were undermined by the hard-liners in Britain – first Stratford, then Palmerston, and finally Clarendon. Because the *issue* that gives rise to the crisis in the first place – namely, the dispute over the rights of the clergy in the Holy Land – is able to be resolved, it plays only a minor role in the onset of the war. Likewise, the *bargaining* over it plays only a minor role.

Also as in the Eastern Crisis, *democracy* ends up working in the opposite direction to that expected by the institutionalist explanation of the democratic peace. Democracy in Britain creates openings to undermine the accommodationist prime minister and has a moderate impact in making the crisis escalate to war. Parliament and particularly the press are forces advocating war. The Crimean War is more of an anomaly for the democratic peace because Britain is more democratic in 1853 than

France was in 1839–1841 and the press and public play more of a role in this crisis than they did in France in the Eastern Crisis.

A second key variable that has a major impact on crisis escalation is the *alliance* of a major state with a minor state that is facing a long-term rival. Even though this is only an alignment and not a formal alliance, the prospect of it, held out by the hard-liner Stratford, encourages the sultan to resist the Tsar's demands and eventually use a war to seize an opportunity to reverse some of the long-term losses Turkey has suffered in previous wars with Russia. In this way, alignment can also be seen as a way of dragging a major state into a war as well as emboldening a minor ally.

Rivalry and *previous history* are also key variables in bringing about war and have a moderate impact. The war would not have likely occurred if the main belligerents were not long-term rivals. Britain and Russia are rivals despite their alliance to defeat Napoleon, as are Russia and France. Additionally, the long-term rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and Russia is a key to the crisis escalating. Interestingly, the sense of rivalry varies among the decision-makers. The Anglo-Russian rivalry is very important to Palmerston, but Aberdeen thinks the problem in their relationship and the crisis could be worked out. Likewise, Napoleon III initiates the crisis, but once his initial demands against the sultan are satisfied, he is happy to settle. Palmerston is not, and uses the crisis to try to fight a war that will weaken Russia.

Previous history plays a role in all of this. This is especially true of the series of losses the Ottoman Empire suffered at the hands of Russia going back to Peter the Great, which generated considerable *hostility* on the part of the Porte. This hostility, however, is not any different from that present in other crises that do not go to war, so it plays only a minor role. Rivalry is always an indicator of the role of previous history, but only an explicit examination of that previous history will indicate what it is in the previous history that is of causal significance. In the case of the Ottoman Empire–Russia, it is the history of defeats, but this history motivates war only because there is now an opportunity for the Porte to have outside support. In the case of the Anglo-Russian rivalry, it is Palmerston's perception of the ongoing power struggle; and in the case of France, it is Napoleon III wanting to overcome France's defeat of 1815.

Arms races do not play any role in the onset of the war, although once the war starts the quantitative data (Sample 1997) show mutual military buildups (for the Horn and Diehl measures; see Horn 1987 and Diehl 1983) between Britain and France versus Russia in 1854 and 1855. These carry over to 1856.

Proximity in terms of distance does not play a role in that it does not inhibit Britain and France from attacking Russia in Crimea. This is

because they have sufficient naval strength and reach. Nonetheless, the relative capabilities of the major states are not that different and do not inhibit any decision for war. At the same time, there is no wishful thinking or significant overconfidence in the deliberations of decision-makers. *Norms* also do not play any role.

Theoretical Analysis

The crucial question is: Why war? Related to this question is: Who brought war about? Who could have prevented it? Were there missed opportunities? A handful of individuals, mostly in Britain, brought about the war. A key individual was Stratford de Redcliffe, the British ambassador to the Porte. He had some clout because he knew the Ottoman Empire and possessed a certain amount of influence as the cousin of George Canning.

Stratford played an essential role in bringing about war because he did not encourage the sultan to accept the Vienna Note, and in fact, along with de la Cour, undermined it. Stratford was widely seen as instrumental in the rejection of the Vienna Note, even though it was initially accepted by all the Concert states. James Richardson (1994: 75), however, thinks the strength of hard-liners in Constantinople as a result of the occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia was key in the sultan's not wanting the Vienna Note. Afterward, Aberdeen blamed Stratford (J. Richardson 1994: 76). Queen Victoria complained about Stratford, and Clarendon knew he was a problem (Rich 1985: 91–92). His presence and role at the Porte may have played a part in Clarendon's rejection of the Olmütz proposals as "false and embarrassing."

Stratford was instrumental in undercutting the peace proposals on the ground in Constantinople, but the major hard-liner who actively wanted war and had political power in the cabinet, parliament, and the press was Palmerston. Although at the time home secretary in the cabinet, he had a say in foreign affairs because he was formerly foreign secretary in 1830–1834, 1835–1841 during the Eastern Crisis, and 1846–1851. Unlike Stratford, he had his own political base and had substantial political influence. He opposed Russia on geopolitical grounds, and he took a realist power politics position. He argued that, "if we do not stop the Russians on the Danube, we shall have to stop them on the Indus" (J. Richardson 1994: 83; Peterson 1996: 84).[9] He saw Russia as a long-term rival, and he believed war with Russia was useful and good. A few days before the cabinet decided for war, he sent a memorandum describing

[9] See also Peterson (1996: 55–56) for an extended quote by Palmerston complaining about British conciliation in foreign policy.

what he called his "beau ideal" of the kind of war Britain should pursue against Russia:

> Aaland and Finland restored to Sweden. Some of the German provinces of Russia on the Baltic ceded to Prussia. A substantive Kingdom of Poland re-established as a barrier between Germany and Russia. Wallachia and Moldavia and the mouth of the Danube given to Austria. Lombardy and Venice set free from Austrian rule and either made independent States or incorporated with Piedmont. The Crimea, Circassia and Georgia wrested from Russia, the Crimea and Georgia given to Turkey, and Circassia either independent or connected with the Sultan as Suzerain. Such results it is true could be accomplished only by a combination of Sweden, Prussia and Austria, with England, France, and Turkey, and such results presuppose great defeats of Russia. But such results are not impossible and should not be wholly discarded from our thoughts. (quoted in Rich 1992: 113; see also Figes 2010: 327)[10]

To this list of hard-liners Clarendon, the foreign secretary, must be added, since he was the last person who could have avoided war. He had previously accepted the Vienna Note but later made an about-face. Stratford's actions in Turkey undoubtedly played a role in Clarendon's reversal. So, too, did the war atmosphere in Constantinople and, more importantly, within London itself. Nonetheless, he decided not to follow Aberdeen, his prime minster and resist this war fever. He could have done more. He could have done more by having Stratford removed, and he could have stood fast with Aberdeen, but he chose not to.

These three hard-liners took positions contrary to that of Aberdeen, the prime minister of this somewhat fragile coalitional government. His position was more moderate on Russia and he was against war. He believed that Russia was willing to abide by the Concert. He had only moderate aims vis-à-vis Russia, unlike Palmerston's very ambitious aims. He believed simply that Britain should have good relations with Russia and avoid "overreaction in minor conflicts" (J. Richardson 1994: 83; see also Peterson 1996: 54–55). Further, he thought it a grave mistake to "take up arms for the Turks" (Figes 2010: 122). Some critics, however, like Temperley (1969 [1936]: 60), argue that Aberdeen's accommodation and "methods proved so unfortunate" because the tsar thought Aberdeen would "induce the British cabinet … to acquiesce." In this way he led the tsar to misperceive what would unfold.[11]

[10] Once he became prime minister in 1855, Palmerston tried to pursue these goals but was unsuccessful in getting the necessary external and internal support (see Figes 2010: 325, 400–402). Even so, his aims probably delayed the end of the war. For a positive assessment of Palmerston's role, see the two-volume study by H. C. F. Bell (1936).

[11] The problem with this view, which is still popular in certain quarters, is that it does not account for the tsar's willingness to avoid war and accept both the Vienna Note and the Olmütz proposals.

In addition to the hard-liners in Britain, the Ottoman Empire played a key role in bringing about war. Given the prospect of support from Britain that Stratford posed, this was an opportunity for the sultan to resist the tsar and perhaps attenuate some of Russia's overbearing influence. As the prospect of war grew, the support of Stratford, coupled with the earlier support of Napoleon III, as well as the ongoing support of de la Cour, emboldened the Porte. After a long line of defeats in Russo-Turkish wars, now there was a chance to recoup (see also Smoke 1991: 52), although precisely what was unclear. Needless to say, any chance of victory for Turkey in this long rivalry, during which it had been periodically defeated, gave Turkey and the sultan a vested interest in having a war. Thus, they followed Stratford's advice. Even without Clarendon's rejection of the Olmütz proposals, the Porte might have rejected them, since there was rioting in the streets after they were made. What the Turks did to bring about war, however, was to not entertain accepting any of the peace proposals that came out of the Concert, but this of course was because they were never really pressed to do so.

Why, then, did Britain end up going to war given that Aberdeen was prime minister? A quote from a letter in which he confided in Gladstone provides some insight. He wrote:

> The Turks with all their barbarism are cunning enough and see clearly the advantages of their situation. Step by step they have drawn us into a position in which we are more or less committed to their support. (Rich 1985: 91; Rich 1992: 111–112)[12]

Although Aberdeen attributed this manipulation to the Turks, it was his own hard-liners who were doing the same thing – successfully manipulating him and the country into war. Figes (2010: 160) comments that as Britain was about to go to war on October 26, Aberdeen told the queen that he had been "dragged into war" by Palmerston. In the end, Britain was caught in an elite-press-pro-hard-line trap that made it unable to pressure a minor state that needed an outside major state to intervene to win a war, causing it (i) to miss opportunities for peace (e.g., the Olmütz proposals) and (ii) to take military moves that escalated actions and made it more difficult for a face-saving solution.

These interactions also make it clear that the hard-liners were able to use democracy to undercut the accommodationist prime minister. In the end, the democratic institutions of Britain, especially Parliament and the press, worked to promote war and not peace, which is contrary to the institutionalist explanation of the democratic peace.

[12] For more details and the reference to Gladstone, see Stanmore (1893: 232).

War also came about because the Concert broke down. Ultimately, it was unable to resolve the dispute between Napoleon III and Russia, then Britain and Russia. The Ottoman Empire was caught in the middle of these disputes but used them to its advantage in its long-term rivalry with Russia. The external support served to embolden it when its material capability should have made it more prudent.[13]

The breakdown of the Concert began with Napoleon III deliberately challenging it. He did not bring his concerns about the Latin clergy and the related dispute with the Orthodox clergy to the Concert, which he could have easily done by calling for a conference. Instead, he deliberately acted unilaterally. He did not feel bound by Concert norms, and he moved a warship through the straits in violation of international law (i.e., the 1841 convention).

Austria, however, tried to make the Concert work and in the beginning it did. Hard-liners in Britain undercut Austria and the Concert. Austria pushed for a Concert solution, and the tsar was willing to have a Concert solution. Nesselrode's opposition to the tsar accepting amendments from the sultan should not be seen as a hard-line opposition to the peace process, but as advice meant to keep the tsar from committing a diplomatic indiscretion. At any rate, Austrian diplomacy was able to circumvent this question of honor in the Olmütz proposals. Even Napoleon III was willing to accept the Olmütz proposals and did. Once he got his victory, there was no need for war, and he was willing to go along with a Concert solution. However, he would not oppose Britain and stayed at its side even as the British moved along a path of escalation. Getting Britain to align with him was too dear a goal: once he achieved it, he was not going to jeopardize it by dragging his feet. This of course was ironic in terms of the role of alignments in this crisis. The British alignment with France brought Britain into the crisis, but once Napoleon III won he had no need for further pressure on Russia;[14] ultimately, it was France's alignment with Britain that brought it to war with Russia and not the events in the last part of the crisis.

What is important to keep in mind is that this war could have been avoided. It could have been avoided if Stratford had not undermined

[13] It must be confessed, however, that whether such power imbalances and realist assessment would have carried the day and made the Porte more prudent is uncertain. Domestic pressure, as well as the previous history of entering wars where they were inferior, does not make one optimistic. In the 1828–1829 Russo-Turkish War, for instance, the sultan insisted on certain demands that made war more likely despite the power differential. In part, he did this because of the empire's own honor, but also because of domestic discontent.

[14] Schroeder (1994b: 23) states that he even grew tired of the issue and that by 1853 Drouyn only wanted to save face.

the Vienna Note, if the sultan had not capitalized on the prospect that Britain and France might support him in a war against its long-term Russian rival, and if Clarendon had accepted the Olmütz proposals.

What was needed to avoid war was for either the Vienna Note or the Olmütz proposals to be accepted. If the Ottoman Empire was the main obstacle to this – as it turned out in the end – then to avoid war the sultan had to be persuaded to accept one of these solutions or a variation of them. Failing that, Turkey would have to be pressured to accept it. The most likely country to do that was Britain, but it was Britain's representative that had undercut the peace process, and it was the prospect of British support in a war with Russia that enabled Turkey to resist Russia. Various pieces of evidence suggest that the tsar wanted to avoid war – for instance, his willingness to even accept amendments to the Vienna Note.

For Britain to pressure the minor state, it was essential that Aberdeen, the only committed accommodationist in the British decision-making group, rein in his hard-liners who were disrupting the peace process. This had to begin with Stratford, whom Aberdeen, Queen Victoria, and Clarendon recognized as problematic. Aberdeen needed an ambassador who was willing and able to pressure the sultan, and this entailed a loyal ambassador committed to peace. Had this been the case, then it was likely that Clarendon, who had initially supported the Vienna Note, would have not seen accepting the Olmütz proposals as putting Britain in a false and embarrassing situation. However, it was not just his ambassador, but powerful figures within his own coalition, that stymied Aberdeen. Just after the October 4 declaration of war, Aberdeen moved to exert the needed pressure on the sultan by proposing a note be sent informing the sultan that the British would not "permit themselves … to be drawn into a policy inconsistent with the peace of Europe" (Schmitt 1919: 58; Seton-Watson 1937: 319). If the sultan refused, he would be left to his own fate. Lord John Russell objected to the harshness of these terms and Aberdeen was prepared to compromise out of fear that if Russell resigned the cabinet would fall, leaving Palmerston and/or Russell to form a new government. Before he and Russell could reach an agreement Sinope occurred (Schmitt 1919: 58–59).

The path to war in this case involved a minor state drawing major states into its own war – that is, Turkey drew in Britain and France because of the connivance of a British hard-liner on the ground and the presence of influential hard-liners in London. Napoleon III in turn followed Britain's lead because he did not want to break the alignment he had carved out with liberal Britain. To avoid war, this path to war had to be blocked.

To do so, in addition to gaining control of his foreign ministry, Aberdeen needed to stand up to Palmerston and his hard-line supporters in Parliament. To a certain extent he did, in that he resisted Palmerston's attempt to intimidate him by resigning after the sinking of the Turkish fleet at Sinope. Ultimately, he was manipulated into going to war by the war hysteria that swept the press and Parliament, with the latter being influenced, in part, by Palmerston's hard-line stance. The obvious strategy that could have avoided war was to pressure the minor state that had a vested interest in going to war. Aberdeen needed to take certain actions within the government so his accommodationist strategy could be implemented. The fragile coalition he oversaw was one of the main reasons he did not pursue this strategy.

The war was fought primarily on the Crimean peninsula, although the British and French navies bombarded Russian naval bases in the Baltic (Figes 2010: 338). In Crimea, the French supplied the most troops with 200,000, compared to 50,000 for the British (Bridge and Bullen 2005: 121). In 1855, after heavy casualties, the British asked Piedmont for assistance to help ease the burden, which they did by sending 15,000 troops. They did this in the hope that it would help them get support for liberating Lombardy and Venezia, a proposition that Palmerston had already suggested in his "beau ideal."

The Crimean War was one of the earliest wars that had press coverage, and it saw the invention of the war correspondent, with William Russell of *The Times* being the most famous. It also saw, largely because of the efforts of Florence Nightingale, the installation of field hospitals to treat the wounded. Before her reforms British soldiers were transported by sea to Scutari under poor conditions, with many dying before they arrived (see Figes 2010: 294).

British press coverage also uncovered battlefield blunders; the most famous depiction appears in Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade":

> Not though the solder knew
> Someone had blundered.
> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die.

Published in December 1854, this poem, along with other battlefield events, stirred up further hard-line sentiment; shortly after, in January 1855, the Aberdeen government fell, to be replaced by one headed by Palmerston. Charges of mismanagement of the war and a lack of adequate supplies for troops, including warm clothing were critical in the fall of the government.

With Palmerston at the helm the war dragged on because he wanted some territorial loss imposed on Russia that would achieve at least a small part of his "beau ideal" (Schroeder 1972a: 321–322). The cabinet resisted this tack, but a turn toward negotiations came only after the French seized Sevastopol in September 1855. Peace probes then began (Schroeder 1972a: 311). Negotiations got nowhere until Nicolas I died and was replaced by Alexander II 1856. The latter was less committed to the war, and the front was not going well. In addition, the Austrian ultimatum to accept peace terms and the threat to break off relations and perhaps enter the war helped bring him to the table (see Schroeder 1972a: 313; Bridge and Bullen 2005: 123). Austria had already moved away from Russia's side after having tried to avoid the war and eventually replaced Russia's troops in Moldavia and Wallachia upon the request of the Ottoman Empire. All these factors helped bring the war to an end with the Treaty of Paris signed on March 30, 1856. Palmerston never got his larger war, but Russia was clearly defeated and humiliated.

The outcome of the war resulted in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia being put under the protection of the Concert in order to prevent any future occupation by Russia. More significantly, Christian subjects were now put under the protection of the Concert (and not the tsar). Likewise, and pointedly, no single state was permitted to interfere with the sultan. This was now a Concert responsibility. Added to all this, Russian warships were excluded from the Black Sea, which was a major humiliation.

Lastly, and a great insult to Russia, the Ottoman Empire was invited to join the Concert. The minor state, which could not make amendments, was granted equal status to the major states and became part of the global governance system. Altogether, this was a huge defeat for Russia, but it would come back.

Lessons of the Crimean War

1. The major lesson of this case is that **the Crimean War was an unnecessary war**. It was a war that could have been peacefully resolved. It did not need to be fought.

To make this more than a purely moral or normative claim that the goals of the war were not worth the costs in lives, one must have a precise empirical criterion for defining what is an unnecessary war. *An unnecessary war is defined here as a war that could have been avoided by a peace proposal that satisfied all the major states that went to war.* Put another way, the interests of the main parties (or, more precisely, their issue positions

on the key questions in dispute) are such that an agreement should have been made without going to war.[15]

In the Crimean case, not only *could* such a proposal be made but two actually were made, one of which was accepted by all the major states. The first was the Vienna Note, proposed by Austria and accepted formally by all the members of the Concert of Europe. This should have settled the matter, but the British ambassador to the Porte, Stratford, went against the spirit of his orders, making it clear to the Porte that he personally disapproved of the settlement. The sultan then proposed amendments. The Austrians responded with the Olmütz proposals, which was the Vienna Note plus the amendments the sultan wanted. In principle, this should have been accepted by all. Both proposals satisfied all the interests of all the major states, and the Olmütz proposals satisfied most of the sultan's objections; thus, war should have been avoided. War was not necessary given the stated positions of the parties. This is one of the major cases in history of an unnecessary war, as several scholars note (see Albrecht-Carrie 1958: 85; Rich 1985; see also J. Richardson 1994: 103; Kissinger 1994: 92; and Smoke 1991: 36, who calls it an inadvertent war).[16]

2. If war was unnecessary, why did it occur? How do unnecessary wars come about? What does this tell us about the causes of war?

War was not avoided for two reasons. First, it was not in the interest of the minor state to avoid it once it had the prospect of allies. Second, it was not avoided because it was not in the interest of certain individuals within a powerful major state that wanted war for their own political reasons that were not shared by the official government. The combination resulted in the scuttling of the two peace proposals. The key lesson here is that **bureaucratic/domestic policy influencers can bring about war against the wishes of their leaders, and minor states can bring about war against the desires of their major-state allies**.

[15] We apply some additional criteria to make the definition more operational. When we say major states, we mean the official decision-makers who can legally commit the state must be satisfied, not their internal opponents or lessor officials. Also, not all major states involved in the crisis need to be satisfied, but all those who actually went to war need to be satisfied for it to be an unnecessary war. We determine that actors are satisfied if they formally accept a peace proposal, as in the Vienna Note, or absent that most reasonable observers would see a proposal as having satisfied their interests. We also add that if one side gains all its initial demands (i.e., it wins), as France does in the prewar period of the Franco-Prussian War, and then goes to war anyway, we see this as an unnecessary war because all its initial demands were satisfied and war was unnecessary in that sense. Of course, war occurs in the Franco-Prussian case because new demands are made (see the discussion in the second lesson in Chapter 5).

[16] For an alternate view, see Goldfrank (1994).

The two domestic policy influencers who helped bring about war were Stratford and Palmerston in Britain. Both were hard-liners who undercut Aberdeen, the prime minister and main accommodationist. Stratford went against his government's explicit instructions to get the sultan to accept the Vienna Note, and he systematically undercut the position of his government, signaling to the sultan, without any approval, that Britain would stand behind Turkey if it came to war. This proved to be a singular opportunity for the sultan. Now, with Britain and France at his back, he could unexpectedly free himself from the Russian bear's hug.

Palmerston's actions helped inflame the press, which rattled for war and saw this as a moral cause. A secondary lesson here is that **hard-liners look for moral causes to do what they think is in the national interest of their country**. The primary lesson, however, is that Palmerston and Stratford, working independently, manipulated Aberdeen and the country into a war that could have been easily avoided. Their actions causing England to eventually go to war were not so much the result of misperception as the result of their hard-line framing of issues that subsequently shaped events and the press's reaction to them, which created a war fever.[17]

3. **Weak leaders cannot take the tough actions needed to avoid war**. The sultan was too weak to accept the Vienna Note outright (J. Richardson 1994: 75). Riots calling for war prevented him from accepting this deal. Pressure for war also prevented Aberdeen from obtaining peace. However, he was undercut by his own cabinet, first by Palmerston and then Clarendon, not to mention Stratford. If three men were responsible for Britain going to war, it was Palmerston, Clarendon, and Stratford. Aberdeen can be considered a weak leader because he did not rein in these hard-liners, but that was in part because he was the head of a coalition government.

4. Also critical in bringing about the war in Britain was the press and the clamor within the public. It was to these that Palmerston appealed and Clarendon bowed. As with the Eastern Crisis of 1839–1841, **this is another anomaly for the monadic institutionalist democratic peace**. The public and the legislature did not seek to avoid war or restrain the prime minister; rather, the accommodationist prime minister was unable to restrain the press, the public, and Parliament that loomed behind them. Seton-Watson (1937: 325), writing long before the contemporary theory of the democratic peace, recognized this when he said: "If ever a war was made by an ill-informed but ardent public

[17] See Gochal and Levy (2004) for an analysis that argues this war was not the result of misperception.

opinion, against the better judgment of a divided Government, it was the Crimean War. It is the classic disproof of the view that peoples are always pacific and only the statesmen or financiers warlike."

5. **Alliances and alignments encouraged war, rather than preventing it**. One of the great ironies of this case is that France's alignment with Britain within the Concert of Europe brought Britain into the crisis. As the crisis evolved, France was ready to settle, but went to war because of its alignment with Britain. If there had been no alignment, war might have been avoided. More importantly, the prospect (posed by Stratford) that Britain and France would align and back up the Ottoman Empire in a war **enabled** the sultan to go to war. The alignment of a minor state working with hard-liners (behind the scenes) pushed Britain to war. The failure to pressure Turkey makes Morgenthau (1960: 565–566) view the Crimean War as a "classic example" of a violation of his dictum to "never allow a weak ally to make decisions for you." An important lesson of this case that is relevant to others is that **war could have been avoided by pressuring the minor state to accept the peace proposal accepted by the major states**.

6. Lastly, this case provides a warning for peacemakers: **Hard-liners often strategize against accommodationists. When their domestic opponents disagree with a hard-line action, they encourage the accommodationists to go along with a future hard-line policy, which takes effect if certain events occur or if a specific accommodationist strategy does not work**. For example, after the Turkish declaration of war, Palmerston and Russell, at the October 7–8 meeting, recommended sending the fleet to the Black Sea. When Aberdeen and the others opposed, the cabinet agreed to send the fleet if Russia attacked Turkey (J. Richardson 1994: 77). When they did, the fleet was moved. Later, in Japan in 1941, Tojo took the same tack with Japanese accommodationists who did not want to go to war with the United States in 1941. He permitted one more chance for negotiations, on the condition that they would support war if the negotiations failed.

4 The Italian War of Independence 1859–1860

In the mid nineteenth century, Italian revolutionaries and nationalists attempted to unify Italy through armed force. It would take four wars before most of the boot would be united – 1848, 1859–1860, 1866, and 1870. Starting in 1848, Italian revolutionaries and nationalists – under the direction of a small cadre of determined, skillful leaders – led this effort. In this sense, one might say that Italian nationalism emerged from a top-down, rather than bottom-up, process.

This chapter focuses primarily on the 1859–1860 war, or the Second War of Independence. Although we treat the other wars briefly, the 1859–1860 war created a distinct interstate crisis that fundamentally reshaped both Italy and Europe. The 1848 war sparked the consciousness, organization, mobilization, and movement necessary for the events of 1859–1860, but failed to make any gains toward unification. The later wars consolidated the peninsula under the nascent Italian state, first in Venetia (1866) and then in Rome (1870). Between these wars sits the 1859–1860 war, which signaled the emergence of an Italian state and first unified the discrete states that previously populated the Italian peninsula.

Background

The 1848 war started with several, distinct Italian revolutions, which occurred simultaneously with a larger set of revolutions sweeping through Europe that year. The first revolution began in January in Sicily. Then in February a revolution took place in France that toppled Louis-Philippe and brought Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, the nephew of Napoleon I, to power in Paris. In March there was a revolution in Vienna that led Metternich, the chancellor and real ruler, to flee. With that, Emperor Ferdinand I was convinced by his Habsburg family to abdicate in favor of his more capable nephew, Franz Josef, even though the latter was only eighteen. After the fall of Metternich, there were uprisings in Austrian-controlled northern Italy. In Milan, the capital of Lombardy, there were five days of revolts that precipitated the retreat of Austrian

troops under General Radetzky. At the same time Venice, led by Daniel Manin, revolted against Austria, and Rome against the Pope.[1] In Rome, the two most famous nationalists of the time – Mazzini, the philosopher and intellectual genesis of the movement, and Garibaldi, the armed leader – declared a Roman Republic. Their motto was "L'Italia fara da se" – Italy will do it herself (i.e., that the people will do it alone and without outside help). Mazzini and Garibaldi were democrats who wanted a republic, not a monarchy. Both they and Manin in Venice succeeded in first creating an independent, popular Italian government.

With the revolt in Milan, the king of Sardinia and Piedmont, Carlo Alberto, crossed the border into Lombardy on March 23 and thereby entered the war. The Italian situation worsened by July 1848, when Carlo Alberto faced defeat on the battlefield; 60,000 troops under Radetzky vanquished a larger contingent of 75,000 Piedmontese troops – a great Austrian victory later celebrated in the *Radetzky March* composed by Johan Strauss, Sr. A second defeat in March 1849 at the Battle of Novara cost Carlos Alberto the Piedmont throne. The Austrian victors forced him both to abdicate in favor of his son, Victor Emmanuel II, and to pay a large indemnity.

With the defeat of Piedmont, the republics established in Florence, Rome, and Venice were now helpless. The Roman Republic held out until July 1849 through Garibaldi's epic defense. It was put down by French and Austrian troops acting jointly and despite the fact that Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte had come to power in France as part of the revolution of 1848. The pope was then restored.

The 1848 revolutions swept through not only the various states of Italy but all of Europe from Paris to Vienna to Budapest to Berlin. One revolution fed another in quick succession. The Habsburgs faced challenges not only in Austrian-controlled Italian lands but also in Vienna and Hungary. A Hungarian politician and journalist, Lajos Kossuth, for example, demanded that Austria grant Hungary political autonomy (March 3). Students next marched on the Austrian parliament in search of political reforms (March 13), and by March 15 the Hungarian parliament had created detailed plans for the form Hungarian autonomy should take. Faced with numerous revolts – in Vienna, Austrian Italy, and Budapest – the Habsburg government pursued a mixed strategy. They suppressed some agitators and acquiesced to Hungarian demands. Before long, however, they abandoned the idea of Hungarian autonomy and were able to suppress the Hungarian revolution, but only with the

[1] The five days of rage in Milan ended on March 22, 1848, and Manin's revolt started on March 22.

aid of Russian armed intervention. Nevertheless, the revolutions exerted a lasting effect.[2]

Outside of Austria, other monarchies experienced a similar plight. On March 18, 1848, rising agitation in Prussia – fed by the unrest in Austria – led King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to promise a new constitution and political reforms to his people; he later recanted and suppressed the agitators. German speakers in Schleswig and Holstein likewise revolted against the Danish king on March 28, 1848. This 1848 revolution ultimately ended in the First Schleswig-Holstein War.

As evident from the above review, the occurrence and timing of these revolts is not coincidental but rather the result of contagion, whereby a revolt in one city encouraged revolutionaries (acting independently) to revolt in another city. Marx and Engels captured this spirit and tried to interpret it when they wrote in the opening sentence of *The Communist Manifesto* that "a spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism." The discontent of the poor and the proletariat, as Marx and Engels define them, no doubt played a role in the 1848 revolutions, but in Italy so too did the spirit of nationalism.

Nationalism was a new ideology capturing the minds of many. It defined the people of a given region who identify with each other as a "nation" and maintained that "nations" had the right to govern themselves. According to Benedict Anderson (1983: 5–6), nations are political communities with three characteristics. First, they are imagined, in the sense that members of a nation feel a common identity with one another, even though many individual members may never meet or interact with one another. Second, nations must be limited; not everyone can be a member. Finally, a nation holds the right to govern itself. It is the true sovereign over its territory, not the dynastic families who claim to own the people and territory by divine right.

This conceptualization carries several noteworthy implications. A "nation" rests on perception – that is, feelings of belonging. Entrepreneurial leaders with political goals manipulate this perception. They awaken, foster, and entrench this sentiment to create "nations" when people may not themselves initially feel communal, "nation" membership. Moreover, if the "nation" exists, then peoples of the same nation who are separated (e.g., the division of territory among monarchs) belong to – or have the right to join – the nation. To Italian nationalists, all

[2] Nationalism continued to tear at the Austrian Empire's fabric until, in the 1867 compromise, the Austrian Empire was transformed into the dual monarchy of Austria–Hungary, in which Hungarians would hold significant autonomy and have a check on foreign policy initiatives.

those who spoke Italian were part of an unredeemed, Italian territory – *irredenta* – that they would liberate from foreign rule and incorporate into a united Italy.[3] Of course, the reality was that they did not all speak the same language, nor did they necessarily identify with each other. This led Massimo d'Azeglio, the prime minister of Piedmont prior to Cavour, to quip in his memoirs, "L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani" ("We have made Italy, all that remains to do is to make Italians," as quoted in English in Albrecht-Carrie 1958: 95).[4] All of this suggests, as Benedict Anderson (1983) maintained, that the Italian and German nations were imaginary communities that did not exist prior to the wars that united Italy and Germany, the product of nationalists and the consequence of the wars they brought about.

This new nationalist ideology directly contradicted both the principle of monarchical rule and the prevailing norms that territory could be legitimately transferred among states only via dynastic succession, marriage, or a treaty between monarchs – as, for example, when the treaties signed through the Congress of Vienna established new states and transferred Napoleon's territorial gains to states that either defeated him and/or previously held this territory. This, in fact, is how Lombardy and Venetiza, as well as lands such as Tuscany, Modena, and Parma, passed into the Habsburg dynasty (see Treaty of Paris, 1814; Final Act of the Congress of Vienna, 1815). Austria relinquished its ownership of the Spanish Netherlands as part of this territorial arrangement (see Treaty of Paris, 1814). These prevailing norms meant that nationalism had to struggle to get its way.

One of the main lessons of 1848 was the defeat of the Mazzini line "L'Italia fara da se." Revolution from below by the people had had its chance and had failed. Now, Italian nationalists – led by Count Camillo Benso of Cavour, prime minster of Piedmont, and King Victor Emmanuel II – felt that Italy could not do it alone. They needed an ally, but the challenge would be finding one. France and Britain were the most likely candidates since they were the most liberal states. Indeed, Palmerston, just before the Crimean War in his "beau ideal" for war with Russia, spoke of redrawing the map of Europe to give Austria the territories of Wallachia, Moldavia, and the mouth of the Danube in return for setting Lombardy and Venice free (Rich 1992: 113; see Chapter 3). Cavour, mindful of his options, tried to curry favor with France and

[3] This period of Italian history is known as the Risorgimento, which means resurgence. Before he became prime minster, Cavour had been editor of a nationalist newspaper called *Il Risorgimento*.

[4] See also Weber (1976), who makes a similar point about the invention and creation of Frenchmen and the spread of the French language throughout France.

Britain during the Crimean War (in 1855) by sending troops to aid in their fight against Russia. If he behaved like an ally of theirs, perhaps they would behave like an ally of his.

Napoleon III was also receptive to the idea of being an ally for several reasons. First, he fancied himself a revolutionary, as his role in the 1848 revolution that brought him to power underlined. Second, he was sympathetic to Italian nationalism. His mother had brought him to live in Rome when he was fifteen. There, he and his brother became active in secret Italian nationalist movements, and he was forced to flee with his mother in 1831. This experience lived within him. As emperor in 1852, he remarked that he wanted "to do something for Italy, which I love as a second fatherland" (quoted in Bridge and Bullen 2005: 135). Lastly, he saw his support of Italy as promoting France's interest and his desire to weaken the Vienna peace settlement established in 1815 and restore France's natural borders.

Historical Events

The Start of the War, Lombardy

On July 20, 1858, Cavour and Napoleon III met at Plombières – deep in the Vosges mountains, at the latter's invitation – to plan a war against Austria that might liberate Lombardy and Venezia.[5] He had promised for some time to aid Piedmont, but that support did not materialize. Consequently, in January 1858 four Italian radicals, disappointed with Napoleon's continued delay, bombed his imperial carriage. This assassination attempt failed to harm Napoleon; yet it motivated him to reengage with the Italian cause – in part, to encourage the Italians to restrain the radical elements of their movement. In fact, during the period February–May 1858 Napoleon III asked Victor Emmanuel to control the radicals, renewed his promise to aid Piedmont, encouraged the publication of documents demonstrating his support for the Italian cause that sketched the preliminary terms of an alliance, and scheduled the meeting in Plombières.

Napoleon III agreed to support Cavour and the Italian cause if it were not opposed by the other major states. He was prepared to make a Franco-Piedmont alliance against Austria that would be the basis of a war. Napoleon's motivation, although supportive of the Piedmontese cause, had self-interested roots, so he proposed several things he wanted

[5] This historical review follows the chronology of Coppa (1992), with events derived from him and confirmed in Darby (2013) and Schneid (2012).

in return for the alliance. First, he proposed a marriage between Jerome Napoleon, his cousin, and Princess Clotilde, the daughter of Victor Emmanuel, which would unite the two houses (Coppa 1992: 82). Second, he maintained that any liberated states (including some of the Papal States) would be part of a confederation of northern Italy (and not a larger Piedmont) with the pope as president to compensate for some of the papacy's territorial losses. He insisted on the latter and that the pope and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies be treated with "circumspection" (Coppa 1992: 80).[6] Lastly, Napoleon wanted Savoy and Nice. This final request surprised Cavour, who balked because Nice was majority Italian-speaking. Cavour also pointed out that he did not know how the king would react to the marriage proposal, stating that the girl was quite young. Napoleon pressed on these two points because marriage was a way of legitimately transferring territory in the system at the time. Ultimately, both demands would be fulfilled, but not without many events intervening.

The key to the alliance's value ultimately lay in whether the other major states would oppose Piedmont's aims. On this point, the positions of the capitals of Europe were uncertain. The British supported the Piedmontese cause – and indeed, nationalism generally – but feared French opportunism would redraw the European map. They therefore tried to calm the situation and discourage the use of force, even if they did not oppose Italian nationalist goals outright. The Prussians, likewise, remained cautious. Cavour left Plombières to meet with William, the prince regent of Prussia, in July 1858. Prussia's support, or at least neutrality, would prove critical. With it, Cavour and Napoleon could ensure that Austria would fight alone; yet, they could not obtain a Prussian pledge of neutrality. Prussian sentiment would likely favor Austria, and William was unwilling to allow his policies to challenge that sentiment. In the end, only Russia's position crystalized. Napoleon III believed that Russia would not interfere with his plans; indeed, Tsar Alexander II assured him as much on several occasions (Coppa 1992: 81). A Franco-Russian treaty of March 3, 1859, eventually confirmed Napoleon's belief. The Russians promised to remain neutral in a Franco-Austrian war, to encourage German states' neutrality (if possible), and to permit Piedmont's expansion – provided that Piedmont respected the sovereignty of any Italian states that did not participate in the war (Rich 1992: 132).

[6] In fact, Napoleon envisaged four different entities: a northern confederation with Piedmont at the head, a central Italy, a diminished papal state, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Albrecht-Carrie 1958: 100).

Upon celebrating the marriage of Jerome Napoleon and Princess Clotilde on January 30, 1859, the Franco-Piedmontese alliance became official. Diplomatic maneuvering then accelerated, in an attempt to both isolate Austria and forestall conflict (see the Franco-Russian treaty of March 3, 1859). Napoleon III opened the French parliament on February 7, 1859, using it as a vehicle to reassure Europe about his benign, peaceful intentions. Lacking credibility, however, the reassurance not only motivated the British to attempt to mediate the crisis (i.e., to discuss plans for a conference of major states to resolve the Italian question) but also created a rift between Napoleon, who wanted to pursue diplomatic options, and Cavour, still seeking an independence movement.

The crisis reached a new phase on March 6, 1859, when Victor Emmanuel began calling up his reserves and brought in Garibaldi as one of several commanders. The Russians, supported by the British, shortly thereafter proposed a conference to resolve the Italian question. Napoleon III agreed to the idea, but his ally's participation hung in the balance – another indication of the growing divide between France and Piedmont. Major states had no role for a minor state (e.g., Piedmont) at a conference. Cavour therefore had to push for Piedmont's inclusion; indeed, he threatened to resign if that did not happen (Coppa 1992: 89). This threat bore fruit. Although the British and Austrians did not support Piedmont's inclusion, the major states invited Cavour to attend the conference (via France on March 26), but only in a "consultative" role (i.e., not a part of any formal decision-making that would occur).

Cavour undoubtedly felt trapped in two ways. First, he increasingly witnessed his most preferred outcomes slip from his grasp. We can infer that he preferred (in order): (i) that no conference occur at all; (ii) that if a conference occurred, Piedmont be part of the decision-making process; (iii) that barring these two options, Piedmont attend the conference in a consultative role; and finally, least of all, (iv) that Piedmont be excluded from a conference outright. He avoided his least preferred outcome, but also lost his two most preferred outcomes. Second, his ally increasingly constrained his behavior. Napoleon's intentions are unknown; yet scholars stress that the courts of Europe pressured Napoleon to encourage Piedmont to disarm between March and April 1859 (e.g., see Rich 1992: 132–133). As of April 18, Cavour's plan appeared wrecked; the French informed him that they had accepted the demobilization plan. This implied that Piedmont would have to accept it as well.

Cavour became "distraught" and was planning to go into exile. He even contemplated suicide (Coppa 1992: 90). Then, on April 21, Austria issued an ultimatum demanding immediate demobilization within three days on pain of war. This was a masterful stroke of luck for Piedmont.

Victor Emmanuel rejected the ultimatum on April 26, and on April 29 Austria invaded.[7] As Coppa (1992: 90) notes, "Cavour finally had what he wanted: a clear intention of Austrian aggression and a French commitment to provide assistance." This put an end to British mediation, and France was now committed. Napoleon III announced that the invasion of his ally was also an attack on France, and he declared war on April 29 (Goldstein 1992: 17). Austrian coercion did not work; instead, it backfired and it changed everything in favor of Cavour.

As war loomed, Cavour called the parliament into session on April 23 to give King Victor Emmanuel II dictatorial powers. This is an example of a pattern we will find in several cases – namely, that war increases the centralization of the state. Tilly (1975) argues that war makes the state and the state makes war (see also Rasler and Thompson 1989), by which he means that war increases the centralization of the state over automatous actors, like lords, or over individuals. In turn, strong states make war, leading to more centralization. We see such a pattern in this instance. The king, who was already a fairly powerful and dominant monarch, has his powers enhanced in order to deal with the likelihood of war, which his own state has planned; as Piedmont fights and liberates Italian lands, these areas then also ask to centralize authority under the Piedmontese king.

The advent of armed conflict facilitated nationalist uprisings in Florence, Pisa, Sienna, and other Tuscan cities. These led Duke Leopold II, the Habsburg ruler there, and his family to flee. In his wake, the provisional government of Florence offered King Victor Emmanuel temporary dictatorial powers over the duchy, but it should be noted that Cavour played a role in this and funded the rebellions in Tuscany as well as the duchies (Albrecht-Carrie 1958: 103). A call for Piedmontese assistance and authority opened the door to a consolidated Italian state under Piedmont; yet, it also promised to stray beyond the plan originally envisioned at Plombières. Cavour therefore needed to obtain French approval for such a move, but Napoleon III withheld his assent. Instead, the French king suggested that Piedmont refuse the dictatorial powers and that France assume command of any Tuscan troops.

The war originally unfolded in Piedmont's favor. Although the 220,000 Austrian troops outnumbered the 128,000 French and 70,000 Piedmontese allied troops, the allied forces won battles in May at Montebello and Palestro, pushing the Austrians back across the Ticino

[7] According to Bridge and Bullen (2005: 137), one of the reasons for the ultimatum was that the mobilization was becoming quite onerous, so Austria needed to bring things to a head.

River. As Coppa (1992: 94) relates as the news of the Austrian defeat spread, Massa, Carrara and the Duchy of Parma rebelled against their Habsburg rulers and appealed to Piedmont. Contagion was at work and there was a danger now of revolts in Modena and in Romagna (a papal area). Pope Pius IV appealed to Napoleon III for protection.

On June 4, 1859, French and Piedmontese forces next won the Battle of Magenta, and four days later, on June 8, Napoleon III and Victor Emmanuel II marched triumphantly into Milan. Meanwhile, Austria withdrew – not only from Milan but also from the surrounding towns of Bologna and Ferrara. A now familiar formula played out. As the Austrians left Bologna, the people there demonstrated against the papal legate and appealed to Piedmont for aid. It appeared as though the other Papal States might follow suit. This, along with Piedmont's agreement to send two thousand troops to Bologna, posed a dilemma for Napoleon III. He now held two seemingly conflicting promises: to aid Piedmont and to protect the pope.

The major battle of the war soon followed on June 24 at Solferino in Lombardy near the Venezia border. France and Piedmont defeated Austria in a bitter battle with much hand-to-hand combat. Although they won, they took heavy loses – more than Austria – with Piedmont suffering 5,000 casualties and France 13,000 (Coppa 1992: 95).[8]

The battle was indecisive because Austria withdrew into the fortresses of the Quadrilateral. It looked like it was going to be a long war. This was made worse by the prospect that Prussia and other German states might intervene.[9] Meanwhile, the war was becoming unpopular among French Catholics. In addition, it seemed that Cavour was now thinking that it might be possible to create a stronger and larger Italian state rather than just settling for a northern confederation to which he had agreed at Plombières.

These factors – heavy causalities; the military situation, including the possibility of Prussian intervention on the Rhine; Catholic opposition at home; concerns about the pope's future; fear that revolts would lead to a stronger Italy rather than a confederation; and the lingering desire to see a resolution of the Italian question by the major states – led Napoleon III

[8] At Solferino, a Swiss entrepreneur, Henri Duant, who was following Napoleon III in order to get his agreement to a financial scheme, was caught in the middle of the battle and was so taken aback by the wounded on both sides that he began running from one soldier to the next trying to save their lives without regard to what side they were fighting for. From this came the idea of the Red Cross.

[9] Prussia mobilized six army corps on the Rhine, and Napoleon III told Cavour on July 10 that he could not also fight a war on the Rhine while fighting in Italy (Bridge and Bullen 2005: 140).

to seek a negotiated settlement to the war. Franz Josef shared the desire for a (peace) conference because he feared a long struggle would weaken the power of Austria both in Germany and in Italy (Coppa 1992: 97). Napoleon III directly approached Franz Josef to propose a truce – violating his alliance with Piedmont, which forbade a separate peace – and Franz Josef offered a meeting at Villafranca. France and Austria signed an armistice there on July 8, 1858. The agreed-upon armistice would last until August 15 and presented Cavour with a fait accompli (as Coppa 1992: 97 phrases it).

The July armistice reflected the battlefield realities. Franz Josef conceded the French-Piedmontese occupied territory of Lombardy.[10] Venezia, the Quadrilateral and some of the other fortresses in Lombardy would remain in Austrian hands, but Venezia would join Napoleon's long-desired northern Italian confederation under a papal presidency. As a concession to Franz Josef, Napoleon agreed that the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Modena could return to their rule.

These various terms – not to mention the pursuit and timing of the peace conference – served Napoleon, but not Piedmont. King Victor Emmanuel II therefore felt that his ally had betrayed him. Cavour urged the king to continue fighting alone, but the king would not. He recalled the lesson of 1848 all too well: "L'Italia fara da se" was not possible. The king therefore signed the agreement on July 11, and Cavour resigned the same day.

The betrayal by Napoleon III at Villafranca now meant that Piedmont was unwilling to give him Nice and Savoy, as had been agreed at Plombières. Meanwhile, the people in the central states prevented the return of the Habsburg rulers and the papal legates in Tuscany, Modena, and Romagna, respectively.[11] Cavour played a role, behind the scenes, in these protests. Palmerston and Russell supported the Italian policy, noting that "God helps those that help themselves" (Coppa 1992: 98). Napoleon III was in a quandary between Villafranca, the pope, and the promises he and Cavour made to each other at Plombières. In November, a treaty settled the war based on the Villafranca agreement and called for a European congress to be held in Paris on January 19, 1861, to make a final resolution.

[10] An interesting side note is that Lombardy was ceded to France, which then turned it over to Piedmont (Riall 2009: 31).

[11] The actions in Tuscany upsetting the Villafranca agreement were very disruptive of Napoleon's III plans to create a central Italian kingdom, since Tuscany would be its main piece. He even had thought of having Prince Jérôme at the head of this kingdom (see Albrecht-Carrie 1958: 103n36).

Before the Paris conference could convene, the tide turned again. A pamphlet entitled *Le Pape and le Congrès* appeared in Paris. It was widely rumored to have been written at the instigation of Napoleon III (see Coppa 1992: 99) and said that France could not force the imposition of the old leaders on the people of Tuscany, Modena, and Romagna. At this, Rome (the pope) and Vienna refused to attend the European conference. Cavour returned to power on January 20,1860, with wild jubilation in the streets of Turin.

Napoleon III recognized a ripe opportunity to reassert his claim to Nice and Savoy. To insure this, the French representative to the pope said that it was unlikely that the lost areas would be restored and stated publicly for the first time that if those areas united with Piedmont then France must be compensated by Savoy and Nice.

Napoleon III and Cavour negotiated, signed, and executed an agreement whereby Savoy and Nice were ceded on March 12–14, 1860 (Rich 1992: 139). Orchestrated plebiscites consolidated the gains in the following weeks. Plebiscites in Nice and Savoy favored union with France; in Italian-dominated Nice, for example, 24,448 voters supported union with France, while a meager 160 opposed it (Darby 2013: 62). The pope and Garibaldi, who was born in Nice, were scandalized by Cavour's schemes. Garibaldi never forgave this deal to give his homeland to Napoleon III – the "executioner of the Roman Republic of 1849," (Coppa 1992 :101), as he called him. In addition, Cavour's agents held plebiscites in Tuscany, the duchies, and the legations on whether to unite with Piedmont – plebiscites that inevitably favored an Italian union.[12]

The Expansion of the War, Sicily

About this time, Garibaldi began listening to the pleas of Francesco Crispi – a Sicilian leader and friend of Mazzini – for an armed liberation of the south. When the fighting began in 1859, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies declared its neutrality. However, as the war spread, King Ferdinand II died and his son Francis II, who was young and inexperienced, ascended the throne. On April 5, 1860, a rebellion in Palermo (Sicily) offered Garibaldi an opportunity to act. Before doing so, he wanted to check the attitude of Turin. Garibaldi despised the loss of Nice and Savoy, finding it "more than he could endure" (Rich 1992: 140); yet, he needed Piedmont's assistance to undertake a successful campaign to

[12] On these plebiscites and their nature, see Albrecht-Carrie (1958: 104, including notes 37 and 38).

the south. Cavour gave it, but would offer only financial and military backing and would not publicly support the campaign.

On the night of May 5–6, (slightly more than) 1,000 red shirts sailed with Garibaldi from Genoa on two ships – the *il Piedmonte* and the *il Lombardo* under the flag of the House of Savoy. The Piedmontese navy did not interfere with the venture. It instead allowed the ships to pass through its lines. Fearing, however, that this would irritate Napoleon – who now wanted calm on the Italian peninsula – Cavour told Napoleon III that he had no choice but to permit the expedition; public opinion in central Italy supported Garibaldi, even if Cavour personally opposed him. Rich (1992: 140) helps us make sense of this: "Cavour's policies in dealing with Garibaldi at this critical time were devious as well as contradictory, for he needed to avoid alienating patriotic opinion at home while at the same time reassuring great power governments abroad."

About a week later, on May 11, Garibaldi landed at Marsala on the coast of Sicily, asserting his loyalty to Victor Emmanuel (Rich 1992: 141). The revolt spread rapidly, and peasants and intellectuals drawn by his charisma came from everywhere to join him. He defeated the Neapolitan army at Calatafimi and the government abandoned Palermo in early June. This withdrawal surprised Europe and startled the pope in Rome. Garibaldi's force moved rapidly and crossed over into the boot. Cavour hoped to profit from Garibaldi's advance, but feared he would go too far and attack the pope and Rome, which would raise the ire of Napoleon III. To assure Paris and Rome, Victor Emmanuel ordered Garibaldi not to march on Naples and Rome. Garibaldi refused.

Cavour's attitude toward Garibaldi was complicated. While each success by Garibaldi in the field moved Cavour closer to his vision of a greater Italy, he feared that if Garibaldi overextended and went too far, then all the Italians had gained thus far would fall into jeopardy. He knew that an attack on the pope, for instance, would draw the opposition of Napoleon III. He also worried that if Garibaldi conquered Naples, he would next want to go to Venice and then Nice (see Coppa 1992: 105). It was like unleashing a mad dog. He would not be surprised if, from Nice, Garibaldi might consider even launching a revolution against Napoleon III himself to make France a republic. In short, he felt things could easily get out of hand, but in the meantime he wanted to use Garibaldi.

As Garibaldi moved north, Napoleon III expressed a willingness to let Cavour and Piedmont annex most of the Papal States – if it came to that – but only if the pope still held Rome. This policy derived from Napoleon's worries about the reaction of the pope and French Catholics

Text Box 4.1 Nutshell Summary: Italian War of 1859–1860

1. Cavour learns from the failed 1848 revolutions in Italy that the nationalist slogan of "L'Italia fara da se" will not work and that Italy will need an ally.
2. Cavour meets secretly with Napoleon III at Plombières and the two plot a war against Austria to redeem Lombardy and Venezia.
3. The 1859 war spreads to Tuscany and the Papal States and reaches a stalemate after the Battle of Solferino. Napoleon III seeks an armistice at Villafranca.
4. In 1860 Garibaldi, secretly supported by Piedmont, sails to Sicily with his 1000 red shirts and liberates the south. Italy becomes united on March 17, 1861.

to such an invasion, and so he threatened to break diplomatic relations with Piedmont if it invaded Rome. Piedmont heeded the warning. Garibaldi approached Naples in September, prompting the royal family to flee. Piedmont consequently deployed more than 30,000 troops to the Papal States (half of Sardinia's army) – not merely to intervene at the orchestrated request of Italians there for "liberation," but also to ensure that Garibaldi avoided both Rome and the French troops tasked with protecting the pope (Coppa 1992: 108). When 50,000 Neapolitan troops blocked Garibaldi's path to Rome, Garibaldi called for Victor Emmanuel to assist from the north. Cavour, to make sure Garibaldi did not go on to Rome, sent the Piedmont army to meet Garibaldi's forces and thereby stop him from advancing further.

By mid October, Piedmont forces led by Victor Emmanuel himself met those of Garibaldi, effectively uniting the north with the south. On March 17, 1861, Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed king of all of Italy – except for Rome and Venezia. This would be the largest revision of the territorial distribution of the 1815 Congress of Vienna (Albrecht-Carrie 1958: 106). Two months later Cavour died (June 6, 1861), but not without knowing that he achieved about 85 percent of his goal.

Text Box 4.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

Territory – linked to nationalism – is the variable primarily responsible for the 1859 war and its expansion in 1860 to the southern boot. In fact, Vasquez (2009: 366–368) argues that it is the linking of territorial

claims to nationalism that makes the latter so war-prone. The desire to acquire territory motivates the Italian nationalists, as well as the Austrian and Concert resistance. This is consistent with statistical research, which provides strong evidence that territorial disputes have the highest probability of escalating to war (Vasquez 2009: ch. 10). The case goes beyond this evidence, however, in a few ways. First, the 1859 war is a planned, premediated war. As a result of his nationalist-territorial ambitions, Cavour wants war to occur. The motives of Napoleon III are more complicated. Although sympathetic to Italian nationalism, he also has a territorial motive – to obtain Savoy and Nice. In addition, he wants to overturn part of the Vienna settlement and to defeat a major victor of the Napoleonic Wars – Austria. Nevertheless, without Italian ambitions, there would be no nationalist war for Napoleon III to join and exploit.

Alliances also play a decisive role. Because Cavour and the Italian nationalists have learned (through *previous history*) that "L'Italia fara da se" will not work, they must have a major state ally to achieve their goal of a united Italy. Cavour therefore searches for such an ally and finds Napoleon III a willing candidate. Napoleon III has certain demands, however – one of which is the insistence that Cavour gain support (or at least acquiescence) from the other major states. This demand constitutes about the only role that the vestiges of the Concert of Europe play in this case.

The third key variable that has a major impact is *norms*. Under the prevailing norms, territory is legitimately owned only by monarchs, and ownership can therefore be transferred only via dynastic succession, marriage between dynastic houses, or treaties among sovereign monarchs. The Italian nationalists challenge these prevailing norms by proposing a new norm, in which the "people" (conceived as *nations*) own the land on which they reside and have a right to self-rule. Given contradictory norms, actors cannot resolve the crisis via an appeal to norms; there exists no agreement on what norm to apply. Norms consequently stymie resolution in this case, thereby pushing each side to resort to force as an alternative mechanism for settling the dispute.

It goes without saying that *hard-liners* dominate the domestic political situation and decision-making on all sides. This occurs, however, because of the power of nationalism and the resistance it generates – not because of the political force of hard-liners per se. In fact, there are no *accommodationists*, so hard-liners have no competition in shaping decision-making in Piedmont, France, or Austria. The domestic political situation is not so much a variable as a constant.

The *system* and the Concert of Europe play a moderate role in escalating the crisis to war. Its conservative structure and status-quo bias prevents it from playing an active role in resolving the dispute. On the one hand, the Concert does not include Italy, closing it off as an option for the Italian nationalists. Indeed, Cavour has to threaten to resign to secure Piedmont's inclusion at one Concert meeting; even then, the invitation stipulates that Piedmont would have only a "consultative" role. On the other hand, the system – and certainly the Concert – accepts the prevailing norms about how territory changes ownership; it does not recognize the validity of the new norm that Italian nationalists champion. Thus, even if the Italian nationalists could go to the Concert, they could make no legal or normative argument that the Concert would accept. Force then becomes the most obvious option. *Previous history* also plays a moderate role because of the lesson derived from the 1848 war.

Three other variables play a minor, latent role: *rivalry*, the *hostility* embodied in rivalry relationships, and an *arms race*. These variables derive from the underlying interstate relationships, and prime Piedmont and, in particular, Austria for war. Piedmont and Austria began a rivalry in 1847 (Thompson and Dreyer 2012: 33–35). The rivalry between France and Austria has a lengthier history. It predates the Napoleonic Wars (going back to 1494) and involves a disagreement over control of northern Italy (Thompson and Dreyer 2012: 30–33). Given the First War of Italian Independence in 1848, it is not surprising that the quantitative data (Sample 1997) reveal a Horn (1987) arms race between Austria and Piedmont in 1859 and 1860. No ongoing arms race, however, exists between France and Austria at the time, which supports the interpretation that Napoleon III is basically seizing the opportunity that Cavour provides.

Bargaining strategy exerts a minor, but important, influence on crisis escalation. Austria's ultimatum that Piedmont demobilize backfires and supplies Cavour with a way to move forward with war. *Proximity* supplies a permissive condition too. Piedmont attacks the Austrian-Italian lands adjacent to it: Lombardy. The war then spreads contiguously to Tuscany and, from there, to the Papal States. Revolution, however, causes the war to spread to the more distant lands of Venice and Sicily.

Numerous variables that play a role in other cases that go to war do not play any notable role here: the *domestic political situation* of all the chief actors; their *relative capability*; *democracy*; and *wishful thinking and overconfidence* (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 *Variable summary for the Italian War of 1859–1860: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Nature of the issue (territory)	Major	X	
Alliances	Major	X	
Norms	Major	X	
System structure	Moderate	X	
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Arms races	Minor	X	
Bargaining strategy	Minor	X	
Proximity	Minor	X	
Domestic politics	None		
Relative capabilities	None		
Democracy	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

Theoretical Analysis

The Second Italian War of Independence raises several theoretical issues.[13] The first (and main) one concerns the role of territorial disputes in international relations. Territorial disputes prove key to interstate war and peace (see Vasquez 2009: ch. 4; Owsiak 2012; Owsiak and Vasquez 2019). The modal (i.e., most common) war in the post-Napoleonic era is a dyadic war between neighboring states over territory (Vasquez and Valeriano 2010: 300). The four Italian wars of independence fit this mold, with the exception that they are not dyadic wars but involve several states; nonetheless they do involve fundamental, conflicting territorial claims between Italian nationalists and the neighboring state that possesses the land in question (Austria).

The Italian Wars of Independence illustrate the difficulty of resolving territorial claims in a peaceful fashion. This was particularly the case here because the dominant norm for transferring territory did not recognize nationalism as a legitimate ideology, let alone a norm for transferring territory. Table 4.2 lists the relevant territorial claims. The data come from the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) project (see Hensel et al. 2008; Frederick et al. 2017) and highlight the long-standing, unresolved, territorial issues between Italy and Austria. Italy claimed Lombardy and

[13] This section, as in previous chapters, focuses on theoretical questions from the perspective of IR theory. For an analysis and review of differing historical interpretations of the Risorgimento by Italian historians, see Riall (2009).

Table 4.2 *Italian territorial claims against Austria*

Claim years	Territorial lands claimed
1848–1866	Lombardy–Venezia
1866–1918	Trentino–Alto Adige (South Tyrol)
1866–1876	Venezia and Giulia (Julian March)
1914–1918	Dalmatia
1915–1918	Venezia and Giulia (Julian March)

Source: Issue Correlates of War Data (see Frederick et al. 2017).

Venezia, for example, following the 1848 revolutions and gained them respectively in the wars of 1859 and 1866. The Alto Adige was claimed after the acquisition of Venezia. It and Trentino were acquired as a result of the First World War. While parts of Dalmatia and the Julian March joined the Italian docket just before Italy entered the First World War, they were never fully attained through that war. Parts of these lands today lie in Italy, but mostly reside in Croatia and Slovenia – even though many there still speak Italian.

The claims in Table 4.2 display two related tendencies. First, they persist and recur (even for decades in some instances). This is a common feature of territorial disputes. Because actors find territorial issues highly salient, they eschew compromise over them (e.g., Garibaldi's position on Nice and Savoy). Many domestic groups threaten to brand a leader who compromises on the national homeland as a traitor. Indeed, Cavour defended his unwillingness to halt Garibaldi's campaign to the south because of such likely domestic opposition. This inability to compromise then undermines the possibility of a peaceful resolution. If an issue matters heavily to multiple actors, seems zero-sum, and cannot be compromised, negotiation will not offer a path to that issue's settlement.

Second, none of the claims in Table 4.2 are peacefully resolved. This coincides with strong empirical evidence that disputes over territory – as opposed to those over nonterritorial issues – experience a higher probability of generating military conflict and escalating to war (Vasquez and Henehan 2001). The Second Italian War of Independence shows us one path to war associated with this pattern. From the perspective of both Piedmont and Austria, there existed no possibility of resolving the dispute absent the use of force. The avenues of peaceful settlement appeared closed, and the involved states consequently made no real attempt at a peaceful settlement until 1914 – and this only after four wars.

The lack of negotiation results partly from the norms about how states (re)allocate territory. Austria had the normative, legal, and historical right to the lands that the Italian nationalists sought. In 1859, territory

constituted part of the sovereign hegemony of the monarch; sovereignty resided in the royal family, and the reigning monarch gained ownership of the kingdom, including all its territory, through legitimate succession.

The Austrians obtained Italian lands primarily through legal agreements. After defeating Napoleon in 1815, they accepted a unique European role: "chief defender of the Italian states against France" (Rich 1992: 19). To this end, the great powers not only returned to Austria some Italian lands that Napoleon took from it (e.g., Lombardy and Tuscany, which had been Austrian possessions previously), but also granted it additional lands (e.g., Venezia and Parma).[14]

Although the Austrians gained title to the disputed territory via means that the system considered legitimate, Italian nationalists and the Piedmontese government believed *they* had the rightful claim. The new ideology of nationalism – that Mazzini invented – argued that people who speak the same language belong to the same "nation" and have a right to self-rule (or self-determination). Mazzini created a new norm about how states (re)allocate territory, and this norm conflicted with the norms in operation at the time. With contradictory norms, greater conflict followed because, as Luard (1986) argues, the dispute now involved not only substance (i.e., division of the land) but also procedure (i.e., the process by which substantive matters are resolved). Italy and Austria disagreed both about who held sovereignty over specific pieces of territory (i.e., the claim) *and* about the most appropriate norm for deciding that matter (i.e., how to resolve claims). All of this demonstrates the problem: If states disagree on the norms to use, then those (conflicting) norms cannot facilitate peaceful, systemic change.

In the face of competing claims – not to mention the diverging, underlying, contradictory principles on which they were based – negotiation failed. Claims to territory and the bargaining difficulties that accompany them fit the territorial explanation of war, which argues that war arises more often over territorial than nonterritorial issues (Vasquez 2009: Ch. 4). Among the cases in this book, the current case best illustrates how that comes about. No real attempt to negotiate them occurred. Instead, hard-liners (like Cavour) dominated the process and schemed to pursue – not avoid – war.

The second theoretical issue raised by this case is the problem of how to bring about fundamental social change in the system. E. H. Carr (1939) identified that as the most basic problem of international politics: How can major changes be brought about without government? There are not

[14] The Habsburgs lost portions of the Netherlands at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Gaining Italian lands offset these losses.

many options. One option, of course, is negotiation; but if that fails, then what? Another is that norms can be followed to make change. The Concert of Europe embodied norms that could be utilized to facilitate decision-making, but those norms ran against those of the Italian nationalists.

The norm the Concert accepted for transferring territory was dynastic succession. The rulers of the Concert accepted the idea that monarchies own both the territory over which they ruled and the people on it. The Concert even went further by adopting at the Congress of Vienna the rule that they would put down revolutions which arose to oppose their monarchical rule. If the Concert's norms were utilized they would sustain the status quo. The nationalist norm threatened to break monarchical rule, so it is unsurprising that many European monarchs opposed it – especially Austria, who saw nationalist revolutions sweep through its lands in 1848 and significantly weaken its monarchy.

Because of this contradiction of norms, the prevailing system of global governance could not be utilized by the nationalists seeking fundamental change – both because of who they were (a minor state) and how they wanted to make decisions. The first major attempt to employ conference diplomacy to resolve the Italian question came in April 1859 when Britain tried to bring the major states together. At first, Piedmont was not even going to be included, and then Austria demanded that no territorial questions be discussed. The conference itself was quickly swept aside by Piedmont's mobilization, which led to war.

Even if a conference had occurred, had Piedmont made a normative or legal argument at the conference, it would have lost. There was no argument that could justify the changes Piedmont sought. Even if there were, the large number of borders and the vast changes in territory that the nationalists were demanding would overwhelm the governing system. It is difficult to change one border and the nationalist irredenta agenda required a number of border changes involving multiple states (for example, not only Austria but also the Papal States and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies).

In the end, the norms and vested interests of the Congress of Vienna system made it impossible to bring about this kind of territorial change. The end result was that those advocating such vast change had to resort to force. Theoretically, the 1859–1860 case provides one explanation for why this occurs. Because the norms and biases of the prevailing governing system could not handle the desired changes, those seeking such changes preferred to fight than to lose through the legitimate processes at hand. A key theoretical lesson that can be derived from this case is that large territorial issues that cannot be handled by the dominant norms will lead the prevailing political system to break down. The large territorial

issues posed by Germany, Italy, and Japan in the 1930s provide cases that reinforce this lesson (see Chapters 11 and 12).

A third theoretical issue that is raised by this case concerns the use of coercive diplomacy (see George et al. 1971). The three cases studied so far provide some lessons about its use. Although coercion does not play a prominent role in the Second Italian War of Independence, its use mirrors what we observe in the (1839) Eastern Crisis and the Crimean War (see Chapters 2 and 3). Each of these crises escalated to war after one party issued an ultimatum to another. Statesmen use ultimata to coerce through intimidation. They demand a particular action be taken or war will follow. The purpose is not to provoke a war, but rather to get what one wants *without* going to war. If war occurs, then coercion has failed. We observe this failure repeatedly – but why?

The (1859) Italian war started because Austria gave Piedmont an ultimatum to demobilize. Rather than intimidating Cavour and King Victor Emanuel II, however, the ultimatum played into their hands in three ways. First, it granted Piedmont "victim" status. Piedmont simply rejected the ultimatum and waited for Austria to declare war (which it did), at which point Austria became the aggressor. Second, and relatedly, by labeling Piedmont the victim, it allowed Napoleon to aid his ally. Finally, it scuttled the British plan to demobilize Piedmont. Napoleon felt he had to agree to the British plan and he broke the news to Cavour that Piedmont would be expected to demobilize. Cavour's machinations almost came to nothing – until the ultimatum. In short, the use of coercion backfired and served the target's purpose, giving Piedmont the war they wanted and feared they would not get.

The main use of coercion in the (1839) Eastern Crisis was the ultimatum that Britain, Austria, and Russia gave to Muhammad Ali (pasha of Egypt). This constituted a more serious ultimatum, carrying the classic features of specific deadlines and consequences if the deadlines were not met. It also involved both carrots and sticks. The four major states (all but France) offered Ali rule over Egypt and Acre for life (carrots), and said that if he did not accept then in ten days the Acre offer would be withdrawn (sticks). After another ten days the Egypt offer would be withdrawn, and ten days later Britain and Austria would attack. Ali would not dignify the ultimatum with a formal reply and war quickly ensued. This case shows that questions of honor and dignity play a role in the rejection of ultimata even when the side applying the coercion has a clear military advantage.[15]

[15] Two additional prominent cases where honor seems to play a major role in the rejection of an ultimatum even when the power differential is clear are Athens and Melos during the Peloponnesian War and Germany and Belgium in 1914.

In the Crimean War actors again used coercion in limited, but important, ways. This involved the ultimatum Menshikov was supposed to have given the sultan at the beginning of the crisis demanding he respond within five days. This ultimatum was rejected, and the sultan (emboldened by the support of Britain and France) eventually declared war. The role of coercion in crises will be something this study will track throughout the book. Suffice to say for now that all three uses of coercion failed; that will not always be true, however, although it is a noteworthy trend.

Aftermath

It would take two more wars to unite all of Italy. In 1866, and again with an ally, Italy took part in Prussia's war of 1866 or the Seven Weeks' War, through which it gained all of the province of Venezia. Because it mobilized its army on the southern border of Austria, this action prompted Franz Josef to mobilize his army against both Italy and Prussia. This in turn made King William of Prussia give in to Bismarck's pressure to mobilize against Austria. The king had been reluctant to fight fellow Germans, as had Franz Josef, but Bismarck was able to use the mobilization of his Italian ally to get his way with the king. The Prussia victory was swift and Italy gained Venezia, but not directly from Vienna. Napoleon III, who took on the role of mediator, was given Venezia and then graciously bestowed it on Italy.

Gaining Rome and its surrounding area proved more complicated. Garibaldi tried to take the province several times, with and without the connivance of the Italian government (in 1862, 1864, and 1866). Once, in 1862, Garibaldi was even wounded by the Italian army after the government had disavowed him and he refused to withdraw. The pope had traditionally been protected by France, and in 1870 French troops were still in place there (see Rich 1992: 143–146). As he went to war with Prussia in 1870 (see Chapter 5), Napoleon III hoped to gain Italy as an ally, especially given his support of the Italians in 1859 and 1866. The Italians, however, had demurred before the war. When he got into unexpected military difficulties he made more of a plea, even going so far as to offer them Rome. They again refused. Napoleon III then withdrew the troops from Rome to fight against Prussia.

On September 2, 1870, Napoleon III was defeated at Sedan and captured. With that, the Italians attacked Rome on their own, but first alerted the major states of their intentions. They presented a "Cordial Ultimatum" to Pope Pius IX, who summarily rejected it. Italian troops then entered Rome on September 11. General Kanzler had 15,000 foreign troops under his command and prepared to defend Rome against 50,000 Italian troops The pope told him to defend the walls, but permitted

him to surrender once the walls were breeched. On September 20, the defenders capitulated and all of Rome except the pope's Leonine City (Vatican City) was now in Italy's hands. On October 9, after a popular vote, Rome was formally annexed. There was no formal peace between the pope and the Italian state, however, until 1929 when Mussolini signed the Lateran Accords.

Lessons of the Italian War of 1859–1860

1. **Not all wars result from misperception, a lack of understanding, accident, or poor crisis management. Not all wars are unnecessary – some are planned**. The Italian war of 1859 derived from a premediated and secret plot – among a select handful of individuals – to bring about a war. It is one of few wars in European history for which we have evidence of this phenomenon. Why does this matter? Some suggest that wars most often result from misperception (see, for instance, Stoessinger 1974),[16] a lack of understanding about how adversaries expect to fare in war (see Fearon 1995), or accidents – the latter being a function of bad or incompetent crisis management efforts (see Copeland 2000: 43). Theoretic causes like these lead to specific policy prescriptions, such as the need to increase transparency and buy time for diplomacy. Yet, for any deliberately planned war, these policy prescriptions will not work. No amount of diplomacy or transparency would have altered Cavour's plan; in fact, Cavour wanted to *decrease transparency* and *prevent peaceful diplomacy*. This leads to a simple, albeit important, conclusion: sometimes actors seek not to avoid war, but rather to promote it.

2. **The biggest challenge to concerts of power (and peace systems generally) is fundamental political change. The Concert of Europe could not handle the vast and numerous territorial changes that Italian nationalists demanded**, because at the time the prevailing norm for transferring territory was dynastic succession, not nationalism/self-determination. The nationalists could not make a philosophical or legal argument for the territorial change they demanded. The system – prioritizing stability – worked to preserve the status quo. Under that system, the norms of the time favored Habsburg ownership and this was reinforced by the legal settlement of the Congress of Vienna, which transferred much of this territory from the defeated Napoleon I to them.

[16] For a critical analysis of this claim, see Jervis (1988).

Any appeal to the Concert of Europe for territorial changes around the Italian peninsula could not have been granted without Austrian consent. The Concert failed because the prevailing norms made it difficult, if not impossible, for the nationalists to win by using the global governance system. Nationalists were trying to redraw the map of Europe, but nationalism was not a legitimate norm sanctioned in international law at this time. War became a way of bringing about major political change (Clausewitz [1832] 1982: 119).

3. **When one tries to shift from one norm for transferring territory to another, the probability of war goes up**. The international system collectively sets norms for legitimately transferring territory among sovereign states (see Shaw 2021). At key moments, however, disagreement arises about what these norms are. Disagreement over which norm to use is difficult to resolve because different norms favor different actors and can produce different outcomes. Nationalism and self-determination, for example, favor smaller (i.e., nonmajor) states and threaten the collapse of major-state empires (see Smith 2018).

Contradictory norms increase the probability of war because, in the absence of a decision-making criterion, war becomes a way of reaching a decision. This is because war is not simply a practice, but an institution within the international system that is accepted by all for making binding decisions in anarchy, including over territorial matters. The presence of contradictory norms and decision criteria increase the level of anarchy in the system by reducing the efficacy of the prevailing system of global governance.

4. **Wars can lead to contagion – through both intentional and unintentional means**.

a. An ongoing war can produce a *bandwagon effect*, where other actors choose to enter the war, making it expand. A bandwagon effect occurs when actors repeat an action taken by others. The term comes from American political campaigns. In that context, a parade for a candidate (historically) contained a wagon with a band playing to drum up support. People jumped on the band's wagon in the emotion of the moment.

Within the context of international wars, bandwagoning effects occur because an ongoing war can create a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for weaker actors to satisfy their own grievances. They could not do this before because of their limited power and the normative restraints placed on the use of force by the prevailing political system: Limited power prevents them from fighting an opponent alone, and the norms of the prevailing political system places constraints on their use of force. An ongoing war overcomes both obstacles (see Vasquez 2018: 30–31); it

not only weakens the opponent (i.e., forces the opponent to confront multiple adversaries at once, thereby reducing the opponent's likelihood of victory), but also does not first violate norms against the use of force, since the ongoing war has already broken these.

The Second Italian War of Independence also illustrates how bandwagoning effects can evolve. Once France joined Piedmont in the attack on Lombardy, then Tuscany and Modena revolted against their Habsburg rulers as well. These revolts were followed quickly with ones in Parma, the Papal States, and, toward the end of the year, Sicily. The latter ultimately spurred Garibaldi to lead his red shirts to Sicily, with the purpose of liberating the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In short, bandwagoning made what started in Piedmont and Lombardy engulf the entire peninsula in short order.

b. Even planned wars are difficult to control. Napoleon III planned for war – and encouraged it. Yet he could not control the war that resulted.[17] He struggled to restrain Cavour and Italian nationalist behavior outside Lombardy and Venezia; thus, he was unable to prevent the war from expanding to the Papal States, and then to the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. Without this control, he also lacked the ability to make the peace he wanted in 1859.

Similarly, Cavour had difficulty controlling Napoleon III and his policy. For instance, during Garibaldi's campaign in 1860, Napoleon III attempted to mediate, proposing that France protect Naples and send the French fleet to stop Garibaldi from crossing onto the mainland. Cavour and Garibaldi were saved because this alarmed the British, who used their navy to keep the Strait of Messina open (see Bridge and Bullen 2005: 144).

The other major protagonists similarly lacked control over the war. Although Austria declared war on Piedmont, it never could fight the war it wanted and hoped to win. Cavour also failed to control Garibaldi, who tried to attack Rome and who– if successful – might have gone on to Nice.

[17] Albrecht-Carrie (1958: 106), for example, says that for Napoleon III the Plombières agreement and the war "got completely out of control."

5 The Franco-Prussian War

Background

After the defeat of France in 1815, the Congress of Vienna created a German Confederation of all thirty-nine German states and free cities (Gibler 2009, vol. 1: 118–119), including the two major states – Austria and Prussia – that had helped defeat Napoleon at Waterloo. The congress also established the new borders of France, which many of the French saw as violating their "natural borders." Important areas remained outside of France, including parts of the Rhineland, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Belgium was the focus of a major crisis in 1830 when it declared its independence from the Netherlands, and there was a danger of a French occupation, which was prevented by British threats of armed intervention (Bridge and Bullen 2005: 90).

As the ideology of nationalism spread across Europe in 1848, liberals in both Germany and Italy called for unification of their peoples. In 1848, German speakers within the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, which were held by the king of Denmark as part of his personal hereditary fief separate from his kingship over Denmark, rebelled and established a provisional government (Sarkees and Wayman 2010: 81). They appealed to the German Confederation for assistance when Denmark invaded Schleswig, since Holstein was a member of the German Confederation. This resulted in the First Schleswig-Holstein War between Denmark and Prussia in 1848.[1] Threats from Russia, Sweden, and Britain led Prussia and the rest of the confederation to settle, and the war came to an end without any change in the status quo.

In 1864 the issue arose again, and this time Prussia and Austria came together along with the rest of the German Confederation and militarily defeated Denmark, resulting in the surrendering of Schleswig and Holstein. The Gastein Convention provided an initial settlement between

[1] Prussia was joined by Hanover, Saxony, and Bavaria in the militarized interstate dispute (MID) that preceded the war (Sarkees and Wayman: 2010: 82).

the major-state victors in which both had joint sovereignty, with Austria administrating Holstein and Prussia administrating Schleswig. Not surprisingly, the agreement broke down. Within the German Confederation a rivalry existed between Austria and Prussia for influence among the rest of the German states – that is, to determine who would be the dominant leader (see W. Carr 1991: 90–104). Once the Gastein Convention collapsed, the war of 1866, also known as the Seven Weeks' War, settled the struggle over Schleswig and Holstein and the latent question regarding dominance within Germany.

At the outbreak of the war, Austria was seen as a major state that had greater status and was considered more powerful than Prussia. Austria, after all, had played a larger role in the diplomacy that had defeated Napoleon I, and its minister – Metternich – had led in the construction of a new world order at Vienna (see Kissinger 1957). The war split the confederation, with smaller states allying with different sides. Among the significant states, Bavaria, Baden, Hesse Grand Ducal, Hesse Electoral, Saxony, Hanover, and Württemberg allied with Austria, while Mecklenburg-Schwerin allied with Prussia. Prussia won the war in seven weeks at the battle of Koniggratz. Bismarck kept the war limited by restraining the military's desire to go on and attack Vienna, because he feared that if the war dragged on this would leave the door open to outside armed or diplomatic intervention (Bismarck 1899, vol. 2: 49–51).

After the war, Prussia annexed several of the smaller German states outright, including Hanover, Electoral Hesse, Nassau, and Frankfurt-am-Main, as well as the disputed Schleswig and Holstein that gave rise to the war (see W. Carr 1991: 226–227 for a map). The 1815 German Confederation was dissolved, pushing Austria out of Germany (W. Carr 1991:138). The states north of the River Main – Saxony, Hesse-Darmstadt, Mecklenburg, Thuringian duchies, and the free cities of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen – became part of a new North German Confederation under Prussian leadership (Wawro 2003: 16).

What is relevant about the 1866 war for understanding the Franco-Prussian War is the role of France and the diplomacy surrounding Napoleon III's ambitions. Napoleon III thought, on the one hand, of exploiting the war to make some gains in the Rhineland and, on the other, of posing as champion of the small southern states that were allied to Austria and eventually defeated by Prussia. With regard to the former, Napoleon had obliquely given "hints about the restoration of the 1814 frontier in the Rhineland," which Bismarck dismissed (Bridge and Bullen 2005: 164), asking in August 1866 for adjustments in Saarbrücken, Landau, and even the Bavarian Palatinate or Rhenish Hesse or Luxembourg (Langer 1980: 731). With regard to the latter,

which was a more serious worry for Bismarck (1899, vol. 2: 51) there was a danger that Napoleon III would intervene during the war or afterward to aid the small southern states that were allied to Austria. It was this lingering threat after 1866 that made Bismarck think that German unification could not take place without a war with France (Bismarck 1899, vol. 2: 57–58, see also Langer 1980: 735).

It should be noted that within France the Second Empire (which Louis-Napoleon had declared less than a year after his December 1851 coup, when he made himself emperor)[2] had been liberalized after the spring 1869 elections, with the new constitutional reforms giving more powers to the Chamber of Deputies. In addition, Ollivier, who had been the leader of the opposition, was brought in as prime minister in January 1870 (Wawro 2003: 28). Further changes in the cabinet brought the Duc de Gramont, a hard-liner and the former ambassador to Vienna, to power as foreign minister in May 1870. It is against this historical backdrop that the diplomacy of Bismarck and the actions of Napoleon III in 1870 occur.

Historical Events

This war originated from events in Spain in the summer of 1870. What is striking about this case is the speed with which decisions were made and the resulting war broke out. The crisis began on July 3, when news of the offer of the Spanish throne to Prince Leopold von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen reached Paris, and ended on July 15 with a French declaration of war on Prussia – a period of just under two weeks.

Queen Isabella II of Spain was overthrown in September 1868 as a result of a navy and army revolt that joined with a coalition of liberals and republicans to push her out. The new provisional rulers and the Cortes sought to replace her with a foreign prince. Several had been approached, including Leopold, but they had all declined. In February 1870, Leopold was approached again, but this time through Bismarck and King William of Prussia, the head of the ruling Hohenzollern family. Leopold and his father, Karl Anton, were still reluctant but eventually relented when Bismarck persuaded them that it would serve Prussian interests (see J. Richardson 1994: 162).[3]

[2] See Marx (1852), who referred to the coup as *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

[3] It was only after the Second World War, with the opening of previously closed archives, that important evidence was uncovered showing that Bismarck had played a major role in promoting a Hohenzollern as early as February 1870 (W. Carr 1991: 180, see also 182 for an overall assessment of Bismarck's motives and plans).

The French immediately took umbrage at this offer. Since the time of Napoleon I, but going back to before Louis XIV, Spain had been an area of immediate interest to France. In fact, Queen Isabella was currently in exile there. To have a German prince, and a Hohenzollern one at that, on the Spanish throne raised several salient issues. First were the questions of honor and the diminishing French influence at the center of the Spanish government. Second, and more important, was the realist and strategic issue that such an ascension would sandwich in France on two sides. Third, Napoleon III regarded himself and France as the preeminent Continental state, especially after the Austrian loss of Lombardy in 1859–1860. In addition, the subsequent Seven Weeks' War of 1866 between Austria and the Prussia–Italy coalition had enhanced the personal prestige of Napoleon III, since the peace agreement had handed him Venezia to give to Italy. At the same time, however, the war of 1866 raised the prospect that Prussia might be a challenger to France's preeminence, particularly because Bismarck refused to compensate France after the war, as Napoleon III expected and demanded in return for his noninterference (Gall 1986: 344).[4] The Spanish offer increased the hostility and rivalry between the two countries, particularly on the side of France.[5] The Spanish succession may have also been seen by French leaders as an opportunity to win a diplomatic victory over Prussia (J. Richardson 1994: 164).

The key French decision-makers during the crisis were Foreign Minister Gramont, Prime Minister Emile Ollivier, Emperor Napoleon III, and Empress Eugénie (who especially influenced her husband). Of these, Gramont was the most enraged and desirous of war. Ollivier, who was normally more pacific, got swept up by the emotion of the moment (Aronson 2021 [1970]: 88). The empress – as might be expected, given that she was Spanish – was quite in favor of war. Napoleon III, however, had his doubts. He seems to have favored a way out, but the increasingly bellicose public sentiment concerned him. At any rate, he lacked the war fever and emotional response of Gramont and the others. Indeed, Aronson (2021 [1970]: 87) notes that Napoleon III was "almost the only person to keep his head during the following emotion-packed days" and that "his was the voice of sanity in a wilderness of passion."

[4] Bismarck (1899, vol. 2: 37–39) actually worried about French military intervention – particularly if it were in alliance with southern German states fighting on the side of Vienna – and asked Moltke what he would do if France intervened. Napoleon III was interested in some compensation with regard to Belgium and (especially) Luxembourg (see Pflanze: 1963: 372–373).

[5] Diehl and Goertz (2000), whose data start in 1816, identify a rivalry between the two beginning in 1830. Thompson (2001), who takes a longer historical perspective, sees it starting in 1756.

As soon as the announcement of the invitation to accept the throne became public, Prime Minister Emile Ollivier sent a message to Bismarck, asking if the Prussian government was involved in the situation. Bismarck had his deputy answer that this was a private and family matter of the royal house. "Ollivier wrote, 'they slammed the door in our face and laughed at us'" (J. Richardson 1994: 165; see also Foot 1960: 590). This response illustrates the emotion aroused by the news and the attitude toward Prussia for taking this action. The government then initiated a number of diplomatic actions to get the candidacy withdrawn. These culminated on July 6 with Foreign Minister Gramont demanding the withdrawal of Leopold before the Chamber of Deputies – implying that if the Germans did not withdraw Leopold's candidacy, France knew what its duty was.

Two days later, the French government sent a special envoy, Benedetti, to Bad Ems to talk to King William. Gramont wanted results within two days hence. If the king did not withdraw the candidacy, Gramont wrote, then "it's immediate war and in a few days we'll be on the Rhine" (J. Richardson 1994: 168). Grammont's private statement indicates not only the emotion that he, like Ollivier, brought to the table, but also his tremendous confidence that France would win swiftly and perhaps occupy the Rhineland – an objective going back to Thiers. This military confidence derived from the report of the war minister, Marshal Le Boeuf, to the cabinet, which noted that the army was ready to fight and had "superior weapons" (J. Richardson 1994: 166).[6]

Because negotiations with King William were not progressing much, Napoleon III simultaneously asked the king of Belgium to step in.[7] Beneditti's second meeting with the king on July 11 failed to produce results. That evening, however, discussions between Karl Anton and the Romanian envoy to Paris led Prince Leopold's father to withdraw the candidacy the next day. King William was relieved to avoid an intensification of the crisis, as he did not want war. In his words, "a stone has been lifted from my heart" (J. Richardson 1994: 168).

This should have ended the matter. France obtained what it had demanded – an apparent French victory, which both Napoleon III and Ollivier initially accepted. Napoleon III, however, told Ollivier to make the most of the matter and present it as a "diplomatic triumph" (Aronson

[6] Taylor (1946: 114) would agree with this view of French weapons. Many thought that the French Chassepot rifle was better than the Prussian needle gun that had been so effective in the war of 1866 (see Foot 1960: 593).

[7] For a description of some of these behind-the-scenes events, see Aronson (2021 [1970]: 92).

2021 [1970]: 89). Then they began to hear rumblings from deputies who wanted more, and so too, it was claimed, did the people of the boulevard (J. Richardson 1994: 169, see also Pflanze 1963: 455). Napoleon III remarked to Ollivier, "even if we should have no avowable cause for war, we should still be obliged to decide for it in obedience to the will of the country" (quoted in Steefel 1962: 206).

This kind of domestic reaction led to an expansion of demands centering on more than just a withdrawal and also insisting on additional statements. Gramont started the process by getting Napoleon III to agree that Benedetti should ask the king to assure him that Leopold would not be a candidate for the throne at any time in the future. Empress Eugénie also urged the emperor on, and the three, without consulting Ollivier, gave Benedetti his orders (Aronson (2021 [1970]: 90). James Richardson (1994: 169) says that Gramont wanted the king to make assurances to this effect "in terms amounting to an apology."[8] Demanding something amounting to an apology was an escalation in the crisis and a change in the dynamic up to this point.

Benedetti was dispatched to Bad Ems a second time. King William was affronted by the requests. Prior to the meeting, Bismarck wanted to stiffen the king's response. He was somewhat frustrated and even considered resigning at one point (Bismarck 1899, vol. 2: 94; Taylor 1955: 120; J. Richardson 1994: 169). The king turned Benedetti down through what became known as the Ems telegram; yet Bismarck edited the king's reply – something well within his rights and not unusual. These edits made the king's response more harsh – what some might even consider insulting – than what the king had actually said.[9] Bismarck then leaked the edited telegram to the press.[10]

Steefel (1962: 208) says that when the evening newspapers "brought the news of the 'Ems telegram,' the outburst of national feeling had become uncontrollable" and demonstrations broke out in the streets.[11]

[8] Taylor (1955: 120) actually refers to this as an "apology," as do William Carr (1991: 195, 202–203) and Pflanze 1963: 455); see also Gall (1986: 358) and Langer (1980: 736).

[9] William Carr (1991: 197) argues that this was not so much an "editing," with lines cut out, but an abbreviated version of the telegram that Bismarck dictated in a way that eliminated the more conciliatory aspects of William's language as well as any idea that the king was leaving the door open to further conversations.

[10] The king did not comment or complain about Bismarck's editing (see Steefel 1962: 215).

[11] The best analysis of public attitudes toward war in France is Case (1954); see also the summary in Steefel (1962: 247–248). There are many problems with discussing public opinion before the advent of survey research. Case's (1954) work is based primarily on the reports that the minister of the interior asked from all prefects outside of Paris about citizens' views of the Spanish case (Steefel 1962: 229). A majority of the prefects reported that their citizens were prepared to go to war.

With emotions running high in Paris before the telegram, the edited version pushed them over the edge.[12]

On the morning of July 14, after reading the Ems telegram, Gramont exclaimed to Ollivier, "My friend you are looking at a man who has just received a slap in the face" (J. Richardson 1994: 170). In the aristocratic culture of the time, a slap in the face by one man on another was a challenge to a duel. The next day, July 15, France declared war. The Chamber of Deputies approved war credits by a vote of 245 to 10.[13]

As in the Italian war of 1859, Napoleon III actually led the army to battle. On September 2, he and the army were surrounded at Sedan and he surrendered. There is a famous drawing of him sitting next to Bismarck, with the two in uniform, where he surrendered (see Wetzel 2001: cover). What is striking about this case is that in a little over ten days of decision-making from July 3 to July 15 Napoleon III lost his regime and went into exile, Alsace and northern Lorraine changed hands, Paris revolted, and Germany was united. And all of this was done for the ludicrous issue of the succession to the Spanish throne! The world changed radically and fundamentally in a way not anticipated by the French.[14] The case illustrates how war among the major states often has consequences that are far-reaching and unknown.[15]

While French decision-makers and King William did not anticipate the war and its outcome, this was not true of Bismarck. In many ways, he manipulated events to push them in a direction he wanted and that would produce the kind of war he wanted. Much of this was not known at the time. Only decades after the war broke out was his role fully understood. In an 1892 interview with a foreign journalist he sought to take credit for the war by emphasizing his role in editing the Ems telegram (W. Carr 1991: 179). With the publication of his memoirs (see Bismarck 1899, vol. 2: ch. XXII, especially 100–101), he could not help taking credit for editing the Ems telegram in the knowledge that it

[12] James Richardson (1994: 170) rejects the claim that the Ems telegram brought about the war and argues that the "telegram was not really needed to ensure the outbreak of war" (see also Taylor 1954: 205n2). See Hall (2017) for an analysis of this war as being brought about by provocations and the emotions they produced.

[13] It should be noted that Thiers, the hard-liner in the Eastern Crisis of 1839–1840, opposed war in 1870, indicating that they had already gotten what they had sought (Steefel 1962: 213). This underlines the point that people are hard-liners, not because of any intrinsic personality characteristic (Vasquez 2009: 219), but because of their political beliefs at the time.

[14] For a political-science analysis of how the world was changed, see Bueno de Mesquita (1990).

[15] For an elaboration of this theoretical point, see Braybrooke and Linblom (1963).

would have "the effect of a red rag on the Gallic bull" and thereby bring about war.[16]

The Franco-Prussian War is often seen as the third war of German unification after 1864 and 1866. In addition, these wars are often compared with the four Italian wars of independence, especially since events in the years 1866 and 1870 also played a large role in the Italian wars. Likewise, Bismarck is compared to Cavour. These comparisons are much too facile. Bismarck, unlike Cavour, was not a true nationalist; instead, he used the rhetoric of nationalism to attain goals that he pursued for reasons of state. This also underlines the other major difference between the two leaders. Cavour wanted a really united Italian nation, whereas Bismarck wanted a Germany united under a kaiser who was the Prussian king, which some might see as a kind of "Greater Prussia." In contrast, no one would regard the united Italy as a "Greater Piedmont" even though it was united under Victor Emmanuel II.

Both did share a long-term goal. Because of this, historians and others with the advantage of hindsight are prone to what is called a teleological error. Some assume the wars are more connected than they were at the time and the outcome of some master plan. The ability of leaders to control events is not as easy as it appears, even when there is a plot as in Plombières in the 1859 war (see Chapter 4). For Bismarck, in particular, there was no blueprint. He was someone who wanted unification under Prussia, but he was in no hurry. If the opportunity came along, as it did in 1870, he would seize it and help move it along. However, if there were obstacles, he would have been just as content not to push the issue.[17]

During the Franco-Prussian War he did more than was understood at the time. He deliberately edited the Ems telegram to "bait" the French decision-makers into war when he knew it was possible to win. A war served his larger purposes of making the smaller German states south of the River Main eventually accept a larger Germany headed by the Prussian king. This was accomplished through a shrewd Machiavellian move of getting France to declare war. The French further played into

[16] Such a complicated set of events that were not fully understood until decades later shows how difficult it is to understand the causes and reasons for war from press accounts. This case should serve as a cautionary note about overreliance on contemporary press accounts as a source of evidence in political science. What is clear from studying this case and the recent historiography surrounding the 100th anniversary of the First World War is how little the press of the time uncovered the real events that made a difference.

[17] On this personal tendency of Bismarck, see Pflanze (1963: 437); see also W. Carr (1991: 157, 182) and Gall (1986, vol. 1: 102).

his hands by starting the war with a troop incursion into the Bavarian Palatinate that seemed a prelude to an invasion even though it turned out to be only a scouting mission with the main invasion occurring in Saarbrücken (Prussia) (Wawro 2003: 86; see also Bridge and Bullen 2005: 168). Napoleon III hoped that the south German states, which had been defeated by Prussia in the war of 1866, would support France and see it as liberating them from the Prussian yoke. Instead, this action increased threat perception because the south German states, especially those on the border, did not trust the French, and it was fear of France that led them to join Prussia (see Foot 1960: 580, 599). Of course, the Rhineland states knew the French harbored ambitions for this area after the Congress of Vienna, with Thiers threatening war in 1840 over it in the midst of the Eastern Crisis (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, the crisis was critical and a wave of anti-French feeling swept through the southern German states, which in Carr's (1991: 206) view "forced the governments – whether they wanted to or not – to order mobilization" (see also Aronson 2021 [1970]: 108).

It is not clear, however, if Bismarck had this goal (of unification) in mind before the war or if it evolved as the war went on. While it is clear that he edited the Ems telegram and knew it would provoke a war, how much the goal of uniting the southern states with the northern confederation played in that decision is not obvious. Taylor (1955: 129–130, 139) argues that the goal of unification evolved as the war went on, saying Bismarck pushed the small states into the Reich to keep them in the war and that only afterward was he driven to go further. Nonetheless, Bismarck stated in his memoirs that the gulf between the south and the north could most effectively be bridged by a national war against a historically aggressive neighbor (Bismarck 1899, vol. 2: 99, cf. Pflanze 1963: 366). Likewise, he "took it as assured that war would have to necessarily be waged," although he did not know when this might occur (Bismarck 1899, vol. 2: 57–58).

Although it is unclear how firmly Bismarck thought, *ex ante*, that war could be used as a strategy to bring about German unification, it is clear that he exploited the war to move unification along. In particular, he thought a war with France would be necessary because the French would not permit the southern states to be incorporated into a larger Prussia. Nonetheless, he also firmly believed that the southern principalities could not be pressured into unification (see Gall 1986: 369–370, 486), but that the process needed to evolve of its own accord. He felt that Prussia needed to be patient, which accorded with his view that an "arbitrary interference in the course of history" could only result in

"the shaking down of unripe fruit" (Pflanze 1963: 433). He believed that the southern states, "themselves must decide whether they wished to join the north," as Pflanze (1963: 401) put it, and it was his hope that the growth of the economic Zollverein would help bring that about (Gall 1986: 338–339). However, the elections related to the Zollverein in 1868 went in the opposite direction (Steefel 1962: 233; Gall 1986: 340–341). This led him to turn to his other view about unification – namely, that "hatred of a foreign foe … had proved to be the force most capable of defeating the sentiment of separatism," and that "War with France could accomplish 'with one blow' what normally would require a generation" (Pflanze (1963: 437–438).

The causal process that Bismarck thought the war would bring about, to move unification along, has been elucidated by Pflanze (1963: 482). He argues that, as Bismarck anticipated, the war gave rise to "an upsurge of German national feeling," and that the sharing of combat and its dangers created a "psychological bond which, if it did not extinguish, at least diminished … tribal sentiments." By the end of the war this nationalist feeling meant that even Bavaria had to accept union. As Pflanze (1963: 483) notes: "The problem was no longer whether Bavaria would remain out of a German union, but under what conditions she would enter it."

Once the war did occur, it alone did not bring about accession to a united Germany – what at the time was called the Kleindeutschland (Little Germany – i.e., without German Austria). Instead, there was an extensive process of interaction, and even outright negotiation, as with Bavaria and Württemberg. It seems like war was a possible path that might speed unification along, but this does not mean that there were no other reasons for war (see Bismarck 1899, vol. 2: 98), or that a war between Prussia and France might not have occurred in the absence of this domestic consideration.

Everything worked as Bismarck hoped regarding the smaller southern states, with them seeking Prussia's protection once France declared war. In addition, the peace treaty ending the war of 1866 with the defeated smaller principalities had also stipulated that in time of war their railways and their militaries would be placed under Prussian command, which served Bismarck's purpose well.[18] Still larger states, like Bavaria, did not just roll over, and Bismarck had to negotiate with them as he did

[18] Smoke (1977: 125) argues that Bismarck was concerned that the small states would only cooperate with these provisions if they believed that France was responsible for the war.

with Württemberg (W. Carr 1991: 207).[19] Lastly, unification was facilitated because it was unification, not into a centralized government, but into a federal state with a common emperor and large areas of autonomy and representation in the Federal Council as well as a Reichstag.[20] Bismarck also got his way by making unification officially come from an invitation of the princes and not from a public justification of liberal nationalism. Even as it was, King William did not want his kingly title to be superseded by his new imperial title, a point on which he and Bismarck disagreed (W. Carr 1991: 207–208). Nonetheless, it was unification – with the ceremony taking place in Versailles at the defeat of France.

What makes this war unusual is that for Bismarck France was not the sole target per se; the smaller German states also were targets – not as enemies but as allies and then fellow members of a federal state.[21] Indeed, for the rest of Europe unification was seen as a primary war aim of Prussia (Gall 1986: 360), but domestically Bismarck's motivation was not fully understood because he kept his goal of unification and his editing of the Ems telegram secret. Nevertheless, the number of states that had to be amalgamated into a single union was rather remarkable. There were no fewer that twenty-five states, including four kingdoms, five grand duchies, thirteen duchies and principalities, three free cities, and the newly annexed Alsace-Lorraine (Langer 1980: 736). Such vast territorial changes would be difficult to accomplish without force and war. Indeed, it took two wars (1866 and 1870–1871) and a little over a half a decade to unify them, giving proof to Bismarck's aphorism (spoken in a different context) that "Not by speechifying and counting majorities are the great questions of the time to be solved … but by iron and blood."[22]

Text Box 5.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

[19] For a detailed review of concessions to Bavaria, Württemberg, and others, see Pflanze (1963: 486–490). King Ludwig was even given a secret bribe of 300,000 marks a year to make the offer of the imperial title to King William after all the arrangements had been concluded, something not revealed until after King Ludwig had died and Bismarck had left office (Pflanze 1963: 491–492; W. Carr 1991: 207).

[20] See Conze (1962: 276–278) for a discussion of the nuances involved in unification by "federalization" in Germany.

[21] For a review of the historiography on this question and the extent to which unification was at issue in the war, see W. Carr (1991: 180–182). For a political-science perspective, see Smoke (1977: 139), who argues that unification was Bismarck's central objective in the war.

[22] Speech before the Prussian Diet, September 30, 1832, quoted in Bartlett (1955: 696n1).

Text Box 5.1 Nutshell Summary: Franco-Prussian War

1. Queen Isabella II is overthrown and the new government invites Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to become king.
2. France objects and sends an envoy, Benedetti, to King William to demand the withdrawal of the candidacy. King William eventually relents.
3. After initially seeing this as acceptable, Ollivier, Gramont, and Napoleon III make more demands to satisfy pressure from the Chamber of Deputies and the people of the boulevard.
4. King William refuses the new demands, and Bismarck edits the Ems telegram to make the refusal more insulting. Gramont and Ollivier are enraged. France declares war.
5. Bismarck uses the war to push the small German states into willingly accepting Prussian leadership. Napoleon III is captured at Sedan; France loses the war and Alsace-Lorraine. Germany is united under Prussia.

Key Variables

The *domestic political situation* in each country, and especially the role of *hard-liners*, contributes most to the escalation of this crisis to war (see Table 5.1). We see this clearly in France, where Gramont and Ollivier – each outraged – call for war. The behavior of these individuals raises a general question: What role do emotions play in hard-line positions? The two are related, but distinct. In this case, concerns about honor – enhanced and directed in 1870 by the prevalent culture of dueling – fuel a sense of outrage and anger. These emotions drive French hard-liners, generating *military overconfidence* and the failure to consider prudence as a value in foreign policy decision-making. All these factors play into the hands of Bismarck, who remains cool, calculating, and therefore able to manipulate Gramont and Ollivier into a war he wants. The fact that Bismarck is also a key hard-liner in this case (i.e., dedicated to bringing about a war) demonstrates that the emotions exhibited by Gramont and Ollivier are a separate variable from hard-line beliefs and actions.

Numerous other hard-liners also exist in France. Napoleon III, for example, is a hard-liner, though not as openly belligerent as Gramont and Ollivier, and hard-line war hysteria dominates the French legislature and people of the boulevard. The latter demonstrates, as we saw in Chapter 4, that *democracy* does not always promote peace. Instead, here it provides an opening for existing hard-liners to pursue a war they want.

Table 5.1 *Variable summary for the Franco-Prussian War: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Domestic Politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists	Major	X	
Democracy	Moderate	X	
Bargaining strategy	Moderate	X	
Rivalry	Moderate	X	
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	Moderate	X	
Alliances	Minor	X	
Previous history	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Relative capabilities	Minor	X	
Proximity	Minor	X	
Nature of the issue	Minor	X	
Arms races	Minor	X	
System structure	None		
Norms	None		

Moreover, France expands its demands because of democratic pressures; Napoleon III, as well as Gramont and Ollivier, raise new demands only after they have achieved their primary goals because of criticism in the legislature and from the public. It is worth noting, however, that they are receptive to advancing new demands because of their hard-line stance. In the end, French actions make this yet another case of an unnecessary war brought about by hard-liners. It is unnecessary because the withdrawal of Prince Leopold's candidacy satisfied the major interests and demands made by the French government.

It needs to be noted that no accommodationists exist in the group making decisions for France. In contrast, the Prussian king William is a weak accommodationist. He would prefer to avoid war, but Benedetti and expanding French demands push him into accepting the war that Bismarck wanted. Given these domestic forces, it is no surprise that the *system structure* plays no significant role in this case. The Concert of Europe does not address this case, though its legacy continues to exist until the July 1914 crisis.

These domestic forces also drive *bargaining strategy*. King William sees Benedetti's initial demands as undiplomatic and almost insulting. More importantly, Bismarck exploits the hot-headed tendencies of Gramont and Ollivier to adroitly bring about a decision for war via the Ems telegram. In this way, bargaining strategy plays at least a moderate role in the escalation of the crisis to war. It is also noteworthy that neither side refers to any *norms* in the bargaining process.

Rivalry also encourages crisis escalation, though not as prominently as the French domestic political situation. Rivalry and the recent victory of Prussia over Austria, predispose (or prime) both sides for conflict. French decision-makers view themselves as a leading power – a position that a rising Prussia challenges, especially through the possibility that Prussia could place a Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne. As with any rivalry, a certain amount of *hostility* underlies this relationship. That hostility likely encourages the response of the hot-headed Ollivier – and especially Gramont. Napoleon III is likewise irked with the way Bismarck treated his demand for compensation after the Seven Weeks' War. Nonetheless, since the impact of hostility is indirect, we label it as having a minor impact. Because Napoleon III is irked with Bismarck, the immediate *previous history* can also be seen as playing a role in the trajectory of the crisis, albeit in a comparatively minor way.

Alliances play an unusual role. Because France has no allies, Bismarck believes a Prussian victory more likely and consequently pushes for war. It must be noted, however, that France has no allies because Bismarck has maneuvered things to isolate France. Napoleon III, on the other hand, thinks that he can gain the support of Austria–Hungary and Italy, thereby increasing the probability of a French victory. On the surface, this is not an unreasonable position, but it turns out to be a case of *wishful thinking*. That, as well as the earlier-referenced French *military overconfidence*, are misperceptions that moderately encourage the French to escalate the crisis. Each of these factors, however, is secondary to other variables that play a moderate role.

Three additional variables play a tertiary and minor role in the crisis outcome. First, French decision-makers have minor concerns about *relative capabilities*. These concerns make the Hohenzollern candidacy trigger a crisis for the French. Such concerns, however, are not as strong as those about honor. Second, *proximity* facilitates conflict and threatens France. It not only permits French and Prussian forces to engage each other more easily than if the two were more distant from each other, but should a Hohenzollern occupy the Spanish throne, Prussia would also sandwich France. The *nature of the issue* – ostensibly the succession to the Spanish throne – plays a minor role in that it really touches upon concerns about the balance of power, honor, and rivalry. Finally, the quantitative data (Sample 1997) show there is a Horn (1987) *arms race* both before (1870–1871) and after (1872–1873) the crisis. This implies concerns about *relative capabilities*, but no explicit extended discussion of these buildups exists before the war – no doubt because other variables overshadow such concerns. For this reason, arms races play a minor, though a real but latent, role in the crisis outcome.

Theoretical Analysis

This case raises several issues for IR theory. Although the exact issues differ depending on whether one looks at the case from the perspective of France or of Prussia, certain common questions arise. The four major theoretical questions raised by this case deal with the role of the culture of dueling in undermining a rational actor perspective within France; the role of wishful thinking and military overconfidence in France doing the same thing; the role of realism and the balance of power guiding the outside major states; and, lastly, the ways in which French foreign policy deviated from the expectations of the Wilsonian (monadic) democratic peace.

From the perspective of France, the key issues deal with why French decision-makers were involved in such a disastrous war and were unable to anticipate the risks adequately. One answer to this question has to do with the norms that affected and guided their thinking. Instead of realism or a broadly defined rational actor model, French decision-makers seemed to let a culture of dueling and related emotional factors guide crucial actions, which resulted in war. The rational actor model can be very broad – as in actors should promote benefits and reduce costs – or more precise – as in the field of public administration that requires a synoptic search for the most efficient means to a given end (see Simon 1947).[23]

The major problem with this framework is that the specific policy is not always clear – a large number of policies can be seen to be in the interest of an actor (i.e., producing some benefit that is lower than anticipated costs). However, an examination of key French decision-makers shows that at a crucial moment in deciding to go war they were not guided by this model, or even guided primarily by considerations of interests, but rather by concerns of honor, which were interpreted by the norms embodied in the culture of dueling prevalent at the time.

The basic evidence we have that the culture of dueling affected French decision-making is that Gramont makes explicit reference to it when he says to the prime minister, "My friend you see before you a man who has been slapped in the face" – a common reference to how a gentleman was challenged to a duel. Scholars have also interpreted French decision-making in this way (see Wetzel 2001). Of note, although common at the individual level, adhering to the rules of the dueling culture was not pervasive at the collective, nation-state level. Gramont and Ollivier saw

[23] In international relations, see the expected-utility variation of this approach in Bueno de Mesquita (1981).

them as relevant, but how common they were in foreign policymaking at the time is an open question.

What is clear is that Bismarck was not influenced by such emotions as honor, but guided primarily by a general view of realpolitik. Emotion did not guide Bismarck's dealings with the French, but he knew his rivals could be manipulated by their emotions, and he was able to do that. What guided him, instead, was a sense that it was in the Prussian state's interest to unite the smaller principalities into a North German Confederation. As long as things went according to his wishes he was cool, collected, and calculating. When the issue of the Spanish succession first arose, he thought it might be of use to the Prussian state for other goals. Nonetheless, when things did not go well his personal emotions did come forth. For instance, when he could not stiffen King William or get him to follow his recommendations, he thought of resigning (Taylor 1955: 120).[24]

Bismarck's plan to push the small states toward unification worked as well as it did because it reflected a pattern that war increases state centralization. Bismarck may have intuited this; we do not really know. A century later, as noted in Chapter 4, Tilly (1975) showed that war promotes the centralization of a state by increasing its powers to tax and to conscript in order to face an external threat, especially a threat to survival.

A second theoretical issue raised by this case, and which explains French decision-making, has to do with Napoleon III and Gramont's wishful thinking about alliances and French military overconfidence. From this perspective, a key factor was that French decision-makers miscalculated which allies they could count on. Again, in this interpretation Bismarck appears the better rational calculator. He made sure that France could not enhance its power through alliances. He made sure, long prior to the war, that France would be isolated and that it would not have any allies if war occurred.

Napoleon III, however, thought that both Austria–Hungary and Italy would stand at his side and thereby overwhelm Prussia militarily. A possible alliance with Austria–Hungary seemed a reasonable expectation since it would permit them an opportunity to reverse the defeat of 1866. Gramont, who had recently been the French ambassador to Vienna, was engaged in negotiations that supported this supposition. Likewise, the French general Lebrun believed that Austria–Hungary would mobilize to tie down the Prussians (Taylor 1954: 203). In actual fact, however,

[24] For an interesting analysis of rationality and emotion in Bismarck's decision-making in the context of realpolitik, see Rathbun (2018).

the Hungarians resisted such an alliance; and the Austrians, to the extent they were willing to enter the war, were only planning to do that if a definitive battle made it clear the French were going to win (Taylor 1954: 208; see also Smoke 1977: 132). The failure to accurately read the Austrians was encouraged, no doubt, by a large element of wishful thinking.[25]

A similar expectation arose with respect to Italy. Going back to 1859 and again in 1866 when Napoleon III served as a conduit by which Italy gained Venezia, Napoleon III thought the Italians were in his debt. This, plus material incentives he was willing to provide regarding Rome, led him to believe that Italy would be an ally. Ultimately, none of these considerations persuaded the Italians, and they took Rome on their own, leaving France isolated.

The question of rationality, and of Bismarck entrapping the French, raises a third theoretical question: whether and how this war could have been avoided. On the simplest terms, France could avoid the war if they did not expand their demands. For this to happen, Napoleon III (and perhaps Ollivier) had to resist Gramont's call to war and rein him in, as King Phillipe did Thiers in 1840, and then stand up to the pressure for war from the Chamber of Deputies and the larger public, especially in Paris. None of this was in the cards since Napoleon III, although the least hard-line of the three, shared the sense that France's honor, and hence his own, was at stake.

A more likely exit off the road to war was to consider turning the matter over to a congress of the major states. The cabinet addressed this matter early on the day of July 14 as it decided to mobilize the reserves. Aronson (2021 [1970]: 91) reports that "the exhausted Emperor" took up and greeted the idea of a conference with "a flood of tears." By evening, with crowds calling for war,[26] Napoleon III still vacillated between full mobilization and a congress, but a meeting of his advisors and the cabinet moved him toward the former. Empress Eugénie (who was the daughter of a Spanish nobleman) fervidly urged war and "Gramont practically shouted the emperor down when Napoleon glanced at the idea of a congress," according to Foot (1960: 598). Later Napoleon reflected: "France has slipped out of my hand … I have no choice but to advance at the hand of a public opinion which I can neither stem nor check" (quoted in Foot 1960: 598). In the end, Napoleon III, who was ill and in pain both during the crisis and on the battlefield (Wawro 2003: 25–26, 35;

[25] For more details on Napoleon's III thinking regarding alliances with Austria–Hungary and Italy, see Foot (1960: 583–584).

[26] For a vivid description of some of these events, see Aronson (2021 [1970]: 92).

Hall 2017: 26–27; Aronson 2021 [1970]: 95, 113, 174, 177) permitted others – Ollivier and, especially, Gramont – to take the lead. War could have been avoided by a stronger leader, who, rather than expanding the demands, would have turned the matter over to a congress and led the public rather than followed it.[27]

A more complicated question is whether the war could have been avoided from Prussia's side. Since Bismarck was not always wedded to a war, in order to find out when war could have been avoided one must identify the time and opportunity when the Franco-Prussian relationship was most propitious for a settlement and when the incipient rivalry between the two could have been shifted toward more cooperation. This turning point seems to have been the 1867 Luxembourg crisis. Napoleon III was willing – in return for some compensation in terms of Luxembourg and perhaps Belgium – to not stand in the way of Prussia's bringing the southern German states under its sphere (Gall 1986: 334–336). This grand bargain might also have resulted in an alliance between the two states. If it had come to fruition, then Bismarck would have had no ulterior motive in going to war with France and thus no ulterior motive in editing the Ems telegram. Instead, the failure to reach a deal, which was due mostly to Bismarck, who did not believe that the French would go through with such an agreement (because they would not permit such a shift in the balance of power (Gall 1986: 335),[28] led to a greater turn toward animosity. Gall (1986: 335) states that after France failed to secure compensation it became clear that France would resist the incorporation of the southern German states[29] and that Bismarck "increasingly regarded a military clash as unavoidable." The Luxembourg crisis was a missed opportunity, and after that Bismarck looked at France as more of an obstacle to German unification and at war as something that might occur both as a way of overcoming the obstacle and speeding along the unification process.

The final theoretical issue raised by this case has to do with the institutional explanation of the democratic peace. As in the Eastern Crisis and the Crimean War, the events are the opposite of what democratic peace theorists expect. The legislature does not limit the power of leaders to

[27] One of Morgenthau's (1960: 567) nine rules of diplomacy, which was violated in this case, is "The Government Is the Leader of Public Opinion, Not Its Slave."

[28] In this he was probably incorrect. Gall (1986: 335) points out that Bismarck was "genuinely astonished" when some French documents seized in 1870 revealed the existence of a group involved in French politics that believed an agreement was possible.

[29] Langer (1980: 735) goes further and says the failure to get an agreement on Luxembourg at the 1867 international conference meant that Napoleon III "looked upon a final reckoning with Prussia as inevitable, reorganized his army and initiated negotiations for an alliance with Austria and Italy."

go to war; neither do the people of the boulevard. Instead, both demand more from their leaders than the initial withdrawal of Leopold's candidacy. It was they who made Ollivier and Napoleon III feel they had not won a sufficient victory. Instead of democratic processes restraining hard-line and war-prone policies, these processes ended up pushing for war. It was the democratic aspects (including Gramont and the new liberal ministers) of the Second Empire that made for war hysteria, not Napoleon III. He, Ollivier, and Gramont were ready to accept the outcome but were pushed into a set of decisions that became a disaster for them and France.

Defenders of the monadic democratic peace might argue that the Second Empire was not a real democracy or a mature one. It is true that France does not score a six or above on the Polity IV index. Nonetheless, it is not coded in 1870 as an autocracy (−1), as it was in 1841, but rather as a polity "in transition" (−88). More importantly, it is one of the more democratic states at that time – one could argue third after Britain and the United States. The key point, however, is that it is the most democratic elements of this polity that made for war, and an unnecessary one at that.

Lessons of the Franco-Prussian War

1. **A central lesson of this case is that this is an *imprudent* war**.[30] In the first phase of the crisis the French had won what they wanted: the withdrawal of Leopold's candidacy for the Spanish throne. Then, instead of accepting that diplomatic victory, they expanded their demands, which resulted in war. This war, which was the outcome after less than two weeks of decision-making, from July 3 to July 15, led to the loss of Napoleon III's throne, the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and a unified Germany that was more powerful than Prussia and eventually invaded France in 1914 and 1939. All of these were unanticipated outcomes that changed the world in which France lived.

These disastrous results, coupled with the fact that France had already won diplomatically, makes this an imprudent war. Morgenthau (1960: 10), in his fourth principle of political realism states: "Realism, then, considers prudence – the weighing of the consequences of alternative political actions – to be the supreme virtue in politics." French decision-makers from Gramont and Ollivier to the Chamber of Deputies and the people of the boulevard let their emotions and concerns of "honor" rush France into war. The consequences of losing the war were not given any real thought, partly because of a military overconfidence that was not fully

[30] Lord (1966: 4, quoted in Hall 2017: 2, 22) called it, "the most imprudent war that ever was," perhaps with a bit of exaggeration (or at least without a systematic examination).

warranted by the power balance (see Aronson (2021 [1970]: 93–94),[31] although it must be said that most of the outside powers – especially Russia and Austria – expected France to win (see Bridge and Bullen 2005: 168; see also Aronson (2021 [1970]: 107 on the London press). French decision-makers did not weigh whether the expanded goals for which the war was declared were worth the risks. More importantly, they did not even entertain what political costs a loss might entail. For realists, prudence entails a cold calculation of the costs and benefits of a war along with its risks. It involves an assessment of its possible consequences and a comparison of the consequences of alternative actions.

In retrospect, the imprudent nature of the war is obvious; at the time, however, things were not as clear. Napoleon III thought he might get Austria–Hungary and/or Italy as an ally. As noted in the Theoretical Analysis, this turned out to be wishful thinking. The larger goal in this second phase was to humiliate Prussia and thereby reassert France's place as the leading power on the Continent. Through his editing of the Ems telegram, Bismarck challenged this goal, which baited the French into a war he wanted and knew he could win. French decision-makers became so emotional and so tied to the culture of dueling that they took the bait without engaging in the objective calculations of the rational decision-making model that realism and other approaches embody. Given the immediate and long-term consequences of this war for France, this case is an enduring reminder of the importance of prudence in international politics.

2. **What is especially important was that, for France, this is not only an imprudent war but also an *unnecessary* war**. Earlier, an unnecessary war was defined as "a war that could have been avoided by a peace proposal that satisfied the interests all the major states that went to war" (see the Crimean War case in Chapter 3). This definition is still applicable, since the outcome of the discussions between Benedetti and King William from July 7 to July 12 at Bad Ems led to the withdrawal of Leopold. In principle, this satisfied the issue positions and interests of each side. Initially, Napoleon III, Ollivier, and Gramont recognized it as a victory. Still, there is more to this case, and we expanded our initial definition of unnecessary war so that *if after one side wins and has attained its stated objectives, that side then makes new demands that lead to a war*

[31] Of course, it must be kept in mind that military overconfidence is an observation typically asserted after the fact and is clearest when one side loses the war. Nonetheless, the rapidity with which Prussia won wars against states that were considered more powerful than it in terms of their status – namely, Austria in 1866 and France in 1870 – suggests that Prussian strength, at minimal, was gravely underestimated. Bismarck and Moltke, however, did not underestimate it.

that is considered an unnecessary war, because the victor has already won what it wanted without going to war. Furthermore, in this case it was reasonable for the parties to be satisfied with what they achieved. This can be seen by examining what Benedetti now asked of King William in the second phase of his discussions. He now wanted assurances that Leopold would not in the future be a candidate for the Spanish throne – something that was not likely to happen or be considered. In addition, he wanted the king to state that no other Hohenzollern would be a candidate. This would amount to an apology, which was an affront to the king, an insult that served no immediate policy objective. Bismarck then exploited the situation in his editing of the Ems telegram for his own purposes, including moving unification along among the southern states. The assurances that the French demanded infused the dispute with intangible qualities that escalated the question to a matter of honor and prestige. Then Bismarck escalated it further to entrap Gramont and Ollivier. For France, then, this was an unnecessary war. For Bismarck, this was clearly not the case. For him, the crisis and the war provided an opportunity to advance his goal for a united Germany under Prussian leadership. This case also shows that **misperception and arrogance can lead to an unnecessary war, especially if a hard-liner in an opposing state exploits these**.

3. **Another key lesson is that individuals make a difference**. Despite the presence of certain structural or contextual factors that increase the probability of war (like the characteristics of the issue), individuals can have an impact in the face of these variables so that they further increase the probability of war. This is seen most dramatically on the French side with Gramont and Ollivier. It was Gramont who took the Ems telegram as a slap in the face and a challenge to a duel. It was he who was militarily overconfident and thought that in a few days they would be on the Rhine. Ollivier, although less hard-line than Gramont and more liberal-minded (Gall 1986: 348), had similar sentiments and thought that Bismarck had slammed the door in their faces and were laughing at them. Both, but especially Gramont, were "hot-heads" (see Hall 2017: 19; Aronson 2021 [1970]: 87) and quickly saw this as a case of honor, involving insults that needed to be dealt with by military action or threat. They, egged on by legislators, failed to look at the situation in a cool rational way and by realist principles of power and of prudence.

In contrast, Bismarck did precisely that.[32] He worked to make sure France would be isolated and not have allies. Before editing the Ems

[32] It should be noted that Thiers, addressing the newly elected chamber following the defeat at Sedan, resisted the emotionalism and war hysteria that persisted among

telegram, he asked Moltke "once more if the army was ready" (Pflanze 1963: 456). He then baited France into a war he wanted, partly for the purpose of getting the small German states to accept Prussian leadership. His editing of the Ems telegram, and in effect manipulating the king, who did not want war, made him the individual on the German side that made a difference. Without Bismarck and his goals and stratagems, the war would have been less likely or at least had more of a chance of being avoided.

Individuals can, and often do, make a difference in crisis management and whether crises go to war or not. They can do this by affecting the quality of diplomacy, making it more likely that a resolution or compromise will be made. Conversely, they can deliberately, as in Bismarck's case, pursue strategies that increase hostility and infuse issues with characteristics like honor to make them more prone to violence.

One of the reasons individuals had such a prominent role in this case was that the Concert of Europe had no real role in this crisis. Of course, it played no role partly because Bismarck did not want it to play a role. Napoleon III was willing to see a conference take place on the immediate issue of the Spanish throne, but was cut off by Gramont. More importantly, from the German nationalist perspective and Bismarck's hidden agenda of uniting Germany, the "constitutional structure" of the Concert did not permit such a large-scale change of borders.

The role of individuals as a variable is often described by historians as "contingency." Contingency is sometimes seen as the key factor that makes the difference between war and peace. Otte (2014: 504ff.) discusses contingency in these terms in his analysis of the July 1914 crisis. For him, despite all the factors external to individuals – like alliances, arms races, rivalry, and so forth in 1914 – what made the difference between whether this crisis escalated to war was the individual actions of the decision-makers and how they interacted. While most scholars do not see contingency as the single most important causal factor, they do believe that contingency can play a role. What individuals do and who they are matter in crisis diplomacy and management.

4. **The Concert of Europe played no role** and was not a main player. In part, this was because neither France nor Prussia called a conference for it to be involved. Each treated their dispute as a bilateral affair. More importantly, while the Concert could have dealt with the

republicans when Prussia demanded Alsace-Lorraine by saying to them: "Either war or peace. This is serious. There's no room for childishness when it's a matter either of the fate of two very important provinces or the fate of the country as whole" (quoted in Howard 1960: 463).

issue of the succession to the Spanish throne, it is not clear how it could have dealt with the long-term issue of German unification. This issue was not even raised in 1870, but nonetheless the "constitutional structure" of the Concert did not provide for such large-scale changes.[33] All these factors led to its disuse.

5. **The masses often want war and exhibit war hysteria that pushes leaders into unwise choices without a sufficient calculation of the risks, consequences, and probability of winning**. In many ways, it was the Chamber of Deputies and the people of the boulevard that made the French leadership expand its objectives after winning. **This case is another example against the Wilsonian (monadic) democratic peace** or, more technically, the institutional explanation of the democratic peace.

Contrary to what is expected according to the Wilsonian explanation of the democratic peace, the people and their representatives in the Chamber of Deputies did not try to restrain the executive from going to war. Instead they wanted more, and they were the heart of a war hysteria that pushed the leadership into war. Napoleon III, Ollivier, and even Gramont felt this pressure and responded to it. This case is another anomaly for the Wilsonian democratic peace.

6. Finally, this case suggests that **balance-of-power thinking is flawed or at minimum extremely difficult to properly apply in the real world**. Britain and Russia permitted a potentially powerful opponent – namely, a united Germany under Prussia – to be created. They should have realized that such a new state posed a potential challenge to the existing distribution of power among the major states – the so-called balance of power. Under realist logic, they should therefore have opposed its creation. Instead, Russia saw a united Germany as a potential balancer against France; Britain also viewed it that way and worried more about French hegemony than the dangers posed by a united Germany (Gall 1986: 360; see Kissinger 1994: 145 on the views of British leaders). Neither viewed Germany in the larger context of the major-state system. They abandoned the traditional policy of keeping German states divided and, therefore, comparatively weak. In particular, Russia should have realized the danger in a united Germany since Germany was contiguous to it. In little over a generation, Germany would invade Russia twice and fight two devastating world wars with Britain. The balance-of-power theory is meant to short-circuit such wars by preventing the formation of new threatening conglomerations of capability. Neither Britain nor Russia was able to see the insights of this theory and prevent

[33] The same was true for the 1859–1860 Italian War of Independence.

a significant increase in Prussian power. Part of this failure must be attributed to the theory itself and its ability to be applied in pressing events of history. The various ways in which the balance of power could be interpreted – at the time and then in retrospect – *illustrates the difficulty in using the decision rules of balance-of-power thinking to make policy*. It also illustrates that the balancing of power is more indeterminate, in terms of suggesting a policy, than automatic (cf. Waltz 1979).

Part III

The Twentieth Century through World War II

The first half of the twentieth century saw the most devastating wars since the Napoleonic Wars. The century began, however, with a limited war – the Russo-Japanese War (Chapter 6) – not unlike those of the nineteenth century. There were also crises that did not go to war: the first two Moroccan crises (Chapter 7) and the Bosnian Crisis (Chapter 8), which gave rise to the July 1914 crisis (Chapter 9) that ended in the First World War, as well as the Munich and the Danzig crises (Chapter 10, Aftermath), which gave rise to the Second World War in Europe. That latter war eventually extended to Asia – a dynamic we capture through our treatment of Pearl Harbor (Chapter 11). The chapters in this part focus on how the crises that did not go to war avoided war and why those that resulted in war did so, as well as how the latter wars could have been avoided.

6 The Russo-Japanese War

Background

Japan and China have a long history. During the height of China's power at the time of the Middle Kingdom, Japan was treated as a subservient entity that paid tribute to the Ming emperors, although there were armed conflicts periodically. In 1853, Japan was "opened" to the West by Commodore Perry, a US naval officer. Japan learned from Western advancements and adapted during the Meiji Restoration. However, China did not adopt Western practices. By the end of the nineteenth century, Japan had become more powerful than China and began to expand. The key turning point was the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, which Japan handily won.

By this time, China had experienced various encroachments by the Western imperialist states, which regarded China as the "sick man of Asia." Not wishing to let Japan conclude a peace with China on its own, France, Russia, and Germany intervened diplomatically in the Sino-Japanese War to reduce Japan's winnings. In particular, they demanded the return of the Liaotung Peninsula, including Port Arthur, to China. Japan acceded to this pressure.

In 1897, Germany seized Kiaochow and created an imperial enclave there. With this, Russia demanded compensation and in 1898 the Qing Dynasty granted it a twenty-five year lease of Port Arthur. This provided Russia with a warm water port, but it also greatly irritated Japanese leaders, who had been forced to give up Port Arthur only a few years before. The same year saw Britain gain leases from China for Weihaiwei and the extension of Hong Kong, also partly because of the German seizure of Kiaochow.

The decline of China and the carving up of its empire led to anti-Western sentiment in China. That, coupled with peasant uprisings related to food shortages, boiled over into the 1900 Boxer Rebellion. To gain domestic support, the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi issued a proclamation condemning foreign nations. The Boxers held to a number of

myths and believed, among other things, that bullets would pass through them. In this, they proved incorrect. As the Boxers attacked Westerners, including missionaries and eventually their foreign legations and diplomatic staffs in Peking, the imperial states – Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria–Hungary, and Italy, as well as Japan and the United States – intervened with troops. Most of the military action took place in the Peking area and the rebellion was put down quickly. Once order was restored, the imperial nations withdrew their troops – with the exception of Russia, which left troops in Manchuria.

In 1902 there was a major change in the international politics of the Far East when Britain and Japan signed a formal military alliance. The 1902 Anglo-Japanese treaty ended Britain's so-called isolation, during which it did not sign military alliances with major states. It also provided Japan with a major-state ally, permitted Britain to reduce its naval strength in the area (and therefore its naval expenditures), and recognized Japanese interests in the Far East, especially Korea, where it supported Japan's general goals. Through this alliance Japan received major-state recognition of its status and an ally in the Western major-state system. Unlike in 1895, Japan would now have an ally in Western deliberations about Asia.

Historical Events

The 1903–1904 crisis and the resulting 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War were over Korea and Manchuria. It was essentially a struggle between two imperial states over who would have more influence and a greater commercial and military position in what were still areas within the Chinese Empire. Fundamentally, it was a conflict over colonial territory, including dominant control of Korea.

At first sight, it seemed as if a bargain could be reached between Russian and Japanese claims. The Japanese were willing, in principle, to give Russia predominant "influence" in Manchuria in return for Russian recognition of Japan's predominant "influence" in Korea. James Richardson (1994: 110–117) provides a detailed summary of these talks (see also Nish 1985). Negotiations went well from the end of October 1903 and even into early November. According to Richardson, on the whole Japan offered significant concessions, but Russia did not reciprocate, causing negotiations to stall until just before the war broke out.

The key turning point was in early November when the Russian ambassador, Baron Rosen, accepted a bargain that traded Manchuria for Korea – the so-called Man-Kan Kokan policy. He and Foreign Minister Komura Jutaro signed this "*ad referendum*," meaning that the agreement

would be referred to the tsar for approval.[1] The agreement was sent first to Admiral Alekseiev, commander of the Pacific fleet, governor of Port Arthur, and viceroy of the Far East in charge of Russia's East Asian foreign affairs. Alekseiev objected to the agreement and recommended that Tsar Nicholas II reject it, which he did.

Now, the concessions that Rosen had made were withdrawn in Tokyo because the tsar had vetoed them. This became the turning point for Japan, which moved away from a successful bargain to frustration and eventually a resort to war. In the bargaining after the rejection of the *ad referendum* agreement, Russia tried to exclude Manchuria from the negotiation and limit Japanese control of Korea, especially any concessions that would give Japan more strategic and military control on the ground. This tack seemed to move away from the idea of a quid pro quo[2] and instead focused just on Korea. The Russians had important commercial interests, particularly in the timber industry near the Yalu River. Bezobrazov, an entrepreneur and influential political advisor to the tsar, was connected to this timber industry (Nish 1985: 169). He recommended a hard-line on Japan but was reined in by Alekseiev once the latter became viceroy. The Russians therefore proposed a neutral zone and talks bogged down.

The negotiations then became deadlocked and the Japanese began to think that they were going nowhere. There was also concern that the Russians may have been stalling until they had completed a leg of the trans-Siberian railway from Harbin to Port Arthur, which would have permitted them to bring troops into Manchuria more quickly. There was in fact some truth to this contention; Alekseiev believed time was on Russia's side because the railway was being built. The Japanese leadership became exasperated with the deadlock and believed both that the Russians were not negotiating in good faith and that only going to war would get Japan what it wanted. As the Japanese stated officially in their last message before breaking off talks, "finding … no prospect of securing from the Imperial Russian Government an adhesion either to Japan's moderate and unselfish proposals or any other proposals … the Imperial Government have [*sic*] no other alternative than to terminate the present futile negotiations" (quoted in Nish 1985: 213).

The structure of the Japanese government at this time consisted of an emperor, a prime minister, a foreign minister, and the *genro* – a body of elder statesmen and former prime ministers. Prime Minister Katsura and

[1] The existence of this important piece of evidence – that an agreement could have been made that would have prevented war – is confirmed by James Richardson (1994: 114) by examining French documents.

[2] Latin meaning "one thing for another."

Foreign Minister Komura took the lead in this crisis and were in favor of taking a hard-line position because of the stalled talks. The *genro* were more accommodationist (Nish 1985: 197), but by December even they thought that war was the only way to handle the situation. On December 24 they approved war preparations. The full cabinet did the same on December 28.

Only at that late date did the Russians realize that Japan was actually thinking of going to war. They then scrambled to make concessions. Their last proposal abandoned their insistence on a neutral zone, which had deadlocked the negotiations. It was supposed to be sent on February 4 but was somehow delayed until February 7; by February 5 war operations for a surprise attack were under way (Nish 1985: 213).

James Richardson believes that the last Russian proposal was a breakthrough that would have eventually resulted in an agreement.[3] Richardson (1994: 117) concludes: "Reviewing the negotiations as a whole, their most remarkable feature is that it was only in the final phase, when the Japanese perceived the negotiations to have failed, that Russia's proposals come close to reflecting its willingness to accept the essentials of a Korea-Manchuria 'exchange' in order to avoid war." He believes that the short-term interests of both sides should have produced a bargain, and would have if not for the timing and the misperceptions involved.

The Japanese decision for war resulted because they believed the talks were going nowhere. They also thought that in order to maximize their chance of success against the large Russian navy they had to engage in a surprise attack. They did so on February 8–9, 1904, after which they landed troops in Korea and Manchuria.[4] The raid on Port Arthur, although inconclusive, incapacitated the Russian navy, making it no longer a factor in the war (Nish 1985: 213). Port Arthur was then attacked by land and surrendered in January 1905. The Russians, not to be outdone, then sent a second navy all the way from the Baltic, and the Japanese sunk about two-thirds of that fleet at the Tsushima Strait on May 27–28, 1905.[5] This was a devastating defeat for Russia and led them to pursue peace shortly thereafter.

[3] Richardson (1994: 117) notes that two of his main sources – White (1964: 129–130) and Nish (1985: 253–255) – do not think the last proposal would have been a breakthrough. They contend that hard-liners in Japan would not have accepted any agreement that would have delayed the decision to go to war. Nonetheless, it seems that timing played a major role in preventing a bargain from being reached and in bringing on the war.

[4] Japan only declared war on February 10, just after the surprise attack; this was seen as a violation of international law by Russia and other states.

[5] In the North Sea, on the way to Japan, British fishing vessels were mistaken by the Russians for Japanese ships near Dogger Bank and attacked, leading to a major incident with Britain. This almost prompted war but was settled with Russia paying compensation.

Text Box 6.1 Nutshell Summary: Russo-Japanese War

1. Both Russia and Japan maneuver to take advantage of China's weakness by increasing their control of Manchuria and Korea.
2. This leads to a conflict of interest, which Japan thinks can be resolved by a quid pro quo that exchanges influence in Manchuria for Korea.
3. Negotiations initially reach such an agreement, but this is overruled by the hard-line Alekseiev and the tsar.
4. Further negotiations lead to a deadlock on February 8-9, 1904, and the Japanese become convinced that no agreement can be reached. They go to war by launching a surprise attack on Port Arthur.
5. Once the tsar realizes the Japanese are willing to go to war, he makes a major concession, but this last proposal reaches the Japanese after the decision for the surprise attack had already been made.

The Japanese strategy was to have a short war, gaining early victories, with the war coming to an end because of the intervention by the great powers. They did not think they could win a long war because of the differential in the populations and militaries involved. They believed the war would have a negotiated end. This in fact happened when Theodore Roosevelt mediated a conclusion to the war at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on September 5, 1905. Interestingly, Russia sent Baron Rosen, negotiator of the *ad referendum* agreement, as part of the delegation to represent it. The military situation changed things dramatically from Rosen's previous foray. Russia not only lost its position in Korea but also Port Arthur. Japan got control over all of the Liaotung Peninsula – something it had won earlier in the 1894–1895 war. In Russia, the defeat was seen as devastating and was followed by the 1905 Russian Revolution, which made the tsar accept a Duma. In Japan, there was strong public opposition in certain quarters to the treaty and anger toward the government since people had expected more gains (Hane and Perez 2009: 186). Outside the country, however, it was recognized as the great victory it was.

Text Box 6.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

This is a case where a war resulted even though neither participant wanted one. Numerous variables contributed to this unnecessary war (see Table 6.1). Of these, one proved decisive: the strength and behavior

Table 6.1 *Variable summary for the Russo-Japanese War: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Major	X	
Alliance	Moderate	X	
Bargaining strategy	Moderate	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Previous history	Minor	X	
Nature of issue	Minor	X	
Proximity	Minor	X	
Relative capabilities	Minor	X	
Arms races	Minor	X	
System structure	None		
Norms	None		
Democracy	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

of *hard-liners* in the *domestic political situation*, particularly in Russia. Rosen, the accommodationist Russian ambassador, negotiated a quid pro quo bargain, which Japan accepted. This bargain seemingly satisfied the interests of all major states involved. Nevertheless, two Russian hard-liners – Alekseiev, the viceroy of the Russian Far East province, and later the tsar himself – overruled Rosen's bargain. The *genro*, who adopted a more accommodationist position earlier in the crisis, consequently moved to a more hard-line stance. Having concluded that Japan could strike no bargain with Russia, the *genro* reluctantly accepted the need for war, and the surprise attack on Port Arthur followed.

Two additional variables exerted a moderate escalatory effect as well. First, the Anglo-Japanese *alliance* of 1902 provided a green light for Japanese military action, since it increased the likelihood that any war would remain isolated. It also supplied Japan with psychological, diplomatic, and (possibly) military support if another major state intervened. Given this "emboldening" effect, the case offers another instance in which alliance formation increases the likelihood that a crisis escalates to war.

It is important to keep in mind that neither side adopted a *bargaining strategy* that resulted in a peaceful outcome, even though they tried to reach a negotiated solution, and at one point did with Rosen's *ad referendum* agreement. Consequently, this is *a case of unsuccessful rational bargaining*, and investigating it helps uncover the difficulties of making bargains. The Japanese were unclear about their willingness to go to war, especially early on. Moreover, the tsar believed that the Japanese would not seriously

consider going to war because, in his view, they could not win a war. Once the tsar concluded otherwise, he was more willing to meet some of the Japanese demands, but by then it was too late. Japan had already made the decision to attack out of frustration over the stalled negotiations. In this sense, the failed bargaining contributed to the onset of the war.

A handful of other variables also pushed the outcome toward war – each with minor effect. *Rivalry*, and its underlying *hostility*, created a challenging bargaining context. This, in turn, resulted from the *previous history* between Russia and Japan, including their colonial competition in East Asia. The latter supplied the disputed issues for this crisis. Territorial disagreements often foster crisis escalation, and we see that again here. Nevertheless, unlike in the Italian wars of independence (see Chapter 4), the *nature of the (territorial) issue* played a minor escalatory role in this case. Territorial space varies in salience (or value). States attach high value to homeland territory; they value colonial territory less, which they often prize solely for its material resources. When two states both contest colonial territory, the potential for escalation therefore increases because of the territorial disagreement, but not as much as with homeland territory. States can reach peaceful bargains more successfully over less valuable (i.e., colonial) territory, as Rosen did in this case (see also the Moroccan Crises in Chapter 7).

Proximity encouraged escalation as well. Russia lay further away from the area of contention than Japan. This impacted troop deployments, giving Japan a local advantage. Japan could therefore develop a military strategy that overcame its asymmetric *relative capabilities*. Indeed, one would not normally expect a weaker state to attack a stronger state – a belief the tsar certainly held.

The prospect that Russia would complete its rail link had an outside effect on negotiations. One can interpret this as an *indirect arms race* – not in that it involved the manufacture of weapons, but rather that it increased the ability of one side to move troops more easily. The quantitative data (Sample 1997) show no (direct) arms race between Russia and Japan in 1904, although both Horn (1987) and Diehl (1983) find evidence of an arms race in the period from 1905 through 1907. This shows that a crisis can increase threat perception, which can lead to mutual military buildups after the crisis has escalated to war. System structure, norms, democracy, and wishful thinking play no role.

Theoretical Analysis

Four interrelated theoretical questions are raised by this case. First, why did this war happen? Second, why did the bargaining fail? Third, could

the war have been prevented and was this an unnecessary war? Finally, what role did alliances play in the onset of this war?

Japan decided upon war and initiated it in a surprise action. As made clear in the Historical Events, the leadership did this because the attempt to achieve their goals through negotiation was not working as they expected. They became frustrated with the process, and they felt the Russians were not negotiating seriously. They therefore switched from negotiation to the use of force.

The key motivation was territorial gain. Japan had imperial ambitions, and it was simply doing what the other imperial states were doing in China. Its negotiation with Russia can be seen as an attempt at resolving conflicts and coordinating its actions in China with one of its rivals. Japan was willing to work with the other major states. It had accepted the loss of the Liaotung Peninsula and Port Arthur in 1895, and even the major states permitting Russia to lease Port Arthur in 1898 as compensation. Its grievance was that Russia was not cooperating, but rather blocking its way and not negotiating seriously, so it went to war.

This war should be seen as typical of many territorial wars between neighbors, although in this case the war was over colonial territory. It should not be seen as a preventive war. The theory of preventive war says that war starts primarily because of a security motive. That was not the case here. For Japan, territorial greed, not fear, was the primary motive. It then went to war because of failed bargaining, not because of a security motive that led it to start a preventive war.[6]

The building of the Russian rail connection played a role in the thinking of both sides, but it was really ancillary. Alekseiev indeed thought that once the railway was completed Russia would be in a better bargaining position (J. Richardson 1994: 114), and the Japanese thought that if they had to resort to war they had better fight earlier, before the railway was completed, than later. Nevertheless, in both instances the railroad affected timing, not whether or not to go to war. The Japanese decided to go to war, and then the railway was an added consideration.[7] Thinking

[6] The preventive motivation in war in its classical formulation sees war arising from a long-term secular trend where one power surpasses another (typically a hegemon and challenger). A broader criterion is to see a preventive war arising from any case where a participant considers it better to fight now than later. For strict definitions of when a preventive war can be seen as taking place, see Vasquez (2014); for an analysis of preventive motivation, see Levy (1987, 2011b). Streich and Levy (2016: 496) examine the preventive logic in depth, as it is relevant to this case.

[7] The temporal order suggested here of first the decision to go to war because of failed bargaining and then the preventive motivation is consistent with the recent discussion by Copeland (2015: 142), who argues that: "Only when it became obvious that Saint Petersburg was not interested in a bargain that would have preserved Japan's long-term economic access to the region did Tokyo make a firm decision in favor of preventive war."

about the Japanese decision counterfactually, it is not certain that even with a railway in place war would have been prevented. Strategically, the Japanese planned to act quickly and with surprise, which means they might have been willing to take the risk that they could win before the Russians could bring new troops to the theatre via any completed rail line.[8] In fact, what appeared to be a more important consideration at the last minute was an intelligence report that a "naval squadron had sailed from Port Arthur the previous day" (Nish 1985: 212).

The Russians were also motivated by greed. They did not expect to go to war, nor did the tsar want war. James Richardson (1994: 122) makes a good case for the latter (see also Streich and Levy 2016: 500–501). The tsar did not expect to go to war. He thought all along that the decision for war was in his hands. He did not dream that the Japanese would attack, because he did not seriously entertain the thought that they could win a war with Russia. This was for two reasons. First was the question of status. He did not think of Japan as an equal capable of fighting Russia. This was a common position. The military attaché in Tokyo, for example, thought it would take a century for Japan "to develop a modern army comparable to the weakest army in Europe" (Nish 1985: 168). The second reason was racism. Like most other major-state actors, the tsar did not believe an Asian nation could defeat a European one in armed combat.[9] Both these factors led the tsar to conclude that Japan knew it was weaker and thus would not initiate a war against an obviously stronger opponent.[10] Once the tsar thought the Japanese would go to war, he made concessions and negotiated more seriously. Misperceptions, then, played a large role on the Russian side and help explain why war occurred. But misperception should be seen as a causal factor only because it helped bring about the failure of bargaining.

The second major theoretical issue is, Why did bargaining fail, especially since a bargaining solution seemed so auspicious *ex ante*? As much as they tried, the bargainers could not reach an equilibrium point. James Richardson (1994: 112–113) suggests several technical reasons for this failure, all dealing with the quality of the bargaining. He argues that the initial bids were too high. According to bargaining theory, moreover, the bargaining process should correct initial misperceptions and the lack of

[8] James Richardson (1994: 292) says Russian policy does appear "as if" it were "following a strategy of playing for time … Russian decision making, however, shows no evidence of such a strategy."

[9] On the racial illusion, see J. Richardson (1994: 123) and Streich and Levy (2016: 502–503).

[10] On the logic of when a weaker state might attack a stronger one, with an application to the Russo-Japanese War, see Paul (1994: ch. 3).

information about each side's interests and capabilities. This did not happen until the very end, and by then the Japanese had given up on the process. Finally, Richardson maintains that one of the main preconditions of peaceful resolution is that the government needs to signal what it wants so the other side can effectively respond. He argues that in Russia there was no dominant strategy reflected in the bargaining until late December (J. Richardson 1994: 292). Japan also could have had a clearer strategy. Indeed, if the tsar did not think Japan would go to war, Japanese leaders must share some responsibility for failing to communicate not only their willingness to do so but also their capability of doing so.

Richardson's (1994: ch. 6) analysis of why bargaining failed in this case is more detailed and convincing than Fearon's (1995: 398–400) brief, cursory discussion of the case in passing to illustrate his theory that bargaining failed because of differences over information about capability. As Streich and Levy (2016: 506–508) point out in their critique of Fearon, it is not information derived from intelligence estimates that produced the difference over capability assessments, but rather the kind of racial disdain that Richardson discusses. To this they add cognitive biases that made actors not process information in the way the rational bargaining theory expected. Instead of an accurate assessment of capability, these biases produced misperception on the Russian side.

Similarly, bargaining did not fail because war appeared to offer more than any potential bargain. Japan did not go to war because it thought it could get more from going to war than by making a bargain; it went to war because it did not think it could get any bargain whatsoever. The quid pro quo of the exchange policy was Japan's preferred outcome. It was a bargain that should have prevented war. War occurred because the parties could not reach this equilibrium point. The negotiators on the ground – namely, Rosen – were of course able to reach this point; it was the hard-liners back home who overruled it and made bargaining fail.

Likewise, it is not very clear that bargaining failed because of a perceived commitment problem. As Streich and Levy (2016: 497) show, some scholars, like Okamoto (1970: 70), do provide evidence that members of the Japanese elite believed that if Russia reached an agreement, "it would not honor it." However, these concerns did not prevent Japan from seriously negotiating an agreement starting in April 1903. Streich and Levy (2016: 508), citing Nish (1985: 208), point out that even as late as January 24, 1904, Prime Minister Katsura told the emperor that if Russia accepted its proposals in full Japan would not go to war, and that if Russia accepted the proposals only in part Japan would continue negotiations. Japan would go to war only if its proposals were completely

rejected. In the end, Japanese perceptions were that the Russians did not so much reject the proposals in their entirety as refuse to bargain more earnestly. The main decision to go to war therefore does not seem to result from a commitment problem – that is, a fear that the Russian leadership might renege on a quid pro quo agreement because its power might increase. Rather, the quid pro quo resolution was rejected because the Russians did not think war was on the agenda. Once they realized Japan was prepared to go to war, then they became willing to make an agreement. In January 1904 (or even earlier in April 1903), reneging was simply not given much consideration by either side.[11]

The third theoretical issue is whether the war could have been prevented. It seems reasonable to assume that bargaining could have prevented this war and, therefore, that the war should have been prevented. The case seemed very ripe for a negotiated solution. The stakes were divisible and there was ample opportunity for a quid pro quo. Additionally, the stakes were not infused with intangible values (see Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: 61–62; Hensel and Mitchell 2005), which often make negotiations more intractable. The territory in question did not involve the nationals of either claimant living there; nor had either side previously owned it (see Hensel, Mitchell et al. 2008).

There are two pieces of evidence that let us know that a bargain could have been reached that would have avoided the war. The first is the *ad referendum* agreement reached by Ambassador Rosen and Foreign Minister Komura. The second is that the last proposal sent by Russia suggested that the deadlock could have been broken and the two parties could have found their way back to the *ad referendum* agreement. Thus, this last proposal could have prevented war, if it had arrived in time.

War was not prevented, and bargaining failed, because Alekseiev and the tsar vetoed the bargain that Rosen and Komura reached. Theoretically, the hard-liners reined in the accommodationists. This is the flip side of the Eastern Crisis where the accommodationist reined in the hard-liner and avoided war. It also reflects a pattern that explains how the Crimean War crisis escalated.

If the war could have been avoided, was this an unnecessary war? Earlier, an unnecessary war was defined as *a war that could have been avoided by a peace proposal that satisfied all the major states that went to war*

[11] Nonetheless, Streich and Levy think that the commitment problem did play a role in the onset of the war. Although they say that "incentives for preventive war driven by the commitment problem did not make war inevitable (Nish 1985: 208; J. Richardson 1994: 117)," what they mean by this is that a preventive logic linked to a commitment problem was not a sufficient condition of war, but rather a *necessary conditions* (Streich and Levy 2016: 508).

(see Chapter 3 on the Crimean War case). The exchange policy that was accepted by Rosen, but not by the tsar, was such a proposal. It would have satisfied both parties, and after the tsar realized the Japanese would go to war it looked like he would have eventually accepted some sort of similar exchange policy, but Japan had already decided to attack.

James Richardson (1994: 344) believes this is an unnecessary war. He states that this case and the Crimean War "provide instances of 'unnecessary wars' – wars that were *not* the logical outcome of incompatible goals and policies flowing from them, but can be attributed in large measure to 'crisis mismanagement'." He maintains that in both cases "it was a reasonable expectation that a diplomatic settlement could have been achieved" (293). Comparing the two cases is informative in that in both instances an unnecessary war was brought about because hardliners were able to outmaneuver accommodationists (as in the case of Stratford, Palmerston, and Clarendon vis-à-vis Aberdeen in the Crimean War) or overrule them (as in the case of Alekseiev and Tsar Nicholas II vis-à-vis Rosen).

Lastly, the case is relevant theoretically for what it shows about the role of alliances. The 1902 Anglo-Japanese treaty provided a green light for Japan. It was not an offensive alliance by any means, but it, in effect, emboldened Japan by providing it with major-state support for its foreign policy objectives in Korea. In addition, it provided material support because it included provisions to the effect that if Japan were to get involved in a war with more than one state Britain would come to its aid. Britain's recognition of Japan's foreign policy goals in Korea therefore gave Japan a green light to go ahead. Japan had confidence in these assurances from Britain because it knew that Russia was one of Britain's main rivals. Japan's severe damaging of two of Russia's three navies (the third based in Crimea) made Britain, which was a naval rival of Russia, a big victor in this war, even though it did not fight in it.

The other ally in question was France, which had been allied to Russia since 1893. It tried to restrain Russia. The reason for this was obvious – it wanted Russian decision-makers to focus Russia's military forces on Europe and on Germany. It did not want a war that would divert and/or weaken that effort. In addition, the French were hoping eventually for some Anglo-Russian accord and did not want the two countries on opposing sides in a war if it should come to that (J. Richardson 1994: 115–116). Germany, by contrast, encouraged Russia's ambitions in the Far East for the very same reasons that France discouraged them.

Theoretically, this is a rich case. It tells us how and why a crisis that should not have gone to war did. It demonstrates the difficulty of reaching a bargain even in the most auspicious circumstances and underlines some of the deficiencies in the rational bargaining model of war, as well

as the limited role of the theory of preventive war, for explaining this case. In terms of the other cases in this book, this case once again demonstrates the importance of hard-liners vs. accommodationists, and it provides a third example of an unnecessary war.

Lessons of the Russo-Japanese War

1. **This is a case study of failed bargaining**. The parties were unable to reach a mutually agreed settlement even though the situation seemed ripe for a bargain based on a quid pro quo. In principle, this is a case where rational bargaining should have avoided a war, but it did not. The case therefore illuminates how difficult it is to reach a bargain. Even though the negotiators were able to find an equilibrium point, the decision-makers on one side rejected the deal and insisted on extending negotiations.

Two elements seem responsible for the failure. The first, and most important, was that the tsar always thought that the decision for war was in his hands (J. Richardson 1994: 122, 125). He never thought Japan would be foolish enough to attack such a major, European state as his. Racial prejudice played a part by making Russian decision-makers underestimate Japan's capability, but only in part. Status was also a key factor.

Second, the Japanese were not as clear in their bargaining as they could have been, in terms of demonstrating their willingness to go to war if the negotiations failed. In the end, it was they who became frustrated and decided that the negotiations were going nowhere when, in fact, the negotiations were on the verge of a breakthrough.

2. This is also **a case of the failure of the bargaining model of war**, because bargaining failed and war occurred for reasons other than those predicted by the theory. Bargaining failed, not because of private information, as Streich and Levy (2016) show, nor because of commitment problems, nor because of an indivisible issue. Nor did bargaining fail because the negotiators were unable to reach an agreement. Bargaining failed, and war occurred, because a hard-liner on one side rejected the agreement that had been reached by lower officials. That rejection was due not to domestic politics or emotions, as in the Franco-Prussian case, but rather to a failure to appreciate the willingness of the other side to go to war. By the time the mistake was realized, the other side had already started the war.

3. As in the Crimean War case, **this is an unnecessary war**. The exchange policy (Man-Kan Kokan) satisfied the main interests and issue positions of both sides and was in fact accepted by Rosen and by Komura, Japan's foreign minister.

4. **This is the flip side of the 1839 Eastern Crisis. There, the monarch pushed aside the hard-liner. Here, the monarch pushed**

aside the accommodationist. The latter occurred not because the tsar wanted war, but rather because he did not understand the real risk of war.

5. **Major states need to learn how to manage their colonial rivalry**. They were able to do this in Africa via the 1884–1885 Berlin congress, which managed the Scramble for Africa and thereby avoided war amongst themselves. The legacy of the Concert of Europe and Bismarck's diplomacy helped accomplish this, but there was no such formal or informal system of governance in Asia.

6. Alliances played a marginal, but still important, role in bringing about war in this case. **The 1902 Anglo-Japanese alliance provided a green light to Japan and diplomatic cover**.

By giving Japan support through this alliance for its aims in Korea, Britain provided backing within what remained of the Concert of Europe. The alliance prevented Japan from being isolated, as it was at the end of the 1894–1895 Sino-Japanese War. It also provided a signal that Britain would not oppose a Japanese war with Russia, if it came about, although the British did not want to be drawn into such a war (Richardson 1994: 118).

The Triple Alliance and Franco-Russian Alliance also played a role in that membership in these alliances and the interests that underlay those memberships made Germany encourage Russia's ambitions in the Far East, and France try to restrain Russia.

7. **A war or crisis can have very negative unanticipated consequences**. The Russo-Japanese War was followed by the1905 Russian Revolution. This threatened the tsarist regime and forced him to accept the creation of a Duma, although the war can at most be seen as a triggering event for deep underlying domestic casual factors. Despite this caveat, it can be argued that the conventional rational decision-making model, which conceptualizes rationality as selecting the best means to a given end after a synoptic search, needs to be revised to also look for unanticipated consequences. Decisions to go to war should also consider possible unanticipated consequences, especially if it is going to be a limited war.

8. **One of the impacts of war can be to intensify future relations with other rivals**. As a result of this war, Russia's European rivalries intensified, even though Russia's rivals were not directly involved in the war. Austria–Hungary and Germany took advantage of Russia's post-1905 weakness, especially in the 1908 Bosnian Crisis. Also, Britain was one of the big winners in the war, since two of Russia's navies were partially sunk by the Japanese.

9. **Japanese decision-makers learned the value of a surprise attack from this crisis** and repeated it in 1941 at Pearl Harbor.

7 The First and Second Moroccan Crises

Even though they are separated by more than half a decade, the First and Second Moroccan Crises are linked. While we will treat both in this chapter, the focus in terms of theoretical analysis and lessons will be on the second, commonly known as Agadir.

Historical Events

First Moroccan Crisis

The First Moroccan Crisis erupted in 1905–1906 and is important for understanding the Second Moroccan Crisis, which occurs five years later in 1911. An important prelude to the First Moroccan Crisis occurred in London on April 8, 1904, with British and French representatives signing the Entente Cordiale, which would settle a long-term rivalry over colonies going back to 1731 (Thompson 2001). Through the Entente, the French received a free hand in Morocco and the British a free hand in Egypt. The French were not as well established in Morocco as the British were in Egypt, but had previously bought off Italy and Spain and now, with this agreement, planned to move forward in Morocco in earnest.

The crisis was preceded by a French mission to Fez in January 1905 that demanded reforms from the sultan. This was seen as an attempt to establish a protectorate over the country. The Germans took affront at not having been approached or consulted. In 1904, Holstein, head of the political department at the foreign office, wanted to make it clear that German interests had to be recognized and could not be ignored. He wrote privately to his cousin: "Our action was intended to demonstrate 'that things can't be done without us'" (quoted in Rich 1992: 399). To do this, he was willing to go so far as to threaten war, if need be. This, however, was not something Bülow, the chancellor, was prepared to entertain.

At the same time, Holstein and Bülow were concerned that the Entente might be an alliance and that Germany should try to break it

up (see Williamson 1990 [1969]: 31–32, 43). Holstein believed that if Germany exerted sufficient pressure on the members of the Entente, it would become clear that Britain would not go to war over this issue and the Entente would fall apart. He also thought that this was a good time to pressure France because Russia, France's other ally, was too weak and distracted to assist France, given the ongoing Russo-Japanese War. In fact, Rich (1992: 398) argues that this would have been an opportune time for a war "to establish their hegemony over Europe," but that German decision-makers did not take advantage of this opportunity despite the fact that some, particularly in the military, contemplated it (MacMillan 2013: 395).[1] Nothing was done in 1904, however, because the German government was divided. The kaiser wanted an alliance among Germany, Russia, and France, and he was unwilling to bully France (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 534). So they waited.

With the French move on Fez in January, however, Germany reacted. It encouraged the sultan to resist (MacMillan 2013: 384). Then the government decided to get the kaiser to stop at Tangier on the tip of the North African coast during his Mediterranean cruise, which he did on the last day of March. Reluctant at first to go, he got caught up with the enthusiasm surrounding his arrival and ended up doing more than the foreign office had expected. He declared that he would deal only with the sultan, meaning that he was not recognizing the right of the French to make demands for reform that would weaken the sultan's sovereignty and increase their influence.

Afterward, he demanded in no uncertain terms a conference to discuss the entire Moroccan question, whereby he thought France would be forced to take account of Germany's interests in Morocco. Calling a conference was the proper procedure to follow in the Concert of Europe. The French resisted the call, but eventually agreed to a conference at the beginning of July.

The conference over Morocco occurred in 1906 at Algeciras, just across the sea from Tangier. Eight countries attended – those that had signed the Treaty of Madrid in 1880, which had dealt previously with the rights of imperial states within Morocco. The signatories included the major states of the Vienna system – France, Germany, Austria–Hungary, Britain – plus three others – Italy, Spain and the United States (recent victor over Spain in the 1898 war). All but Austria–Hungary supported the French plan. Germany was stunned. It sought a face-saving

[1] Such a situation, in which there is a clear opportunity to defeat a challenger that is not taken, is a problem for the theory of preventive war. A related problem is why the rising state does not try to delay war; see Levy and Mulligan (2017).

compromise, but France opposed the compromise, and Britain, standing by the French, forced a vote (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 537). Only Germany and Austria–Hungary voted together, and they lost. Holstein wanted to break off the conference and walk out. Bülow overruled him and forced him to agree with the final conference statement; the danger of war was reduced by an accommodationist reining in a hardliner. Holstein resigned one month after the conference ended. When things went awry, the kaiser, who was adamantly opposed to going to war over the issue (see Rich 1992: 403; see also MacMillan 2013: 385), complained that he had not wanted to go to Tangier in the first place. The end result was that France's political influence in Morocco was recognized but Germany could have some commercial interests. The matter remained that way until 1911, when a second crisis broke out.

In retrospect, it was clear that German attempts to break up the Entente actually had the opposite effect. The 1905–1906 crisis publicly brought Britain and France together at the Algeciras conference. Indeed, the press commented that Britain was determined to stand with France (MacMillan 2013: 385). Behind the scenes, newly appointed foreign secretary Edward Grey, who saw Germany as Britain's principal rival, had military staff hold talks with the French beginning in January 1906, which he kept secret from the cabinet but not from Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman (MacMillan 2013: 397; Williamson 1990 [1969]: 82–83). Nonetheless, he did tell the Germans that if it came to war Britain would not likely remain neutral (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 536), although he would not accede to French desires for a formal alliance.

This crisis was important because German leaders learned that the existing global system of governance originally set up in Vienna in 1815 was rigged against them. The German leadership would never use the prevailing governing system again to resolve the major questions facing it.

Second Moroccan Crisis, Agadir

As with the First Moroccan Crisis, this crisis began with a French move on Fez and the sultan. This time, however, the move was much more serious. France sent troops and occupied the capital on May 21, 1911, in response to social unrest and with the ulterior purpose of taking firm control of the country and establishing its long-awaited protectorate. To Germany, this was a violation of the Algeciras agreement; it also further undercut the recent 1909 accord between the two countries, which had signaled more cordial relations over Morocco but by 1911 was floundering. Germany saw the French moving to consolidate their political rights while German commercial rights were being pushed aside.

The new French government under Ernest Monis had announced that it might have to send troops to Morocco as early as April 5. It knew there was a risk of an adverse German reaction, but it went ahead anyway, claiming it was protecting all European citizens. Just before the intervention, both Kiderlen-Wachter, the German state secretary, and Bethmann-Hollweg, the chancellor, warned that this would mean an end of the Algeciras agreement and re-ignite the Moroccan question (J. Richardson 1994: 173). The French disregarded this warning and occupied Fez on May 21.

The kaiser had made it clear to his underlings in the First Moroccan Crisis that he was unwilling to go to war on this issue. Given this, the goal of German policy in 1911 became to gain some sort of compensation. Almost a month went by before anything concrete happened. On June 21–22, while taking the waters at Bad Kissingen, Kiderlen met with Jules Cambon, the French ambassador to Germany, and raised the issue. Cambon, according to James Richardson (1994: 174), wanted to rule out any division of Morocco, even a partial one, so he said, "one may seek elsewhere." Kiderlen refused to make any suggestions, but said, "bring us something back from Paris" (quoted in J. Richardson 1994: 174).

This time, the Germans did not call for a conference but instead acted unilaterally by sending a gunboat – the *Panther* – to Agadir, a port on the southern Moroccan coast. It arrived on July 1, just a few days after the Mons government was replaced by that of Joseph Caillaux. The larger threat here was that the Germans might seize Agadir and hold it to get the French to take their interests seriously. To the French, German actions implied that the Germans might want a piece of Morocco. Although a clear display of force intended to show the French that they were prepared to threaten war, it was less belligerent than it could have been if the Germans had sent the gunboat to Mogador, where there was more of a French and British presence. Instead, Agadir was chosen – where no other European vessels were present – thereby avoiding any inadvertent armed confrontation (see J. Richardson 1994: 174). Like the French, the Germans claimed they were taking this action to protect their own citizens. Their only problem was that there were no German citizens in Agadir. Thus, although they wanted to demonstrate resolve, they also wanted to avoid a direct armed confrontation.

Cambon and Kiderlen met again on July 15 and, when pressed about what he wanted, Kiderlen pointed to a map of the French Congo. This was a very valuable territory and Cambon made it clear that this would lead to the end of the negotiations. Kiderlen did not disagree and said they would throw in German Togo and part of the Cameroons (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 543; J. Richardson 1994: 175). There the matter rested for the time being.

In the interval, the British entered the dispute publicly when David Lloyd George, chancellor of the exchequer, gave a speech on July 21 that had been approved by Grey. In this Mansion House speech, as it came to be known, Lloyd George said that Britain could not be treated as if of no account, and that peace at that price would be intolerable (J. Richardson, 1994: 176). This caused an uproar because Lloyd George was known as an accommodationist and generally antiwar. The German ambassador to London immediately met with Grey and asked if press reports that interpreted this as a warning to Germany were true. If this were the case, he said, "Germany's 'dignity' required an official retraction. Grey replied … that English 'dignity' forbade such a thing" (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 544). Grey came out of the meeting and "warned the Admiralty to expect a German attack at any moment" (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 544). Prime Minister Asquith and Kiderlen smoothed over the incident, but it was now clear that Britain was standing with the French. Nonetheless, this was a moment when Britain and Germany came close to war.

About a week later, on July 28, Bethmann-Hollweg dined with Kiderlen and became convinced that Kiderlen actually wanted war (J. Richardson 1994: 177). Kiderlen's stance was that the French would not give in on anything unless, in modern-day parlance, their feet were held to the fire. This was part of the strategy behind sending the *Panther* to Agadir. When the Kaiser learned of the July 15 meeting between Cambon and Kiderlen he returned from his northern cruise and he, Bethmann-Hollweg, and Kiderlen met on July 29 at Swinemunde. This was the turning point of the crisis. The kaiser did not think Morocco, let alone the French Congo, was worth a war. The kaiser overruled Kiderlen, who turned in his resignation. The kaiser refused it, telling him to follow orders and get an agreement. Now Kiderlen demanded only part of the French Congo, and on August 1 he and Cambon reached a tentative agreement, although access to the river and the sea remained unresolved.

This turned into an impasse, since Germany needed to have access to the sea and the Congo River. The impasse was aggravated by belligerent moves on each side. Caillaux, the new premier, retreated from his earlier, more accommodative, stance and was unwilling to compromise on access to the sea. Instead, he engaged in public bluster and on August 4 threatened to send French and British warships to Agadir, where there were now rumors that there might be a German landing (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 545).

The kaiser was incensed by Caillaux's threat and began to believe that Kiderlen was correct and that only force and the willingness to risk war would get the French to accept a bargain. He supported Kiderlen's threat to break off negotiations and prepare for war. Caillaux's threat, however,

Text Box 7.1 Nutshell Summary: First and Second Moroccan Crises

1. France and Britain sign the Entente Cordiale in 1904, which gives France a free hand in Morocco and Britain a free hand in Egypt. Having also bought off Spain and Italy, France sends a mission to Fez and demands reforms from the sultan in 1905. Germany objects, saying it cannot be ignored, and the kaiser goes to Tangier on March 31,1905 prompting a crisis.
2. A conference is held at Algeciras in 1906 to resolve the matter. Germany loses badly in a vote, with only Austria–Hungary siding with it. France is given political rights in Morocco, but Germany receives some commercial rights.
3. In 1911 France occupies Fez in a clear move to establish a protectorate over Morocco.
4. In reaction, Germany sends the *Panther* to Agadir on July 1.
5. Kiderlen, the state secretary, and Jules Cambon, the French ambassador, try to negotiate a bargain based on the principle of compensation.
6. Lloyd George gives a belligerent speech supporting France, saying Britain's interests cannot be ignored. This prompts a war scare between Britain and Germany.
7. Kiderlen is willing to threaten war to break a deadlock over the bargain but is overruled by the kaiser and Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. A tentative bargain is reached; however, the question of access to the river and the sea holds things up.
8. Caillaux threatens to send French and British warships, which angers the kaiser, who now sides with Kiderlen. The crisis almost goes to war.
9. Caillaux backs down and an agreement giving France a protectorate over Morocco in return for German compensation in the French Congo is reached.
10. Nationalists in both countries decry the agreement. The Caillaux government falls and the kaiser and chancellor are criticized, but the agreement is ratified and war avoided.

proved to be a bluff, for he did not have British consent. Realizing his mistake, Caillaux tried to paper over what he had said and denied that he really was planning to send warships. A compromise on access to the sea was worked out, and the Germans ended up giving France a small slice of their colonial holdings. But an agreement was not reached until there was another war scare at the end of the month, including a collapse of the German stock exchange on September 1.[2] The agreement, which in effect gave France a protectorate over Morocco, was signed on November 4.

[2] See James Richardson (1994: 178) for a brief discussion on whether the French played any role in this market collapse.

Throughout the process nationalists and organized groups, like the Pan-Germans, had opposed concessions. In Germany, the press openly attacked the kaiser (Fischer 1975: 93). Helmuth von Moltke, chief of the German Central Staff, wrote privately to his wife: "If once again we crawl out of the affair with our tail between our legs … then I shall quit. But before that I shall propose that we do away with the army and place ourselves under the protection of Japan; then we can concentrate on making money and develop into ninnies" (quoted in J. Richardson 1994: 177). Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg was heavily criticized by leaders of the Conservative Party and the right wing of the National Liberals in the Reichstag when he went to get the agreement ratified, which the Reichstag eventually did on November 12 after much criticism. Heydebrand, leader of the Conservatives, said: "Our peace is assured by standing firm, not by agreements or settlements, but solely by our German sword" (quoted in Fischer 1975: 91). In France things were worse. The Caillaux government fell. Caillaux was replaced by the hard-liner Poincaré, who drummed through ratification, but not until February 10, 1912.

Text Box 7.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

A few key variables feature prominently in both Moroccan crises. First, *accommodationists* in the *domestic political situation* – most notably, the kaiser – prevail at critical junctures in both cases, which significantly encouraged de-escalation. Holstein, for example, tries to abandon the conference that the major states convene to address the First Moroccan Crisis, since he sees the conference moving against Germany's preferred outcome. The kaiser and Bulow overrule him.

A similar dynamic plays out in the Second Moroccan Crisis, where the kaiser and chancellor play an even more prominent role in avoiding war by reining in Kiderlen. After this critical move, negotiations begin to bear fruit, but the *bargaining* stalls when the French premier makes a hard-line naval threat. The kaiser then thinks Kiderlen's approach might be correct after all, and the crisis intensifies. The French naval threat turns out to be a bluff, however, and subsequent negotiations produce an agreement. Although other hard-line actions intensify the crisis at other points as well (e.g., Lloyd George's speech, or domestic criticisms of the negotiated agreement), the Agadir crisis is resolved peacefully through a negotiated bargain. Because of the role of norms, bargaining plays a major role in the second crisis, compared to the minor one it played in the first.

System-level variables also feature prominently in both cases, although in different ways. In the First Moroccan Crisis, *system structure* operates effectively, giving it a moderate de-escalatory impact. A conference of major states and other relevant parties convenes to resolve the dispute. The resulting resolution, however, arises not through consensus but rather through an overwhelming vote (i.e., only Austria–Hungary supports Germany). Through this humiliating loss, Germany learns not to use the conference system again to address its grievances, so the system structure plays no role in the Second Moroccan Crisis.

The 1904 crisis is part of the previous history of the 1911 crisis. *Previous history* creates a moderate escalatory risk. When the 1911 crisis arises, Germany concludes that France is moving progressively toward making Morocco a French colony, and that the international community is leaving Germany out of the global colonial enterprise. It therefore refuses to be outnumbered at a conference, as it was in the 1904 crisis. War remains off the agenda initially, however, because the *norm* of territorial compensation supplies a focal point for bargaining. The norm of compensation is a major de-escalatory force in the second crisis, but plays no role in the first.

Another variable is the *nature of the issue*, which is territorial. In Germany's view, previous agreements settled the issue, and France was now violating them. Germany therefore engages in an aggressive display of force to get attention from France and the other major states. This raises the escalatory potential of each crisis, but only in a minor fashion, since France and Germany are disputing colonial territory rather than homeland territory. States find the former less salient than the latter. Indeed, the kaiser does not believe the territory at stake is worth a war in either crisis. This constrains the escalatory potential of the crises somewhat.

Alliances play a minor, but important, role in each crisis as well. In the First Moroccan Crisis, Germany uses the crisis to test – and try to break – the recent Entente Cordiale. This backfires, however, and Britain supports France instead. Germany takes a similar tack in the Second Moroccan Crisis, but this backfires more significantly – with Lloyd George's speech and more serious staff talks between Britain and France – than in 1906. In short, alliances encourage conflict escalation in both cases; they did not promote peace.

Both crises occur amidst the French–German colonial *rivalry*. The hostility that defines a rivalry relationship encourages dispute escalation; yet, rivalries also vary in their hostility levels (Diehl and Goertz 2000). Two factors constrain hostility in the French–German rivalry at this

Table 7.1 *Variable summary for the First Moroccan Crisis: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Major		X
System structure	Moderate		X
Nature of issue	Minor	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Alliances	Minor	X	
Bargaining strategy	Minor	X	
Arms races	Minor		X
Norms	None		
Proximity	None		
Democracy	None		
Relative capabilities	None		
Hostility	None		
Previous history	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

Table 7.2 Variable summary for the Second Moroccan Crisis, Agadir: effect on crisis outcome

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Norms	Major		X
Bargaining strategy	Major		X
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Major		X
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Nature of issue	Minor	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Alliances	Minor	X	
Arms races	Minor		X
System structure	None		
Proximity	None		
Democracy	None		
Relative capabilities	None		
Hostility	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

time. The first concerns the issue. As noted already, colonial territory may be worth a skirmish and some brinkmanship, but not a full-scale war. Second, the rivals are not involved in an *arms race* with each other before either crisis. The quantitative data (Sample 1997) show no arms race until 1913. The absence of an arms race during each crisis likely

serves as a latent vector against crisis escalation. It makes a rivalry less intense because, without it, the rivals face less time pressure to act before the balance of relative capabilities shifts against them. Alleviation of that pressure opens space for bargaining. The arms race variable is seen as playing a minor role because of its *absence* rather than its presence. Its absence has a de-escalatory impact.

In the end, several variables have an impact that differs between the two crises – e.g., norms, previous history, and system – but five variables – *proximity*, *democracy*, *relative capabilities*, *hostility*, and *wishful thinking* –play no role in either. Tables 7.1 and 7.2 provide variable summaries for the two crises.

Theoretical Analysis

First Moroccan Crisis

This crisis was important because German leaders learned that the existing global system of governance originally set up in Vienna in 1815 was now rigged. They were shocked by the 8–2 conference vote against them. Furthermore, the unwillingness of these major states to accept a face-saving solution showed they would not take cognizance of Germany's wishes or interests. The German leadership would never use the prevailing governing system again to resolve the major questions facing it. This was true in the 1908 Bosnian Crisis and again in 1914 when the kaiser would work outside the Concert system and try to mediate the crisis on his own.[3]

Second Moroccan Crisis (Agadir)

Agadir is an interesting case because it does not go to war (nor should it have), but it comes very close to doing so more than once. As such, it tells us something about how and why war can be prevented, and how it could have come about even when it is avoided. Several questions deserve special attention. One is the role of territory. Why did a territorial dispute not lead to war in this case. Another is why bargaining succeeded, especially since it did not succeed in the Russo-Japanese case where colonial territory was also at stake. Lastly, underlying all of these factors is the role of hard-liners and accommodationists, both inside and

[3] For a more detailed theoretical analysis of the First Moroccan Crisis, including a formal analysis, see Zagare (2019: ch. 3).

outside government. Since these processes are highly interrelated, they will be treated together in an integrated fashion.

Foremost and above all, this is a case where territory is at stake but does not result in war. The case shows that although a dispute over territory generally increases the probability that a crisis will escalate to war (see Vasquez and Henehan 2001), it does not require a war to be resolved. An analysis of the Agadir case gives us some insights into how territory can be handled to avoid war.[4]

From the very beginning, the Germans were prepared to bargain and negotiate some deal that would trade their consent to a French protectorate over Morocco for some sort of compensation. Approaching the question in this manner meant that negotiation rather than coercion would be used to settle the issues at stake.

Analytically, there are several reasons why negotiations were chosen as a decision game[5] over war. A key element was that even though the French had outmaneuvered the Germans diplomatically in 1906 by gaining the support of outside states, and the kaiser decided that war was not worth the stakes at hand. Once the situation had been defined this way, the norm of compensation in 1911 provided a way of framing and structuring the negotiations so that bargaining could be directed in a fruitful way – something missing in the Russo-Japanese case (see Chapter 6).

Of course, the threat of coercion – by sending the *Panther* in the first place and entertaining the possibility of landing troops in the second – helped move the negotiations along a progressive path. The willingness of the leadership on both sides to compromise was key, however. In this regard, nationalists and hard-liners in the domestic political arena of each side hampered negotiations and thereby threatened the negotiation game by raising the possibility that negotiations would be abandoned in favor of war. The nationalists, however, seemed to be more interested in questions of prestige and status than territory. Despite their presence on both sides, a key lesson of this case is that negotiation can handle even highly salient issues, like territory, and produce an outcome that satisfies both sides.

It is also the case here that there are certain characteristics of the territory under contention that permit it to be handled by negotiation rather

[4] For a systematic analysis of how territorial disputes can be peacefully resolved, see Powell and Wiegand (2023).

[5] A decision game is a concept used to describe whatever rules and criteria actors institutionalize, if only informally, as a way to make a decision. For example, actors could decide to use the courts (a judicial decision game) or have the public vote (an election decision game) or use a test of strength (a war game; see Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: 282–283 for further discussion of decision games).

than by war. Territory is at stake, but it is colonial territory. This sort of territory lacks some of the key characteristics that make territory prone to war; namely, the Italian case, this territory is not connected to nationalist claims or co-ethnic groups living on the land. Nor is it infused with transcendent values, like honor or contrary to, that make it indivisible. Admittedly, colonial territory had resulted in war in the Russo-Japanese case. Here, however, the bargaining would be more successful, but not without almost going to war.

An essential difference in this case is that the kaiser and Bethmann-Hollweg are in firm control and restrain the hard-line approach of Kiderlen, who is willing to go to war. The accommodationist stance of the kaiser makes the negotiation not only the primary game but the only game. Nonetheless, when Caillaux threatens to send warships – deviating from hard bargaining to outright coercion – the Kaiser is angered and begins to both question his accommodationist stance and believe that Kiderlen is correct. War is avoided because Caillaux backs away.

James Richardson (1994: 180) points out that "Kiderlen's attempt at coercive bargaining illustrates three general problems: the likelihood that threats may provoke resistance, not induce compliance; the difficulty of achieving governmental unity behind high-risk strategies for questionable stakes; and the danger that the confrontation may escape from the control of the bargainers, becoming more like a hostility spiral." Richardson's analysis suggests how a case that should not have gone to war could nevertheless have done so. Theoretically, it would be expected that the introduction of coercive threats has the potential to lock the parties into intransigent positions, causing both sides to resort to punishments rather than positive incentives to gain their ends. The resort to negative sanctions generates psychological hostility rather than a shift in issue positions.[6] The failure of threats to shift positions leads actors to increase the level of coercion, which can result in a hostile spiral ultimately cumulating in war (see Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: ch. 7). Specifically in this case, war could have arisen from some armed interaction at Agadir. If it had, then war could have spread rapidly to include Britain.

A last factor that is of theoretical importance in this case is the role of alliances. Britain makes clear that it will stand by France and that it cannot be ignored in the deliberations. That is one of the main points of David Lloyd George's Mansion House speech. In the end, the Entente Cordiale, which the kaiser sought to break, is further strengthened by the

[6] This general hypothesis was initially suggested by Coplin and O'Leary (1971: 9); see also Coplin, Mills, and O'Leary (1973).

crisis. Indeed, staff talks that had been brought about by the 1905–1906 crisis are intensified in the 1911 crisis. This brings the Entente closer to a functional defensive alliance, although Grey still resists a formal alliance because radicals in the cabinet will oppose it.[7]

In conclusion, Agadir is important theoretically because it provides insights into how war can be avoided. Bargaining is most likely to be successful if some set of norms – in this case, that of compensation – provides a framework for how negotiations should proceed and what a final bargain might look like. In addition, someone in authority must ensure that bargaining is the preferred strategy and that hard-liners are restrained. It is also probably the case that successful bargaining will only occur over certain types of issues. This case shows that certain types of territorial issues can be handled without recourse to war. Colonial territory that is not infused with intangible qualities and does not involve nationalist identities seems a good candidate for bargaining because the stakes are divisible and open to a deal.[8] Agadir also underlines the dangers that can emerge even when there are several factors favoring peace. The introduction of threats can lead to a change in attitude and an increase in hostile emotions, which, if not abated by accommodationist leaders, can lead to a hostile spiral.

Lessons

First Moroccan Crisis

1. The important lesson of this case is that **the use of voting in a major-state governing system to impose the will of the majority on a minority will lead the latter to stop using the system**. The losing states will seek other institutions or procedures to get what they want. In 1906 there were not many such forums. In 1899, at a session of the Hague Conference, the major states had established a court of arbitration and revised the laws of war, but both a strongly codified body of international law and an international court were still very underdeveloped. There were, however, some norms – like the norm of compensation – that aided the peaceful resolution of disputes. A main alternative to the Concert was a unilateral use of force.

2. As in other crises that did not escalate to war, such as the 1839 Eastern Crisis, **the danger of war was reduced by an accommodationist**

[7] Details of the staff talks during the two crises are provided in Williamson (1990 [1969]: chs. 2–3, 7).

[8] See Hensel, Mitchell et al. (2008) and the components of their salience index for other possible issue characteristics that may be associated with peaceful resolution.

reining in a hard-liner. In 1904, Holstein, who wanted to threaten war against France, was overruled by the kaiser, who had a different foreign policy in mind. In 1906, Bülow overruled Holstein, who wanted to leave the conference and most likely escalate the crisis by pursuing a more hard-line tack. The kaiser made it clear that he would not go to war over Morocco, which further buttressed Bülow.

Second Moroccan Crisis, Agadir

1. **The creation and invention of practices, like *compensation*, can set up an effective procedure that facilities the peaceful settlement of disputes**. Compensation is a well-known and accepted practice in international relations. It permits states to make binding decisions on the basis of the principle that if one major state gets an increase in its territory or population, then other relevant major states must be "compensated" by being given an equal or equivalent amount of territory (see Schroeder 1989: 141; Bérenger 1994: 22–24). The principle goes back to the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht and was enacted as a way of maintaining the balance of power.

The principle of compensation is very useful because it provides an immediate focal point and decision-making criterion for any negotiations that attempt to resolve a dispute. It lays the basis for a win–win solution. Because the practice has been accepted for so long, states do not lose face when making a settlement on this basis, which is important for domestic audiences.

3. Because the principle of compensation is a social practice that is invented in a particular period of history, it provides an additional lesson – namely, that **peace is learned**. Actors need to learn how to develop procedures to resolve disagreements. These then need to be institutionalized and turned into acceptable practices.

An example from US labor history can illustrate how this works. Strikes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America were becoming increasing violent. In 1935, with the Wagner Act (the National Labor Relations Act), the US government stepped in and required a cooling-off period and the use of collective bargaining as a way of settling strikes. Collective bargaining became an institutionalized practice for settling labor disputes.

4. Comparisons with two other cases permit us to make further inferences.

1. Why was there war in the Franco-Prussian crisis (Chapter 5), but not here?

a. Kaiser Wilhelm II was a strong leader and in charge in 1911, while King William was not in 1870. Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg did not want war, but Bismarck did.
b. Bismarck was able to manipulate the French and bait them into a war that he believed to be in the national interest of Prussia, while controlling the accommodationist tendencies of his king. Kiderlen was not in a position to do that, and not as skilled as Bismarck even if he had wanted to behave similarly.
c. In the end, this case reinforces the lessons that **someone must stand for peace, and peace occurs when strong accommodationist leaders can overrule hard-liners**. The kaiser was firm in his opposition to war over Morocco and so was Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg.

2. Why did bargaining fail and go to war in the Russo-Japanese crisis of 1903–1904 (Chapter 6), but not here?
   a. In Agadir, **the principle of compensation provided a procedure and focal point that guided and directed the bargaining and negotiations**. It focused the negotiators on a settlement that had a clear structure and rationale that was accepted in the system. In the Russo-Japanese crisis, the bargaining in the last phase lacked coherence and a clear goal that could settle the dispute.
   b. In Agadir, the kaiser and Bethmann-Hollweg were accommodationists and in charge; in contrast, in the over Morocco, Russo-Japanese case Ambassador Rosen was the accommodationist and not in charge.
   c. In the end, war was avoided ov because the kaiser and the chancellor reined in the hard-liner Kiderlen before he went too far; in the Russo-Japanese crisis, the tsar overruled the accommodationist Rosen and supported the hard-liner Alekseiev.

Comparing Agadir to the Russo-Japanese case reinforces the lesson above that peace occurs when the accommodationist overrules hard-liners. Thus far, we have four cases in which this pattern occurs – the 1839 Eastern Crisis and Agadir, where war is avoided because of this process, and the Russo-Japanese and Franco-Prussian cases, where war occurs because the opposite process operates. Interestingly, the latter two are seen as unnecessary wars.

5. Still, the case shows that **even with accommodationists at the highest levels in Germany and the use of the norm of compensation, coercive bargaining could have led to war**. Coercive bargaining is its own type of game with its own rules and expectations. Kiderlen demonstrates this when he argued that for bargaining to work one must "proceed forcefully (*sehr kräftig auftreten*)" (J. Richardson 1994: 175).

To get compensation one must threaten, and to threaten effectively one must be willing both to use force and, if need be, to go to war. Part of what made Kiderlen so committed to coercive diplomacy was that three years before the 1911 Agadir crisis he had brought about a German and Austrian victory over Russia in the 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis by giving the Russians what in effect was an ultimatum. This successful precedent led him to repeat it.

The case points out the dangers of coercive bargaining and the role of emotion. It illustrates how insults to honor and distrust can lead to a hostile spiral that escalates to war. When the new French government under Caillaux threatened to send warships to Agadir, the kaiser became very angry and began to think that Kiderlen was correct. If Caillaux had not backed down, Kiderlen would have gotten his way and the kaiser would most likely have increased coercion in a way that could have led to an upward-escalating hostile spiral that domestic hard-liners in each nation would have supported and encouraged.

6. **Coercion and hard-line positions are popular. They can stir up war hysteria and war scares and silence accommodationists in the public and in the press**. Even though war was avoided in this case through a settlement that "any reasonable person" could accept, the settlement was highly criticized in both France and Germany. This problem is more serious in democratic states, as shown by the government falling in France. Nonetheless, even in quasi-democratic states like Wilhelmine Germany – with its freely elected Reichstag and coherent party system – Reichstag members criticized the chancellor, and the press and Pan-Germans openly criticized the kaiser for his lack of firm leadership. Likewise, the popularity of hard-line positions and their danger is illustrated in Britain by Lloyd George's Mansion House speech and the subsequent war scare.

This lesson reinforces some of the lessons about the inadequacy of the monadic democratic peace discussed in both the Crimean War case and the Franco-Prussian case.

7. Agadir also shows that **alliances heighten tensions and can increase the danger of war, rather than lessen it**. The signing of the Entente threatened German leaders and they tried to test it and break it. In 1911, Lloyd George's Mansion House speech produced a war scare even though Britain was not a principal in the crisis. Although Britain would have probably intervened even without the Entente, the perception of the Entente as an alliance threatened Germany and encouraged France, enhancing the rivalry among the three in the heat of the crisis. The alliance did not have a pacific effect.

8. Lastly, a key lesson is that **territorial disputes do not have to go to war, especially if they involve colonial territory**. Morocco was not worth a war to the kaiser, and he was willing to trade it for some other colonial territory. A quid pro quo was therefore possible – a bargain that the principle of compensation helped facilitate. This occurred because the colonial territory at stake lacked the intangible qualities of homeland territory, which are infused with symbolic and transcendent value (see Mansbach and Vasquez 1981: 61–63; see also Hensel and Mitchell 2005). Agadir indicates that even though territorial disputes have a higher probability of going to war than other types of disputes, they can be resolved peacefully if handled in a certain way. Of course, some types of territorial disputes are more easily handled than others.

8 The 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis

Historical Events

Three years prior to Agadir another crisis was resolved without going to war, although, as with Agadir, war almost occurred. This crisis, ironically, started with a quid pro quo that went awry. In October 1908, the Russian and Austro-Hungarian foreign ministers – Izvolsky and Aehrenthal, respectively – met each other in Buchlau in the castle of Austria–Hungary's ambassador to Russia at the time, Berchtold. There, they allegedly worked out an agreement whereby Russia would not oppose Austria–Hungary's annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in return Austria–Hungary would not oppose Russia's acquiring exclusive access for its warships after the Congress of Berlin to go through the straits.

Both goals were long-held objectives of each. Austria–Hungary had occupied the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, which revised the settlement of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. In 1908 there was a revolt in Constantinople by the Young Turks against the sultan, which limited his powers. Vienna worried that this new movement might make demands on the provinces and, to avert this possibility, decided to replace its occupation and administration of the provinces with a formal annexation. Gaining Russian acceptance would smooth the way, and Aehrenthal hoped to gain Ottoman acquiescence by turning Novi Pazar over to the sultan (Rich 1992: 412). By early 1909 Austria–Hungary had won Ottoman recognition in return for a large indemnity (MacMillan 2013: 432).

Ever since the lapse of the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi Russia had wanted to improve its position vis-à-vis the straits and now sought to get the exclusive right of its warships to go through the straits when the sultan was at peace.[1] As recently as the Russo-Japanese War its Crimean

[1] Under the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi Turkey agreed, in the event of an attack on Russia, to close the straits to all other foreign warships. When the treaty lapsed in 1841, it was replaced by a treaty among the major states, which stipulated that the straits would be

fleet had been bottled up in the Black Sea because of the provision that prohibited warships from passing through the straits when the sultan was not at war (Rich 1992: 410). Izvolsky saw Aehrenthal's plan to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina as an opportunity to gain Austria–Hungary's agreement to change the norm governing the straits. This was a good deal for him, since he could do little to prevent the annexation. It did, however, involve selling out the Serbs, who saw the provinces as inhabited by fellow Serbs and naturally as part of Serbia. To gain diplomatic cover, Izvolsky hoped to have an international conference on both questions. Izvolsky thought he could count on the support of France, his steadfast ally since 1893. He thought, moreover, that the recent Anglo-Russian Entente reached in 1907 would also make Britain – Russia's long-time rival and supporter of the sultan going back to 1839 and the Crimean War – more willing to accept a change in policy concerning the straits. Indeed, he believed the June 1908 meeting between the tsar, Edward VII, and high officials from both countries, including both himself and Prime Minister Stolypin, had gone so well that Britain would in fact support his effort (see MacMillan 2013: 422).

Aehrenthal announced the annexation on October 6, the day after Bulgaria announced its independence and before Izvolsky was ready. In 1878, the year Austria–Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria had become autonomous with Russian support. The annexation raised a storm of protest, especially from the Serbs, but also from the British, who saw it as undercutting the more reform-minded Young Turks. Equally important was the fact that a number of Russians within, as well as outside, the government objected to the annexation.

The quid pro quo never came to fruition; Aehrenthal denied he had ever made it, while Izvolsky claimed that he had been cheated. To save face with the Serbs and his domestic opposition, Izvolsky now opposed the annexation and supported the Serbs. Domestic opposition to the deal in Russia was intense, with Stolypin threatening to resign and other high ministers in the council attacking the annexation (MacMillan 2013: 425). Serb nationalists – including Pasic, a future prime minister but now only a party leader – called for mobilization and war. The crown prince said he was ready to die for Serbia, and volunteers were sent over the border to support the nationalist cause (MacMillan 2013: 428–429). Talk of war went on throughout the winter of 1908–1909 and then into the spring as the Serbian government tried unsuccessfully to cool the hot heads. The British, meanwhile, said they would accept an agreement

closed to all warships in times of peace (Rich 1992: 71, 73, 410). It was this provision that Izvolsky was trying to change to Russia's advantage.

that permitted the warships of all countries access to the straits in times of peace – the last thing the Russians wanted.

Aehrenthal refused to accede to a conference and stood fast in Austria–Hungary's annexation, which it now regarded as a fait accompli. Germany was not entirely happy that Austria–Hungary had acted alone without informing it, but the kaiser stepped in and gave Russia what in effect was an ultimatum. The government sent a note, drafted by Kiderlen; the Germans would seek a revision of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin to recognize the annexation (the closest they would get to an international conference) but wanted to be sure of Russian acceptance beforehand: "we await a precise answer – yes or no; we shall be obliged to consider an evasive, ambiguous, or unclear answer as a refusal" (Rich 1992: 413), in which case "[w]e would then withdraw and let events take their course" (Jelavich 1991: 224, cited in MacMillan 2013: 433). The idea of resorting to coercion was Kiderlen's, and it worked because Russia was not in a position to go to war given its terrible defeat in the 1904–1905 war. In addition, the French had made it clear in February, after reaching a settlement with Germany on Agadir, that they did not see Bosnia as an area where Russia's vital interests were involved and that the French public could not support going to war over such an issue (Taylor 1954: 455). Given Russia's weakened condition and lack of allied support, the tsar had to back down and Russia clarified that it could not support Serbia either.

Serbia was forced to formally recognize the annexation, to change its current foreign policy, and "to live henceforth on terms of good neighborliness" (Rich 1992: 414), which meant controlling nationalist organizations on its territory, reducing the size of its army, and dispersing the volunteers that had gone over the border. Aehrenthal made it clear that if Serbia did not recognize the annexation and change its foreign policy, that would mean war; he went so far as to tell the Germans that Austria-Hungary would invade Serbia (Rich 1992: 413).

An invasion was precisely what Conrad, the chief of staff, wanted. He preferred to use the crisis as an opportunity to go to war and end the Serbian nationalist threat by absorbing the small state into the empire. A so-called preventive war was favored by the situation and the differential in power, but did not occur.[2] Aehrenthal did not want war and saw no need for it, preferring coercive diplomacy to get Russia to

[2] Technically, a preventive war is between a hegemon and a rising challenger that might overtake it; Serbia, as a minor state, was never in a position to do that, so this could not be a preventive war in terms of power transition theory (see Vasquez 2014). What Conrad really had in mind was that they should attack now because they would win and it was a good opportunity because Serbia's patron was in no position to come to its aid.

Text Box 8.1 Nutshell Summary: 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis

1. Austria–Hungary plans to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina after having occupied it since 1878.
2. Izvolsky, the Russian foreign minister, seeks to get a quid pro quo from Aehrenthal, the Austro–Hungarian foreign minister. Russia would agree not to oppose the annexation in return for Austria–Hungary's not opposing a change in the straits convention, which would permit Russian warships to pass through the straits during times of peace without allowing other states to do the same.
3. Aehrenthal denied that a bargain had been made. Izvolsky is enraged and embarrassed. Serbia protests the annexation and there are domestic demands for war. Fears of war between Austria–Hungary and Russia are rampant in winter 1908–1909.
4. The kaiser steps in and gives the tsar what in effect is an ultimatum: accept the annexation or Germany will fight alongside Austria–Hungary.
5. The tsar relents because Russia is unprepared for war and has not recovered from its defeat by Japan in the 1904–1905 war. With this, Serbia has to accept stringent demands from Austria–Hungary regarding their nationalist claims.
6. The tsar, determined never to be humiliated again, begins a major military buildup.

accede. The tsar had little choice, but he was resolved never again to be humiliated and began a major military buildup. Williamson and Van Wyk (2003: 114) go so far as to say "the Tsar vowed there would be no forced retreats in the future." Mercer (1996: 110) also characterizes this as a vow. Similarly, Snyder and Diesing (1977: 541) see Russia "never again" backing down to Austrian and German threats.[3] Austria–Hungary responded with their own buildup.

Text Box 8.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

Two key variables drive the outcome of this crisis: *territory* and the *relative capabilities* of the two main actors (see Table 8.1). Territorial issues

[3] Our thanks to Jackson B. Barnett for his research on the tsar's reaction. Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary, was aware of the impact that the Bosnian Crisis had on the tsar and during the First Balkan War he warned the German ambassador that Russia had given way in 1909 but "was determined not to give way a second time" (quoted in Otte 2020: 460).

Table 8.1 *Variable summary for Bosnia 1908–1909: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Nature of issue	Major	X	
Relevant capabilities	Major		X
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Moderate	X	
Bargaining strategy	Minor		X
Hostility	Minor		X
Alliances	Minor	X	
Arms races	Minor		X
System structure	None		
Democracy	None		
Proximity	None		
Rivalry	None		
Norms	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

dominate the first part of the crisis, while capability differences dominate once the ultimatum occurs. The crisis begins over the territory of Bosnia and Hercegovina, which the Austrians plan to occupy. The Bosnian territory in question can almost be seen as homeland territory for Austria–Hungary and the Serbian nationalists, but not for Russia. Izvolsky, the Russian foreign minister, hopes to gain something from the situation and consequently offers a quid pro quo to Aehrenthal, his Austrian counterpart, in which he links the Bosnian annexation to Russia's desire to change the status of the straits. This bargain would give Russia access to, and control of, strategic territory it had been without since its defeat in the Crimean War. Trading this for Austrian control of Bosnia-Hercegovina, however, involves selling out Serbia, which claims the territory as its own. Once the offer becomes public and is rejected, Serbian *hard-liners* become outraged and threaten war – all because of the territorial issue.

At this point, the crisis escalates and shifts from a territorial bargain that could have avoided war to a crisis in which Germany stands alongside its ally and threatens to go to war unless Russia concedes. The ultimatum results from *hard-liners* in Germany and Austria–Hungary. It works because Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War has weakened it (illustrating the moderate role of recent *previous history*). The disparity in *relative capabilities* between Germany and Russia is therefore the key variable that determines how the crisis resolves short of war. It exerts a de-escalatory effect. This is consistent with realist thinking, which typically posits that superior power inhibits war. Germany's alliance also

plays a role, but only a minor one; the key variable that makes the ultimatum work is not the alliance but rather the overwhelming difference in capabilities. As this case shows, for such an outcome to occur, the power differential must be clear, overwhelming, and involve an issue of limited salience for the side being coerced. The latter is true for the tsar, since Russian homeland territory is not at stake. In contrast, the Serbian nationalists consider the territory to be part of the homeland and are therefore prepared to go to war with a militarily superior adversary.

In this way, territorial issues need not always escalate to war, even though they have a greater probability of doing so. Indeed, the quid pro quo could have resolved a salient territorial issue without war. That the proposed deal dramatically fell apart, even to the extent that Aehrenthal denies it ever took place, shows that the *bargaining strategy* influences the crisis outcome too – in the sense not only that the quid pro quo collapses but also that German intervention shifts the bargaining strategy to the use of an ultimatum that successfully coerces Russia. Because we cannot be certain that a deal was actually struck, we ultimately consider bargaining strategy to play only a minor role.

Although the strategy of coercion succeeds, it also produces a negative consequence – namely, increasing the tsar's resolve to never back down again and initiating a military buildup to ensure that he does not. In this way, *hostility* plays a minor role in the crisis. The lack of any *arms races* at this time between the three major states or between any of them and Serbia helps hold hostility at bay (Sample 1997). Although not reflected in specific evidence about decision-making during the crisis, we can deduce that the absence of arms races perhaps reduces the probability of war here, since neither side will feel pressure to preempt violence before the other side obtains a military advantage. We therefore see arms races as playing a minor role in the crisis. As noted above, however, the hostility that is present in this case provides clear evidence about how some arms races originate out of defeat. The tsar accurately attributes his defeat in this crisis to his military weakness, so he decides to engage in a military buildup to rectify that situation. The resulting arms race, in turn, pressures him to preempt his adversaries in July 1914.

Of note, the *system* (or the legacy of the Concert of Europe) plays no role in this crisis. Aehrenthal has concerns about Britain, but the other major states do not feature prominently in the management of the crisis.

Theoretical Analysis

This case raises a number of theoretical questions related to coercive bargaining and realism. These include how and why coercion works, why

the chance for a "preventive war" was not taken, what makes one side renege, why the principals were unable to reach a quid pro quo, and why the principals did not utilize the existing system of conference diplomacy to resolve the crisis.

The 1908–1909 crisis is important historically because it became a template for the July 1914 crisis. In particular, the lessons derived from the case by the actors shaped their thinking about future interactions, which reached a head in the July 1914 crisis (see Chapter 9). In that crisis, Austria–Hungary and Germany thought the process would play out thus: Russia would attempt to support Serbia by threatening Austria–Hungary with war, while Germany would support Austria–Hungary by clarifying that it would go to war with Russia if Russia attacked. Both Germany and Austria–Hungary believed the tsar would back down because, as in the Bosnian Crisis, Russia was not ready to go to war. The case served as an analogy on which to base foreign policy in the future. It thus became a lesson from the past to guide the future (see Jervis 1976: ch. 6). The analogy seemed to be airtight. The only doubt was whether Germany would stand firmly at Austria–Hungary's side, as it did in 1908–1909. Emperor Franz Josef was uncertain of this and would only go to war once he got the so-called blank check from the kaiser and Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg.

The 1908–1909 crisis also became an important policy lesson because it conformed to realist precepts of coercive diplomacy. A clear demand was made informing the Russian state what was expected – namely, endorsing and accepting the annexation, with the consequence of failing to do so being that war would ensue. The resolve of Germany to go to war was unambiguous and there was no doubt that it would follow through. It was also clear that there was no room for further negotiation. The key lesson, of course, was that coercive diplomacy worked the way it was supposed to in theory. And it worked because Germany's resolve was unequivocal and diplomacy was backed by sufficient power. Power made the tsar and Russia bend to the demands of Austria–Hungary.

This combination was even more forceful with regard to Serbia. Here, the demands were more severe and stringent. This was, in part, because the differential in capability was greater and also because Austria–Hungary had much to gain through a crushing war against Serbia, especially when Russia would stand aside. The kaiser and Emperor Franz Josef had no other expectation than that it would work again in similar circumstances.

What they did not take account of was the consequence of their success. They did not realize that the tsar had resolved never to be humiliated that way again. This meant that he might fight a second time, even

if he was not ready. However, he planned to be ready by engaging in a major military buildup, which by 1914 was worrying Moltke. Nor did they entertain the possibility that wishful thinking might play a role in the tsar's and his advisors' thinking about their capability. The tsar firmly believed, as will be seen in Chapter 9, that the coalition of the Triple Entente was more powerful than that of Germany and Austria–Hungary. Generally, realist theory underestimates both the role of cognitive biases that undercut "rational" cost–benefit calculation and the role of emotions, like the sense of humiliation in a defeat, that shape future decision-making in similar situations. In the long run, the very success of this instance of coercive diplomacy set the stage for its dramatic failure just half a decade later.

In contrast to the theoretical expectations of realism and coercive diplomacy, some of the theoretical expectations associated with preventive war were not fulfilled in this case. The structural conditions for fighting now rather than later were present in this case for Germany versus Russia, and especially for Austria–Hungary versus Serbia since Russia could not intervene. Yet in both instances these structural conditions were not sufficient for war. In Vienna, Conrad, chief of the general staff, advocated for war to settle the Serbian problem once and for all. He went a little too far, however, in arguing for war with Italy as well, if it should intervene, maintaining that the lost Italian provinces could be regained. His influence was muted by Franz Ferdinand, the heir apparent, who sought to rein him in (MacMillan 2013: 430). More importantly, Aehrenthal was basically an accommodationist in sentiment and was not going to go to war when diplomacy would suffice.

In Germany, the kaiser did not hesitate to threaten war, but did not expect one either. At the same time, there was no desire on the part of the kaiser or others in Germany to take advantage of the differential in capability to engage in a "preventive war" with Russia, assuming they felt that Russia could only increase in power because it was at a low point after its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War. The lack of a German preventive motivation reflects a deficiency in preventive war theory since Germany failed to take advantage of the situation with a long-term rival. It had no motivation to take advantage of a situation in the struggle for power when it could have.

If there were "sufficient" conditions for a preventive war in both these dyads, why were these not seized? With regard to Austria, there was a hard-liner in place, who made a strong argument, pointing out, according to MacMillan (2013: 430), that Austria–Hungary had a land force of 700,000 compared to 160,000 for Serbia and 43,000 for Montenegro. There was also widespread talk of war in Serbia. Material conditions,

even when used by the military to make an argument for a preventive war, are not always sufficient. Even if Conrad had been a more convincing personality within the elite, he was no match for Aehrenthal or Franz Ferdinand, illustrating again the importance of accommodationists in reining in hard-liners. Nonetheless, it seems in this case, if not in others, that certain psychological barriers undercut advocates of preventive war. The case seems to indicate a defect in the theory in this regard. The costs of war are immediate and war itself a risky proposition, whereas long-term power shifts are not guaranteed and are uncertain. It is difficult psychologically to take on the costs of war when their necessity is not overwhelming. Inertia is a powerful force that is difficult to overcome and its role in circumventing preventive wars has been overlooked.

With regard to Germany, there was even less motivation for a preventive war because there was no hard-liner, like Conrad, who made the case for it. By December 1912 Moltke might fulfill this role, but he did not in 1908. The absence of such a hard-liner makes the German case even more of an anomaly for preventive war theory in that both Germany and Russia were major states, and rivals, and in a crisis that could provide a pretext for war. This crisis, in which Russia confronts an ally of Germany, is more of a candidate for a preventive war than the buildup to the Russo-Japanese War, where Russia did not engage with Germany or its allies at all.

An additional theoretical question raised by this case has to do with the bargaining model of war. There is much talk about the commitment problem logic under this model, but in this case we see a more likely path of how states might renege on a solution. Here, Serbia had a solution imposed on it that was never accepted by domestic political actors, who undercut that solution and pressured the government not to live up to its commitments. Serbia had legally accepted an end to its territorial claim in the settlement of this crisis (which is duly reported in the ICOW data; see www.paulhensel.org/icowterr.html), and agreed both to change its nationalist foreign policy and to be a good neighbor. Domestic actors refused to accept these terms and new actors, like Narodna Odbrana, were formed to push nationalist ambitions even more vigorously. Serbia subsequently reneged on its 1909 commitment not because of a change of power but because of the refusal of domestic actors to continue to abide by the previous commitment.

The official government of Serbia was well aware of its problem and begged Austria–Hungary for something to cool the domestic agitation for war. It asked for some compensation. What it would have liked was the Sanjak of Novi Bazar (MacMillan 2013: 429), but this was too valuable and already promised to the Ottomans. More importantly,

Aehrenthal rejected the Serbian call for compensation, as he did that of Montenegro, because he thought it was not applicable, which technically it was not since both were minor states and neither was involved in a balance of power with Austria–Hungary. Thus, the principle of compensation that provided a focal point for negotiations over Agadir would not be applied here.

A related and puzzling question raised by the bargaining in this case is why a quid pro quo between Austria–Hungary and Russia could not be reached. Why could Germany and France secure a quid pro quo over Morocco, and why were Ambassador Rosen and the Japanese government able to negotiate a quid pro quo, but Aehrenthal and Izvolsky could not? Negotiations between Aehrenthal and Izvolsky were difficult, but unraveled quickly. This seemed to be due to international hostility, especially British opposition, to a change in the norms governing the straits (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 539). Ultimately, it is not clear why Aehrenthal did not fulfill his side of the bargain, assuming that he did in fact make the deal. Of course, he denied that he did, but it seems unlikely that Izvolsky would have made up his claims that a deal had existed, since these sold out Serbia and raised domestic hostility, both of which eventually resulted in his being replaced as foreign minister.

In any case, it became clear that Aehrenthal could get the annexation without a conference and without Russian approval; indeed, the annexation came about in a few days while Izvolsky was still trying to gain major-state support for Russia's position on the straits. In the end, Aehrenthal saw that war could be avoided through intimidating Austria–Hungary jointly with Germany, because Russia was still too weak. This is critical. A quid pro quo assumes interdependent decision-making where a resolution cannot be reached without both sides agreeing. In this case, Aehrenthal was able to implement his preferred position unilaterally and imposed Russian acceptance through coercion. In addition, it turned out that Russia had accepted the idea of annexation, in principle, as early as the 1870s and again in the 1880s (MacMillan 2013: 431). This earlier acceptance had been forgotten by the Russians. It turned out to be embarrassing and undercut Izvolsky's weakening position within the government. The tsar, as reported in MacMillan (2013: 431), wrote to his mother, "You will understand what an unpleasant surprise this is and what an embarrassing position we are in." It all proved too much, and the tsar moved away from Izvolsky, who was eventually replaced and made an ambassador – in Paris, where he would seek his revenge in 1914 (see McMeeken 2013: 322).

Finally, Austria–Hungary learned, like Germany in 1906 during the Algeciras conference, not to permit its foreign policy to be subject to

conference diplomacy (Rich 1992: 412). It also learned from Algeciras that the governing system was rigged against it. Instead, they relied on their own power and alliance politics.

Lessons of the 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis

1. This is **a case of successful coercive diplomacy – one that supports realist thinking**. Most ultimata we have looked at up to this point in the book have not worked. This was true of the ultimatum given to Muhammed Ali in 1840, in the Menshikov mission to Turkey before the Crimean War, and in 1859 when Austria demanded that Piedmont demobilize. The German ultimatum in 1909 worked because Russia was weak from the Russo-Japanese War. It was no match for Germany, let alone Austria–Hungary and Germany. It had to capitulate and this resulted in Serbia giving in over strong nationalist protest.

2. Although coercive diplomacy worked, an important corollary to this lesson is that **humiliation and defeat can give rise to hard-liners that increase the probability of war in the future**. In Russia, the tsar was determined never to be humiliated again, and in the next crisis he planned to stand firm. In Serbia, new nationalist, nonstate actors, like Narodna Odbrana, formed. These and existing groups would set up a climate in which they would be able to assassinate Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria–Hungary.

3. A third important lesson from this case is that **crises that go to the edge of war and where power is key in winning will also encourage future arms races**. This held for both the winners and losers. The tsar coupled his rebuilding of his two navies with a land buildup, the so-called Great Program. Austria–Hungary also built up its military. By 1914, the Great Program led Moltke to worry that the Schlieffen plan would not be able to work once the Russian plan came close to being completed, and thus talked of preventive war. Even those who had been neutral in the crisis, like Italy, engaged in a military buildup. These consequences are an important train of events because we know statistically that ongoing arms races increase the probability of war (see Sample 1997, 2002).

4. Another important theoretical lesson illustrated by this crisis is that **territorial MIDs repeat**. Ultimately, Austria–Hungary was not satisfied in 1878 with the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; it wanted more. Serbia, despite its capitulation, did not give up, even though it made legally binding assurances. This is consistent with statistical findings that show that territorial MIDs recur (Hensel 1994) and recurrent MIDs have a higher probability of escalating to war (Hensel 1996; Diehl and Goertz 2000; Senese and Vasquez 2008: chs. 5 and 6). In 1908–1909

the Bosnian crisis was a successful case of coercive diplomacy, but in retrospect it actually turned out to produce a set of events – arms races and repeated territorial MIDs – that served as early-warning indicators of future war.

5. Serbia's actions in this case show that **if prudent leaders give in, hard-liners will not and can agitate to get leaders to follow their agenda in the future**. The leadership in Serbia and its diplomatic corps knew they would lose a war if they fought alone, so they had no choice. The emotions of the moment did not stem the feelings of the nationalists, however. At first, they counted on Russian support, which at least made their demands somewhat consonant with power realities, but once Russia gave in, the cries to fight alone were unrealistic and potentially played into the hands of Austro–Hungarian hard-liners, like Conrad, who wanted a "preventive" war. This agitation, however, also had an impact on future policy and played a key role in making Serbian officials turn a blind eye on their activities. This violated both the spirit and letter of the settlement with Austria–Hungary and as such amounted to reneging on it.

6. **This case became a precedent for 1914 for both sides, and both learned from it in ways that shaped their behavior in the July crisis**. The dynamics of the 1908–1909 crisis were the same as 1914. A coercive game, coming close to a game of chicken, was played – one in which alliances and alignments made the game a multiparty affair. In 1909 Germany and Austria–Hungary learned that if they were firm Russia would back down. Because of the 1908–1909 crisis, Russian leaders were determined not to back down again. Both rivals derived lessons from the Bosnian Crisis, but the lessons they derived helped set the stage for a future war.

9 July 1914

Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and a man of power, wealth, and culture, travelled to Bosnia and Herzegovina to attend military exercises; the final day of his visit – Sunday, June 28, 1914 – was to be the last day of his life. He was slated as heir, since Franz Josef's son, Rudolf, had committed suicide in 1889.[1] Ominously, June 28 was St. Vitus day, the commemoration of the Ottoman Turks' defeat of Serbian prince Lazar at Kosovo Polje. Awaiting him in Sarajevo were a group of nationalists – young men who wanted to do something with their lives, young men who wanted to make history, and young men who would.

It was a sunny morning as the archduke and his wife, Sophie, came into Sarajevo around 9:20 a.m. for a ceremony that was to last from about 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., after which they were to leave the town hall (McMeekan 2013: 12, 19). Their motorcade first encountered the conspirators near the Cumurja Bridge by the river.[2] There, Cabrinovic, one of the early conspirators, threw a bomb that bounced off the archduke's car and exploded in the car behind injuring several, including the military governor of the province – Oskar Potiorek, the original target until it was learned from the newspapers that Ferdinand would be coming. Cabrinovic, the only one of the three conspirators at his position who acted, jumped into the dry river and was arrested by police. Franz Ferdinand insisted on proceeding to the town hall, where he was to give a speech. Both he and Sophie had only a few scratches from the bomb.

After leaving the town hall, the archduke changed the original plan, which had been published in all the papers, so that he could visit the hospital to see the victims of the bomb attack. Potiorek made adjustments to the route to avoid additional attacks. For some reason, however, the driver followed the original route and the first two cars turned into Franz

[1] A few years later, in 1898, Franz Josef's wife, Empress Elisabeth (Sisi), would be assassinated by an Italian anarchist in Geneva.

[2] Details on the assassination are drawn from McMeekin (2013: 1–20).

Josef Strasse. The third car, with Potiorek in it, followed until Potiorek realized the mistake and ordered the cars to reverse. As this happened, Gavrilo Princip, who was at his position in a tavern, shot point blank, hitting both the archduke and Sophie. As they were bleeding to death in the car, Franz Ferdinand said, "Sophie, Sophie, don't die, stay alive for our children" (Clark 2012: 375).

Background

The long-term causes of the First World War are often traced back to the new Kaiser Wilhelm II pushing out Bismarck as chancellor in 1890. Wilhelm, who succeeded to the throne in 1888, wanted to direct his own foreign policy and did not want to be under the shadow of the great chancellor. The first immediate negative consequence of Bismarck's leaving was the collapse of the alliances that brought together Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, even though the latter were rivals. In 1881, Bismarck had engineered an alliance of all three, and when that ended in 1887, he signed the 1887 Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, which helped insure that Germany, although in a defensive alliance with Austria–Hungary (since 1879), would not fight Russia. In 1890 the Reinsurance Treaty lapsed because Wilhelm, among others, felt that Bismarck's alliances were overly complicated and contradictory. The end result was that Russia was left open to accept an offer to become France's ally, which it did in 1893. This alliance set the stage for the polarization of 1914.

Two other events involving the kaiser increased hostility between Germany and Britain. First, was in 1896, when the kaiser sent a congratulatory telegram to Paul Kruger, president of Transvaal, on the occasion of his repelling the Jameson Raid, an invasion of British irregulars. This raised a great deal of indignation in Britain, which had fought the Boer War of 1880–1881 and would subsequently fight the Second Boer War. The second event, which was more important and fundamental, was the kaiser's push to build an oceangoing navy to pursue his policy of *Weltpolitik*, which by 1898 led to an Anglo-German naval arms race that Paul Kennedy (1980) says produced a long-term hostility between the two countries. The point of building this navy was to provide power for Germany to gain what the state secretary, Bernhard von Bulow, called its rightful place in the sun by securing a colonial empire commensurate with its global power.

This emerging hostility increased further with the 1904 Entente between Britain and France, which led to the First Moroccan Crisis (see Chapter 7). France, which had become an implacable enemy of Germany since its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, now ended its

colonial rivalry with Britain. By the end of the First Moroccan Crisis, France and Britain isolated Germany by getting all the other major states in the world, with the exception of Austria–Hungary, to vote against Germany at the Algeciras conference, which was called to settle the dispute over Morocco. Thereafter, Germany would not use the prevailing global system to deal with its international problems because it saw that system as rigged against it.

As the First Moroccan Crisis unfolded, the Russo-Japanese War broke out (see Chapter 6). This not only preoccupied Russia but also removed it from giving its French ally much support. Russia's eventual defeat put it in a very weak position in terms of both its naval and land power. When the 1908 Bosnian Crisis broke out (see Chapter 8), the kaiser stood fast with Austria–Hungary and in effect gave the tsar an ultimatum to back down. Because of Russia's weakened position, the tsar had to yield, but he vowed never to do so again. Nonetheless, through this successful use of intimidation German leaders learned that coercion could work in the future, and the 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis became an important precedent for how they were to behave in July 1914.

The 1911 Agadir, or Second Moroccan, Crisis next saw the kaiser intervene to rein in his hard-line state secretary Kiderlen and reach a deal that prevented war, although there were last-minute setbacks. Even though this crisis showed that colonial rivalries, which were rampant during this period, need not to lead to war, the crisis also revealed that Britain was moving much closer to France.

As Agadir was going on, Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire at the end of September 1911 and invaded Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (modern-day Libya) in order to counterbalance French gains in Morocco. In March and May of the next year, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro came together in a Balkan League, an alliance aimed at the Ottomans and secretly supported by Russia. Taking advantage of the need for the Ottomans to fend off the Italian invasion, Montenegro declared war against the Ottoman Empire on October 8, with Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece soon intervening. In November, the Ottomans signed a peace treaty, with Italy giving up important territory. The next May (1913), the First Balkan War came to an end with territorial gains for Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. But in June, Bulgaria attacked Serbian and Greek positions. Thus began the Second Balkan War, which Bulgaria lost badly as both Romania and the Ottoman Empire entered the war against it. During the First Balkan War tensions mounted between Austria–Hungary and Russia; indeed, both mobilized on their borders. The kaiser did not stand at Austria–Hungary's side as in 1909, and the crisis was defused when each demobilized (Williamson

and Van Wyk 2003: 117). A year later the July crisis broke out, and scholars later posed the question of why this did not become a Third Balkan War rather than a world war.

Historical Events

The world was shocked by the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. In Vienna, this became the last act in a series of perceived outrages that nationalist Serbia had committed over the years. It demonstrated that the agreement ending the 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis was for naught. Franz Ferdinand had been the major accommodationist in Vienna and he hoped to deal with the Slavic problem by giving Slavs more autonomy, like the Hungarians had been given in 1867. This solution was known as trialism, but it was opposed by the Hungarians because they saw it as weakening their position within the empire. After the assassination, Berchtold, the foreign minister and ally to Ferdinand, now became a hard-liner. Emperor Franz Josef himself felt pushed over the edge; something now had to be done about Serbia. Conrad, chief of staff, had long wanted to attack Serbia, as well as Italy, to deal with nationalist threats. The assassination made the ruling circle in Vienna much more hard-line.

The emperor, however, was prudent. He did not want to act unless he was assured of German support. He had such support in 1908–1909, but since then the kaiser had not always stood by his side like a knight in shining armor, as the kaiser referred to it back then (see MacMillan 2013: 433). The kaiser, for example, had wavered in support during the Winter Crisis of the Balkan Wars when Austria–Hungary and Russia mobilized against each other. Conrad, however, was prepared to fight alone if need be.[3] Berchtold, of course, agreed with the emperor and on July 5–6 Count Hoyos, another hard-liner, was dispatched to Berlin to meet with the kaiser and Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg to get German support.

Kaiser Wilhelm II was a personal friend of Franz Ferdinand (McMeekin 2013: 42); Franz Ferdinand and Sophie had just visited him a few days before they were assassinated. The couple liked the kaiser because he treated Sophie with the dignity she deserved. Sophie and Ferdinand were forced to have a morganatic marriage because she was not of equal rank to the Habsburgs. This meant she was denied the privileges of his rank and their children had no succession rights to the throne. On a

[3] See his audience with the emperor on July 5, 1914 (recorded by Conrad), during which the emperor said, "If Germany does not give [the answer that it will stand on Vienna's side], then what?" Conrad replied, "Then we stand, to be sure, alone." (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 59).

daily basis this meant that she was often seated at the margins or came in toward the end of processions. Franz Josef and the family opposed the marriage but relented to Ferdinand's pleas, even though they knew this would be considered a scandal, since Sophie was a lady-in-waiting to Marie Christine, the woman the family thought Ferdinand would marry. Kaiser Wilhelm II, however, treated Sophie and Ferdinand as royalty, and this was a respite from the humiliation at the Vienna court.[4] The kaiser was shocked and saddened by the assassination. It moved him to fully back Franz Josef, something he had not always done in the Balkan Wars.

When Hoyos arrived, he found the kaiser willing to give his support. In his audience, which was attended by Szogyeny, the long-time Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Germany, the kaiser said that "he could give no definite answer" until he had discussed it with the chancellor, but that Franz Josef could rely on Germany's "full support" (Mombauer 2013:192, doc. 120). Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, after meeting with both Szogyeny and Hoyos, then formally telegrammed Vienna:

> As concerns Serbia, His Majesty, of course, cannot interfere in the dispute now going on between Austria–Hungary and that country, as it is a matter not within his competence. The Emperor Franz Joseph may, however, rest assured that his Majesty will faithfully stand by Austria–Hungary, as is required by the obligations of his alliance and of his ancient friendship. (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003 : 100, "Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, *Telegram to Vienna*, July 6, 1914")

This was later characterized by historians as the "blank check" that Germany gave to Austria–Hungary.[5] For Franz Josef, this was the assurance he needed; he now approved of Berchtold's and Conrad's desire to go to war with Serbia and end the threat to the empire's territory. With that he turned the daily operations of the government over to Berchtold.

The only remaining accommodationist in Vienna was Tisza, the Hungarian prime minster. Tisza did not want war because he feared that conquering and absorbing Serbia would greatly add to the Slavic population in the empire, thereby weakening Hungarian influence. He therefore insisted that no territory be absorbed, and Berchtold, to placate him, granted this major concession except for some small adjustments for strategic purposes. Instead of incorporating Serbia, Berchtold intended to distribute its territory to others and in that way subdue it and the threat it posed. Tisza was still not on board, although he became increasingly isolated. He raised concerns about ethnic unrest in Transylvania, which Romania might exploit. Conrad assured him that the army would

[4] On this and their courtship, see McMeekin (2013: 2–3).

[5] Despite the diplomatic wording, this sentence does not seem so open-ended as to be characterized as a "blank check."

protect Transylvania from any Romanian attack (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 67). Ultimately, Berchtold and Conrad used Tisza's fears about Transylvania to tell him that Serbia might make an alliance with Romania over the issue and this brought him on board (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 65).

An ultimatum was composed, written so that it would be rejected. Many of the demands it included to curb nationalist propaganda echoed what the Serbian government had agreed to in the Bosnian Crisis, so the Austro-Hungarian leadership saw little point in getting another agreement. All the leaders, even the reluctant Tisza, felt that something more than another signed agreement was needed now. Indeed, Tisza quipped at the joint council of ministers that he considered the southern Slav provinces "lost if nothing happened" (minutes of July 7 in Mombauer 2013: 214, doc. 134).

The Serbian government's nationalist claims to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Novi Pazar had been brewing since 1878.[6] The claims of the nonstate Serbian nationalist groups were more virulent; they championed themselves as the new Piedmont that would dismember the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so much so that the Crna Ruka (the Black Hand) named their paper *Pijemont* (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 22, 32). It was this territorial threat that was at the heart of Berchtold, Franz Josef, and Conrad's wanting to crush Serbia once and for all. As Williamson (1991: 75) states: "The frequent talk of Serbia as the new Piedmont, in direct allusion to Piedmont's success in unifying Italy, horrified leaders in Vienna and Budapest. The annexation of Bosnia–Herzegovina had settled little. Serbia had become more, not less, dangerous to the Dual Monarchy." This Pan-Slavic nationalism and its territorial claims, in Williamson's (1991: 59) words, were a challenge to "the Habsburg monarchy's very existence." According to Mombauer (2013: 309n19), this desire to go to war "dominated the thoughts and actions" of the decision-making elite, especially those of Berchtold (quote from Fellner 1995: 16–17, whom Mombauer cites).

The assassination now provided the impetus to do something. It did this for two reasons. First, it shifted the inner circle to a more hard-line position by removing Franz Ferdinand and switching Berchtold from accommodation to a determination to use force. Second, it created widespread sympathy internationally – so much so that the kaiser thought that even the tsar, with his horror of patricide, might stand aside (McMeekin 2013: 105). Thus, both domestically and internationally this was an opportune time to act.

[6] See the ICOW data reported in Vasquez (2018: 80).

The kaiser and Bethmann Hollweg recommended a quick and decisive war before Russia had a chance to react. A fait accompli would ensure diplomatic success. With Tisza's concerns, however, it took until July 19 for the council of ministers to approve the ultimatum. Then, the main delay was because Poincaré and Vivandi, the president and prime minister of France respectively, were visiting Tsar Nicolas II in St. Petersburg from July 20 to 23. Berchtold did not want the ultimatum to arrive while the leaders of France and Russia were meeting, so they would not have a chance to plan their reaction in person. As soon as the French ship left St. Petersburg, Vienna had its ambassador, Baron Giesl, hand-deliver the ultimatum to Pasic, with forty-eight hours to reply. Grey, the British foreign secretary, characterized the ultimatum as "the most formidable document I had ever seen addressed by one State to another that was independent" (McMeekin 2013: 204).

Initially, the Serbs did not know how the Russians would react, since they did not hear from St. Petersburg. The prince regent said that Serbia would comply if that was what the tsar recommended (McMeekin 2013: 185). Sazonov, the Russian foreign minister, who on Tuesday, July 21, had just warned Pourtalès, the German ambassador, not to issue an ultimatum, was firm in his support.[7] He recommended that two of the demands be rejected, but Pasic rejected only one – the demand that Austria–Hungary could conduct its own investigation of the assassination in Belgrade.

Pasic, who was campaigning for reelection when the ultimatum came, faced a major dilemma. If he rejected the ultimatum, this would mean a costly war; Serbia would most likely be overrun and conquered, with a large loss of life. Even with Russian support, there was little likelihood that Serbia could avoid defeat, at least in the short run. If he accepted the ultimatum, however, he would go down in history as a coward, who had accepted a humiliating defeat rather than fight. Equally important, Serbian nationalists (who had engineered the assassination), along with Apis (Dragutin Dimitrijevic, head of Crna Ruka as well as Serbian military intelligence), would likely remove him from office, if not kill him (see Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 40). This was not far-fetched; Apis and these nationalists had killed King Alexander I and his wife, Queen Draga, in 1903[8] to bring about the very shift in foreign policy away from Austria–Hungary toward nationalism and Russia that had led to the current predicament. Even before the assassination of the archduke,

[7] According to McMeekin (2013: 168), this was sent by post to Berlin and not received until July 23.

[8] For an interesting recounting of these events, see Clark (2012: 8–13).

moreover, Apis and Pasic were engaged in a struggle to dominate Serbian politics (see Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 23–31). We know that Pasic regarded Apis as a continuing threat, because years later, in late 1916, he had Apis and some of his colleagues charged and then executed for plotting to assassinate the regent – charges that Williamson and Van Wyk (2003: 41) regard as dubious. Pasic replied on July 25 to Giesl, who immediately severed relations since one of the ultimatum's demands was not accepted.

The kaiser did not read the Serbian reply until the morning of July 28, even though it had been in Bethmann's office since the evening of July 26 (McMeekin 2013: 228–229). As soon as he read it, he immediately wrote to Jagow, state secretary, that "*every cause for war has gone*" (Mombauer 2013: 408, doc. 277 [italics in the original]). He thought the rejected demand could be negotiated, and he began to formulate his Halt-in-Belgrade plan. He believed, in particular, that the concessions had to be transformed into "deeds." To ensure this, Austria–Hungary could occupy Belgrade and hold it as a "hostage" until Serbia complied, much as Prussia had kept troops in the northern provinces of France in 1871 until the indemnity was paid. This would have the added benefit of giving the Austro-Hungarian army the victory it long needed. On this basis, he told Jagow he was "ready to mediate" and ordered him to draw up a proposal to send to Vienna.[9] Tschirschky, on the next day – July 29 – went to the Ballahusplatz and delivered the kaiser's plan (Otte 2014: 372).

What the Kaiser failed to realize was that Berchtold and Vienna were interested not in the specific demands but in using the Serbian rejection as justification for a war (see Mombauer 2013: 309, 398, 453–455, doc. 321) that would crush Serbia and end its territorial threat to the empire forever. On July 28, Berchtold declared war at 11:10 a.m. – before the kaiser had a chance to act (McMeekin 2013: 244). Declarations of war during this era were soon followed by military action. When, however, he told Conrad, who had been angling for war for years, Conrad said the army would not be ready until August 12, since troops were on leave to collect the harvest. Berchtold then bombarded Belgrade from the Danube on July 29. This preempted the kaiser from avoiding a local war, but not the wider war that was looming. Berchtold did not mind the kaiser trying to prevent the wider war since this would mean that Austria–Hungary would win the local one.[10]

[9] All quotes are from Mombauer (2013: 408, doc. 277, July 28).

[10] For an astute analysis of the various goals of the countries and the kinds of war they preferred, see Levy (1990–1991b).

Similarly, Grey attempted to avoid war. Even before the Serbian reply, he proposed a conference (echoing a Concert of Europe approach) to deal with the problem. After Austria–Hungary declared war, he attempted to prevent a wider war by supporting direct negotiations between Russia and Austria–Hungary, while continuing to angle for four-power negotiations. These proposals would eventually evolve into a position similar to the kaiser's Halt-in-Belgrade plan Otte (2014: 392–393).[11] Berchtold delayed accepting either the kaiser's or Grey's proposals.

There now began two trains of events running somewhat parallel. The first was that the immediate parties, starting with Austria–Hungary and Serbia, began to mobilize against each other while simultaneously, in a second parallel process, the major states began attempts to avoid war. With regard to the first, Serbia began mobilization on the day it replied to the ultimatum, July 25. Russia took some early steps toward military preparedness on the same day (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 262). As it declared war on July 28, Austria–Hungary partially mobilized against Serbia.

Meanwhile, the kaiser formulated his Halt-in-Belgrade plan on July 28, and very late in the day he telegrammed the tsar (the night of July 28, dispatched at 1:45 a.m. on July 29).[12] Just a few minutes before, the tsar had telegrammed the kaiser (the messages crossed each other). The telegrams were a mutual attempt to avoid war.[13] These Willy–Nicky telegrams started out auspiciously, but on July 29 Berchtold bombarded Belgrade, and Bethmann Hollweg had the German ambassador, Pourtalès, warn Russia that if their mobilization measures continued Germany would mobilize and that it would not be possible to avoid a European war (Mombauer 2013: 419–420, doc. 287).[14] According to Mombauer (2013: 420n57), Pourtalès' visit convinced Sazonov that the

[11] On the similarity between Grey's plan and the Halt-in-Belgrade plan, see Otte (2020: 512, 515–517).

[12] We assume that the kaiser was an accommodationist here and really wanted to avoid a world war. For a different view, see Rohl (2014).

[13] Those who follow the Fritz Fischer (1967) thesis that the First World War was deliberately brought about by Germany, with planning going as far back as December 1912, long before the July 1914 crisis, see the telegrams primarily as an attempt by Bethmann Hollweg (who added phrasing) to placate the German socialists in the Reichstag, as well as Britain, by clearly laying the blame for the war on Russia (see Geiss 1967; see also Mombauer 2013: 399n3). Mombauer reflects this view in her discussion of the telegrams. The problem with this view is that the kaiser did not see it solely that way, but as an attempt to avoid war.

[14] See McMeekin (2013: 270) for the precise times of when Sazonov learned of the bombardment of Belgrade. It began in the afternoon, Sazonov learned of it around 5 p.m., and Pourtalès arrived at 6 p.m.

kaiser would not intervene with the Austrians, and he phoned the tsar asking him to order mobilization, which he did. However, late in the day – around 10 p.m. (McMeekin 2013: 273) – the tsar rescinded the order when he got another telegram from the kaiser indicating that a direct understanding could be reached between Russia and Austria, with the kaiser saying, "my Government is continuing its exertions to promote it" (Mombauer 2013: 420, doc. 288, 6:30 p.m., July 29).[15]

Even though the kaiser came up with his plan on July 28, Bethmann Hollweg did not immediately do much to pressure Vienna.[16] Nonetheless, by the middle of the next night (2:55 a.m. on July 30), he pressured Vienna in a telegram to Tschirschky, the German ambassador. He said that if Austria did not accept Grey's request, the blame for the war would fall on them: "Under these circumstances we must urgently and impressively suggest to the consideration of the Vienna Cabinet acceptance of mediation on the above-mentioned honorable conditions" (see Mombauer 2013: 449, doc. 316). Five minutes later (McMeekin 2013: 281–282) he sent another telegram to Tschirschky to tell Berchtold: "We are, of course, prepared to fulfill our duty as allies, but must decline to let ourselves be dragged by Vienna wantonly and without regard to our advice into a world conflagration" (Albertini 1952, vol. 3: 18; see also Vasquez 2014: 214 for more details).[17]

The 2:55 a.m. telegram was almost a withdrawal of the blank check. This raised concerns in the Austro-Hungarian government, as well as in the military, that Germany might abandon its ally (Mombauer 2013: 399, see also 450–451, doc. 317). Bethmann Hollweg seemed to have acted because his realization that Britain would likely enter the war (Stevenson 1996: 402–403). Bethmann had tried more than once to get the British to stay out, with the most recent attempt being his meeting with British ambassador Goschen on the night of the July 29, but to no avail (see McMeekin 2013: 277–278). Much of his foreign policy since at least the Second Moroccan Crisis had been centered on

[15] As McMeekin (2013: 273) notes, this telegram crossed with the one the tsar had just sent about submitting the problem to The Hague, and the tsar thought the kaiser was responding to that proposal, though the kaiser had not seen that yet.

[16] Some, like Copeland (2014: 180–193), believe this was because Bethmann wanted war.

[17] This telegram was then followed by another, "written in Zimmerman's hand," instructing Tschirschky, "Please do not carry out Instruction in No. 200," where Bethmann had recommended "most urgently that Austria should accept Grey's proposal" (Albertini 1952, vol. 3: 22). Zimmerman explained the reason for this in yet another telegram, saying that the instruction was suspended because the General Staff told him that military preparations were being taken by their neighbors in the east and speedy decisions were needed (Albertini 1952, vol. 3: 23). On the sequence of telegrams, see also Ponting (2003: 204–205).

improving relations with Britain. On the afternoon of July 29 he even suggested that he would give up much of Germany's naval growth in return for Britain's staying out (McMeekin 2013: 275).

Austria–Hungary was able to circumvent this telegram because events were moving rapidly and superseded the pressure. Not even two hours before Bethmann's 2:55 a.m. telegram, the tsar at 1:20 a.m. inadvertently let it slip that his country had "decided five days ago for reasons of defense" to take military measures (i.e., a partial mobilization) against Austria (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 140; Mombauer 2013: 447, doc. 313). This news stunned the kaiser, who thought that the tsar "had secretly mobilized behind my back" (Mombauer 2013: 447, doc. 313), and led to *a mobilization crisis*. Later that day Moltke cabled Conrad telling him to mobilize (Mombauer 2013: 451, doc. 318). This undercut Bethmann Hollweg and the kaiser's move toward peace, which led Berchtold to quip, "Who rules in Berlin, Moltke or Bethmann?" (Mombauer 1999: 436; see also Albertini 1952, vol. 2: 674; McMeekin 2013: 306). The contradictory messages permitted Berchtold to do and believe what he preferred.

Thanks to the kaiser's marginalia, we know how he reacted to the news that Russia had a five-day lead. Such a lead would upset the entire Schlieffen plan. The kaiser underlined the relevant words in the telegram and commented, "Thus it is almost a week ahead of us." He concluded, talking to himself, "My work is at an end!" (Mombauer 2013: 447, doc. 313, arrived at 1:45 a.m., July 30). This was a psychological turning point of the crisis for the kaiser.[18] He now began to abandon the peace script, which the tsar abetted by formally ordering general mobilization at 4 p.m. later in the day (Mombauer 2013: 465). This prompted the kaiser to issue an ultimatum for Russia to stop mobilizing on July 31. The tsar replied, in one of his last telegrams to Willy, "It is technically impossible to stop our military preparations which were obligatory owing to Austria's mobilization" (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 143). Crossing with this telegram, the kaiser revealed that through intelligence reports Moltke had sent him he now had "authentic news of serious preparations for war on my eastern frontier. Responsibility for the safety of my Empire forces preventive measures of defense upon me" (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 143). "The machine is in motion," as Mombauer (2013: 398–403) avers.

[18] News of the five-day lead also shocked Moltke (see McMeekin 2013: 289) and, on July 30 at 1 p.m., led him to pressure Bethmann Hollweg into entering a *Kriegsgefahrzustand* (imminent danger of war). Bethmann, however, was still pursuing the Halt-in-Belgrade plan and would not be persuaded.

It was not the technics that prevented the tsar from reversing the mobilization a second time; it was the sweep of events that was going on in his inner circle. His early comment to Willy at 1 a.m. on July 29 that "I foresee that very soon I shall be overwhelmed by the pressure upon me, and be forced to take extreme measures which will lead to war" (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 138), perhaps an exaggeration at the time, now captured what was going on. The tsar, who was under intense pressure by his military and by Sazonov to mobilize, could not rescind the mobilization order a second time.

It is testimony to the structure of the last few days before the guns of August – from the declaration of war on July 28 to July 31 – that both the kaiser and the tsar, absolute rulers in their respective countries, wanted and tried to avoid war but to no avail. What was it that made them fail? In large part, it was mobilization and the danger this posed to each side coupled with the time pressure to act (see the Theoretical Analysis section). For Moltke and the tsar, the five-day lead meant that the Schlieffen plan, worked out years in advance to fight a possible two-front war, could unravel. Moltke had adapted the plan and had wanted to enact it earlier rather than later. Each day that went by was a day that might prevent Germany from defeating France so it could swing back to the east. The kaiser tried to stop the tsar's mobilization the only way he knew how – he threatened an immediate mobilization of his own.

The mobilization crisis was even more severe in Russia. The generals, Sukhomlinov and Yanushkevitch, knew they had a disadvantage and that their mobilization would be slow. Moltke was counting on that, and the Schlieffen plan was based on it. Slowly and secretly the Russians had been making preparations going back to as early as July 24–25, as the Serbians were replying. The generals worried that without adequate preparation the Germans would move in, overwhelm, and conquer them. It was their job to prevent that. Their concern was not so much political goals as military defense. Sazonov and the tsar were convinced that a so-called partial mobilization only toward Austria–Hungary – one that Sukhomlinov and Yanushkevich told them was possible (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 131–132, 134) – might allow them to avoid German ire. The tsar accordingly ordered this mobilization on July 29 but rescinded the order when the telegram arrived from the kaiser about his mediation.

Sazonov was not pleased, and the generals were beside themselves. As early as July 24 "the Russian military leadership was determined not to be left behind" (Lieven 2015: 327). Now they frantically began to pressure the tsar. Krivoshein, the hard-liner and the power behind the scenes at the council of ministers, who wanted war for his own reasons, was enraged. His request to speak to the tsar was refused. Sukhomlinov and

Yanushkevitch were able to talk to the tsar by phone, but when he had heard enough of their litany that had been going on since the previous day, he said to Yanushkevitch, who was repeating what Sukhomlinov had been saying, "the conversation was at an end" (quoted in McMeekin 2013: 297). It was now left to Sazonov, the only advisor the tsar trusted. Sazonov had been convinced by the two generals, and he met with them to plan how to persuade the tsar of the necessity to order general mobilization. Yanushkevich, no doubt remembering how the tsar had rescinded the previous mobilization, asked Sazonov to phone once he persuaded the tsar, saying, "Afterwards, I will go away. I will destroy my telephone and otherwise do everything to ensure I cannot be found, in case there is an opposing order such as a renewed revocation of general mobilization" (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 141–142, Russian ministry of foreign affairs; see also McMeekin 2013: 298).

Sazonov met the tsar at 3 p.m. on July 30, alone except for General Tatistchev, although the latter had no influence on the decision. Sazonov's central argument was that Russia could not afford to be caught unprepared for an attack, which would be the case if there was no mobilization: "It only remained to do everything that was necessary to meet war fully armed and under the most favorable conditions for ourselves." The tsar replied, "Just think of the responsibility you are advising me to assume! Remember it is a question of sending thousands of men to their deaths" (both quoted in McMeekin 2013: 301). That day and the previous one, the tsar stood alone surrounded by the military and his key civilian advisor, all of whom agreed on the need to fully mobilize and go to war. At 4 p.m. he ordered general mobilization (On the meeting see Ponting (2003: 224). He was not happy about the decision. Sazonov was, however, and he telephoned Yanushkevitch to say that he could now destroy his telephone (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 142; McMeekin 2013: 302).

Mobilization was the most crucial decision in the crisis because once it was made there was no turning back (see, e.g., Ponting 2003: 224–225).[19] The tsar was the last person who could have avoided mobilization, and mobilization meant war. With the Tsar's July 30 order, war was ordained, and the tsar knew it.[20] The kaiser resorted to an ultimatum. The Tsar replied on July 31 that it was "*technically* impossible" for him to stop the mobilization, but said, "My troops shall not take any *provocative* action" (Mombauer 2013: 491, doc. 346 [italics in the original];

[19] For a major debate on the importance of mobilization in 1914 for bringing about the war, compare Levy (1990–1991a) and Trachtenberg (1990/1991).

[20] Grey still thought war could be avoided, but the Germans and the Russians knew differently.

Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 143). He was "hopeful that a way could be found to prevent the order … from becoming an irrevocable cause for war" (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003; 142, Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, July 30, 1914). Since the tsar did not stop the mobilization, the kaiser, at 5 p.m. on August 1, signed his own mobilization order, which meant war, and most likely world war. France had already mobilized earlier in the day, making Germany (as McMeekin 2013: 341 notes) the last of the principals to mobilize.

Just as the kaiser finished signing the order, a telegram came from Lichnowsky, Germany's ambassador in London, indicating that Grey suggested that if Germany did not attack France, Britain would stand aside and so might France. The long hoped-for neutrality of Britain now seemed at hand, and the kaiser and Bethmann were ecstatic; now, not only a world war, but also a Continental one, could be avoided. Germany could therefore easily win the coming war. Moltke was called in and told to abandon the western assault and move the army to the east. Moltke, appalled, said that was impossible. The kaiser angrily said, "Your uncle[21] would have given me a different answer," followed up by, "It must be possible, if I order it" (Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 106). Orders were then issued to halt the advance into Luxemburg (Otte 2014: 478). However, at 11 p.m., a note from King George V (actually written by Grey) came, indicating that there must have been some misunderstanding about Grey's remark to Lichnowsky (McMeekin 2013: 348). The August 1 "misunderstanding" with Grey most likely pushed the kaiser over a psychological edge. With that and the Russians having a five-day lead, he threw in the towel and told Moltke "Now you can do what you want" (McMeekin 2013: 349). It was past 11 p.m. and Moltke hurried off to issue orders to attack France by going through Luxembourg and Belgium.

The events of August 1 were the beginning of the cataclysm. August 1 saw France and Germany mobilize, and Germany declared war on Russia. The next day, on August 2, Germany, instead of attacking Russia, decided to attack France, going through Luxembourg first, before invading Belgium on August 3. Grey went to Parliament on August 3 with the rationale of protecting Belgian neutrality, which he believed would keep the government from falling as he argued for war. Germany declared war on France. As Germany invaded Belgium, Britain gave Germany an ultimatum to reverse course and guarantee Belgian neutrality (McMeekin 2013: 374). This ultimatum expired at 11 p.m. (London time) on August 4, at which point Britain and Germany would be at war. Two days later, on August 6, the two main protagonists on the Serbian

[21] General Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, winner of the war of 1866.

Text Box 9.1 Nutshell Summary: July 1914

1. On June 28, 1914, Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, is assassinated in Sarajevo by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip.
2. Emperor Franz Josef seeks support from Kaiser Wilhelm II and receives the so-called blank check.
3. On July 23, Austria–Hungary presents Serbia with a forty-eight-hour ultimatum that consists of ten demands. Serbia accepts all but one. Kaiser Wilhelm II reads the Serbian reply on July 28 and says "*every cause for war has gone*." He develops his Halt-in-Belgrade plan.
4. On the same day Austria–Hungary declares war on Serbia, followed by a bombardment of Belgrade on July 29.
5. On July 29, Tsar Nicholas II orders mobilization against Austria–Hungary in a move to support Serbia, but then rescinds it in light of a telegram from Kaiser Wilhelm II.
6. Pressures from Sazonov and Russian generals lead the tsar to order general mobilization on July 30. The next day, on July 31, Germany gives an ultimatum to Russia to cease its mobilization.
7. On August 1, France mobilizes, then Germany mobilizes. Germany declares war on Russia.
8. On August 3, Grey speaks to Parliament. Germany declares war on France.
9. On August 4, Germany invades Belgium, which brings Britain into the war at the end of the day.

question – Austria–Hungary and Russia – declared war. The house of cards the alliance created fell. The guns of August (Tuchman 1962) roared and one hundred years of major-state peace came to an end. As the guns were moved into place, Grey looked out of his window from the Foreign Office on the evening of 3 August and remarked: "The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our life-time."

Text Box 9.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

The game-theoretic structure of this crisis should have resulted in both sides backing down. Instead, each holds firm to its commitments and goes to war. *Alliances* are therefore a major key variable. Each critical actor has alliance commitments, which encourage it to play the game of coercion to the hilt. Once the major-state war starts, with the German declaration of war on Russia, alliances also cause the war to spread rapidly in a matter of days – between August 1 and August 6.

How could the alliance between Germany and Austria–Hungary, initially formed in 1879, the Franco-Russian alliance of 1893, and even the 1904 Entente between France and Britain be much of a structural factor in the escalation of a 1914 crisis, especially since these parties had been in severe crises before without war? No one can deny that the Franco-Russian alliance turned out to be a "fateful alliance" (Kennan 1984). Poincaré used it to stiffen the tsar, and the terms of the alliance made sure that once Russia mobilized, France would follow. In this way the alliance played a critical role in the mobilization crisis of July that brought Germany and Russia to war. An important theoretical insight here is that a two-party war that breaks out in a system with several interlocking alliances is apt to spread, especially if these alliances involve major states and opposing rivals. If the system of rivalries was a powder keg in 1914, the alliances were the wiring system that made the flame spread, exploding the entire barrel.

The *system structure*, in particular the legacy of the Concert of Europe, plays a major role as well by trying to avoid the war. Whatever governing structure existed fails to mediate the crisis, even though reasonable peace *proposals* exist (e.g., the Halt-in-Belgrade plan). Two actors undercut these proposals: Austria–Hungary and Serbia (buttressed by the nonstate Serbian nationalists). Negotiations end abruptly when Russia and Germany mobilize.

Hypothetically, these mobilizations generate *fear*, encouraging each side to move from a strategy of trying to prevent war (whether though negotiation or coercion) to preempting the other side militarily in order to gain an advantage in the coming war. Such a dynamic illustrates how *emotions* can influence crisis escalation, even if they are secondary to other factors. Indeed, another psychological factor – misperception – affects the crisis outcome as well. Both the kaiser and the tsar think the other will back down. All the other major decision-makers, moreover, believe that avoid a major-state war as they had in the past – a function of *previous history*.

Territorial issues prove key in three respects. First, nonstate Serbian actors seek homeland territory. This motivates them to assassinate the archduke, thereby instigating the crisis. Second, those territorial ambitions contribute to the local (dyadic) war between Serbia and Austria–Hungary, which tries to hold its empire together. Finally, the desire to retake Alsace-Lorraine creates a latent, if unstated, incentive for France to enter the war. The other major states involved in the war's onset and initial expansion – namely, Germany, Russia, and Britain – do not explicitly pursue any territorial issues. Nevertheless, territorial demands motivate a number of late entrants to the war, including Japan, the Ottoman Empire, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece.

To the extent that bargaining fails (through both negotiations and coercion), *bargaining strategy* also plays a major role in the crisis outcome. Bargaining fails, however, largely because of other variables: the alliances that alter decision-makers' calculi, as well as the mobilizations that endanger countries through proximity and encourage them to preempt their adversaries militarily.

Numerous variables contribute moderately to crisis escalation. First, *previous history* influences Russian decision-making. After the 1908–1909 Bosnian Crisis, the tsar vows never to back down again. Moreover, both Austria–Hungary and the kaiser expect a repeat of that crisis. This variable is more potent here than in other crises discussed heretofore, because the last major crisis involved the same key actors over a relatively similar issue (i.e., the Balkans). They therefore easily make analogies between the Bosnian Crisis and this one.

Second, *arms races* encourage war. This is often mentioned as a key factor (Joll 1984), and Lewis Richardson (1960a) thought it played a major role in the onset of the First World War. The "great program" that the tsar initiated after the Bosnian Crisis encourages the German military – especially Moltke – to contemplate, and then advocate for, a preventive war. Equally important was France's financing of railways that would facilitate Russia's mobilization and thereby undermine the Schlieffen Plan.[22]

The quantitative data show no mathematical arms race in 1912 or 1913 between Russia and Germany (Sample 1997). They do, however, show an arms race between Germany and France in 1913, between France and Austria–Hungary in 1912 and 1913, between Germany and Belgium in 1913, and between Austria–Hungary and Serbia in 1912 (Sample 2002). The great Anglo-German naval race does not appear in these data, in large part because Britain has gone ahead by 1912. That earlier arms race, however, fostered a *rivalry* between the two (see P. Kennedy 1980). Indeed, the failed talks to manage the naval race in 1912 "soured" relations (Otte 2020: 436) and led Britain to tighten its alliance with France. Britain agrees to withdraw most of its fleet from the Mediterranean if France will protect British interests there. In return, the British navy promises to protect the French Channel and Atlantic coast. As this agreement demonstrates, military buildups and alliance politics are often connected empirically (see also Most and Starr 1984).

Stevenson (1996: 1–14, especially figure 1) provides a detailed analysis of armament spending prior to the First World War. His data show a

[22] On the role of France (as well as Britain) in funding Russia's war preparations, see Siegel (2014).

"synchronized, rapid and accelerating expansion" in armament spending, with a steep upward increase starting in 1912 (Stevenson 1996: 3). Stevenson (1996: 13) sees the repeated crises in the decade prior to 1914 as "the essential destabilizing factor" that brings about the war (i.e., *previous history*); these crises encouraged decision-makers to spend money on armaments in order to be prepared for war (e.g., Russia). In his view, concerns about preparedness also influence the mobilizations of 1914. From this perspective, the myriad arms races did not make the war inevitable but rather intertwined with the repeated crises. This is not inconsistent with Wallace (1979, 1982) and Sample (1997), who find that ongoing arms races help statistically to distinguish the militarized disputes that go to war during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from those that do not (see also Senese and Vasquez 2008: chs. 5–6).[23]

The third variable with moderate influence is *proximity*. Because the major states relied largely on land armies and sat geographically near one another, leaders feared being overrun. This fear intensified because of arms race considerations, including the prospect that Russia would complete its great program;[24] the French investment in Russian railways; and the ongoing French arms races with both Germany and Austria–Hungary. Each promised military advantages to certain adversaries' land forces, thereby priming the continent for a mobilization crisis and war.

Statistical evidence suggests that states in a rivalry relationship face a greater probability of war (Vasquez et al. 2011). *Rivalry* has a moderate effect in 1914 on crisis escalation. Rivalry pervaded the major-states' relationships with each other. For instance, the rivalry between France and Germany was intense. After France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, it lost Alsace-Lorraine and formed the Franco-Russian alliance, which provided a key element in, and prerequisite for, the onset of war. The rivalry between Russia and Austria–Hungary over issues in the Balkans also motivated the July confrontation. These hostile relationships made the major-state rivals particularly suspicious of, and sensitive to, each other's moves.

Despite the rivalry, hostility as an emotion seems to be under control between the leaders of Germany and Russia, as well as Britain, all of whom are actively trying to avoid a war. It is most prevalent in the Serbia/Austria–Hungary dyad that starts the local war, and in the France–Germany dyad, where France's latent hostility over the loss of

[23] For an astute theoretical and empirical analysis of the role of arms races in the escalation of crises to war, see Sample (2021), including her discussion of the First World War.

[24] The government had finalized a bill for army expansion in November 1913, which the Duma passed in June of the next year (see Mulligan 2010: 130).

Alsace-Lorraine seems to affect its actions. Given that some of the key actors are trying to avoid the war, we see hostility as playing a more minor role.

Rivalry is produced by the repetition of disputes. An ominous finding regarding the repetition of crises appears in Midlarsky (1988): The buildup of crises in the period prior to the First World War was so rapid that it overwhelmed the ability of decision-makers to deal with and manage them. MacMillan (2013) details some of the major crises in this prewar era.

Ironically, one of the problems of having many crises that do not escalate to war is that it gives a false sense of security that any current crisis will be resolved because the previous ones all have been. The tsar, for example, said to his finance minister on July 24 after a meeting of the council of ministers, at which they considered their response to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, "In latter years conflicts had frequently arisen in the Balkans, but the powers had always come to an agreement" (Mombauer 2013: 334, doc. 208). Many of the scholars writing in Afflerbach and Stevenson (2007) note that the expectation among leaders was that because previous crises had avoided war, so too would this one. This was true, but the statistical pattern reveals a more pernicious trend – namely, that the use of force repeats *and escalates* as the underlying issue proves to be intractable (see Bremer 2000: 25).

The repetition of disputes is also discussed as a factor that ignites a powder keg that is just sitting in a room waiting to be ignited. Thompson, among others, discusses 1914 in terms of the presence of a powder keg that is not going away. His key theoretical point is that even if one crisis, like July 1914, did not ignite the powder keg, the structure would ensure that the powder keg would remain until a crisis came along that would ignite it (Thompson 2003, 2007, building on Hinsley 1995: 4). For Thompson (2003), Sarajevo was like a streetcar; if you miss one, another will come (see Halberstam, 1972: 646, cited in Goertz and Levy 2007: 42; see also Thompson 2007).[25] In other words, if you have successfully managed the crisis, it does not matter because (the structure will insure that) another crisis will come along that will take you to war.[26]

[25] Thompson (2007) makes this theoretical point in criticism of Lebow (2007), who argues that the First World War started because of the assassination of the archduke and the inability of the major states to manage the subsequent crisis. Without the assassination, Lebow argues, through counterfactual analysis, the war would not have occurred.

[26] An example of this is the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. Several plots to assassinate Austro-Hungarian leaders had failed going back to 1910, including one that never got off the ground to assassinate Franz Josef on June 3, 1910, in Sarajevo (see Otte 2014: 12). On June 28, 1914, a plot came along that succeeded.

Table 9.1 *Variable summary for July 1914: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Alliances	Major	X	
System structure	Major		X
Nature of issue	Major	X	
Bargaining strategy	Major	X	
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Arms races	Moderate	X	
Proximity	Moderate	X	
Rivalry	Moderate	X	
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Moderate	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Relative capabilities	Minor	X	
Democracy	None		
Norms	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

The streetcar effect is normally thought of as a *system* effect, but it is really a *dyadic* effect brought about by rivalry.

Another key variable is the domestic political context, because *hard-liners* in the militaries of Russia, Germany, and France moderately encourage war. They pressure political leaders in numerous capitals to mobilize. Once the war starts, Grey also adopts a more hard-line stance and devises a political strategy to get his cabinet and Parliament to go to war.

As noted earlier, hostility plays a minor role. Relatively equal capabilities, which are in the background and in the minds of decision-makers, actually cancel each other out. In this way, they are seen as playing a minor role. The remaining variables exert no notable effect on crisis escalation, one way or the other.

As Table 9.1 demonstrates, the key variables we consider perhaps overdetermine war in this case. Nearly all the variables discussed above encouraged escalation, although their relative potency varies. System structure (i.e., the legacy of the Concert) alone works feebly to prevent escalation – particularly through Grey's attempts to convene a conference and propose a diplomatic solution – but ultimately fails.

Theoretical Analysis

The First World War is the most complicated case we have examined and also the most fascinating in terms of the decision-making involved.

Even after a century, the causes of the First World War still remain the subject of disagreement, although in recent years scholarship has gone beyond the "blame game" to become more empirically oriented (Clark 2012: 560). This section examines some of the main theoretical issues that the review of historical events raises. It begins with a detailed analysis of what caused the First World War, before moving on to consider whether and how the war could have been avoided.

What Caused the First World War?

Types of War Part of the complexity of the First World War, in terms of its causes, is that it involved two different types of war – the local war between Austria–Hungary and Serbia, and the world war that was interlinked with and arose out of it.[27] The local war was a two-party war between neighbors over territory, which is the typical (modal) war in the international system (since at least 1815; see Vasquez and Valeriano 2010: 300). Such wars are well understood. The question is why this local war did not remain a two-party war – that is, why it did not become the Third Balkan War.

The straightforward answer to this question is that the involved alliances expanded the war. Although not a formal ally of Serbia, Russia's long-term patron–client relationship with Serbia made it tightly aligned with Serbia, which it was not willing to see overrun by Austria–Hungary. It tried to prevent war by stepping in and threatening war against Austria–Hungary if it attacked Serbia. In a very real sense, *the world war arose out of the local war because coercion failed to prevent the local war.* In other words, the world war is the product of third parties intervening into an ongoing crisis that escalated a two-party war to a multiparty world war.

What is known statistically is that alliances and contiguous belligerents are factors that spread and enlarge two-party wars (Siverson and King, 1979; Sabrosky 1985; Siverson and Starr 1991). Later statistical studies on the First World War have shown that rivals of a belligerent are also apt to bring in third parties (Vasquez et al. 2011). The states that went to war in August 1914 (after Austria–Hungary declared war on July 28) were allies of, contiguous with, rivals of, and often engaged in arms races with, each another. How did these factors affect the decision-making that resulted in the crisis escalating to a multiparty war?

[27] Levy (2011a) sees the two wars as more intertwined than we portray them. We treat the initiation of the local war as involving a separate casual path from the spread of the war to the other major states.

Why Did the July Crisis Escalate? The July crisis escalated because each side thought it could prevail through intimidation and coercion. Austria–Hungary had had enough and was therefore no longer interested in merely securing a diplomatic victory, as it had in the 1908 Bosnian Crisis. It now sought to crush Serbia and its nationalist groups through war. To do that, however, it had to keep Russia out of the war, so Franz Josef would go to war only if he had the full support of his ally, Germany.

It is therefore widely believed that Germany is at least partly responsible for the war because it gave a "blank check" to Austria–Hungary. However, as Williamson (2014: 50) points out, "Germany gave Vienna a 'blank check,' Paris gave Russia a 'blank check,' and France and Russia gave Belgrade a 'blank check.'" All of this, of course, made the game of chicken possible.

Austria believed that, with Germany at its side, Russia would not go to war to support Serbia. After the humiliation of 1908, however, the tsar was committed to not backing down again. Once Serbia received the ultimatum, it turned to Russia – its patron, albeit not a formal ally – for support. Sazonov gave that support and would not budge. The tsar and Sazonov knew that they were outmatched by the combination of Germany and Austria–Hungary, so they turned to their allies – France and Britain – as war loomed. Poincaré, the French president, and Paléologue, the French ambassador to Russia, assured the tsar that France would fully live up to its alliance commitments; yet they also went further and encouraged the tsar to stand firm and not yield. The British ambassador was more hesitant. Speaking for Foreign Secretary Grey, the British ambassador indicated that he was unsure that the British people would go to war for Russia, let alone Serbia. Nonetheless, the tsar believed that if Russia could "count on England," the kaiser would be out of his mind to fight "Russia, France and England combined" (reported in Paléologue memoirs; see Williamson and Van Wyk 2003: 130). The kaiser, in turn, believed that the tsar would give in because Russia was still not prepared for war (Mombauer 2013: 193, 208, docs. 120, 131). Both sides believed that their threat to go to war would result in the other side backing down and accepting defeat. War came because coercion failed.

The July crisis escalated to war because it was a failed coercion game – or what some might call a failed game of chicken.[28] In game

[28] Game theorists typically analyze a game of chicken as a single-play, two-party game. The July crisis differs from that setup because it is an iterative, multiparty game. These characteristics undoubtedly helped cause the outcome of the July crisis to deviate from

theory, the game of chicken involves two drivers speeding toward one another on a collision course. The game's logic predicts a cooperative (i.e., non-collision) outcome; each side "swerves" (or yields) to avoid a catastrophic outcome.[29] In July 1914, however, neither side swerved, resulting in a collision. Once Germany and Russia went to war, the local war spread rapidly, enveloping every major state in Europe (except Italy) in a matter of days.

The Mobilization Crisis and the Security Trap As their strategy of intimidation and coercion failed, neither side rethought their position. Instead, they switched their strategy from deterring to winning the war. Winning the war – or, more importantly, not losing it – *was best achieved by preemptively reaching a full mobilization* – or at least, that is how the militaries saw it. The concerns about mobilization produced a mobilization crisis, which became a crisis within the crisis. It started when the kaiser learned that the tsar had already been mobilizing for five days. The crisis was that the generals on both sides feared that as one side got a head start in mobilizing, it would have an advantage in invading and conquering the other side. They became insecure and feared that they might be overrun. Therefore, they pressured their leaders to start mobilizing. The resulting mobilizations, which were aimed at avoiding preemption, actually preempted the best peace plan around – the Halt-in-Belgrade plan.

This stance put each side (in Germany and Russia) in a security trap, as the time pressure mounted with the various mobilization measures that were taken. A *security trap* exists when decision-makers on both sides feel ensnarled – caught in a situation in which they fear an imminent attack that may overrun their defenses unless they take drastic military action, typically preemption. A security trap produces a war when both sides go to war because fear of an imminent attack leads to extreme threat perception (Vasquez 2018: 95). That threat perception results not only from a history of conflict but also from the dynamics of the immediate crisis at hand. In July 1914, fear and the resulting insecurity led both sides to preparatory periods of war and then complete mobilization followed by a declaration of war.

The mobilization crisis and the security trap made the military on each side frantic. For Sukhomlinov, Yanushkevitch, and even Sazonov,

the typical cooperative outcome associated with the game of chicken. For an analysis of how these two factors may have played a role in the escalation of the July 1914 crisis, see Vasquez (2018: 355–356).

[29] For a game-theoretic analysis of the July crisis, see Zagare (2011). For a recent text that applies game theory to understand the First World War, see Wolford (2019).

German superiority posed a risk that Russia might be overrun if it was not better prepared; while for Moltke, Russian mobilization threatened to unravel all of his war plans. The kaiser tried to stop the Russian mobilization with an ultimatum, but the tsar's previous reversal made another impossible.[30] Fear and insecurity led each side to pursue mobilization, and as the tsar formally ordered a general mobilization on the afternoon of July 30, the kaiser did the same two days later, resulting in the crisis escalating to war. With that, Moltke unleashed the Schlieffen Plan and attacked France through Belgium, which provided the rationale for Britain entering the war.

Thus, fear and insecurity led to war, not the other factors often cited in the literature, such as Moltke's desire for a preventive war (Copeland 2014) or Krivoshein's desire to control the straits (McMeekin 2011). Unlike the Austria-Hungary/Serbia dyad, political grievances were not the main catalysts that motivated the decision for war in the Germany/Russia dyad. Preemption and time pressure were the key – not the preventive motivation for war. Insecurity, rather than substantive grievances, was the main motive guiding decisions (Vasquez 2018: 95). It was this crisis within a crisis, coupled with the failure of the coercive game, that led the July crisis to escalate to war.

The Spiral Model Much of our analysis is consistent with the data analysis of government documents, including the kaiser's marginalia, that the 1914 Studies conducted, under the direction of Robert North. Holsti, Brody, and North (1968) show that the perception of hostility led to violent acts. Each side thought that the other was more hostile than it was. Simultaneously, both sides thought their actions were less hostile than they actually were. This means that each side exaggerated the level of hostility directed toward it, and when the two sides responded, they were more hostile and violent than they thought they were being. In the end, each side perceived the other side as responding hostilely in the face of its own accommodation.

This resulted in an upward hostile spiral that escalated to war because, as Zinnes, Zinnes, and McClure (1972) show, in the presence of hostility one expresses hostility. According to them, it was this upward hostile spiral that made the 1914 crisis escalate to war. Holsti (1972: 150–168) also found that each side saw the other as having more options than itself. The upward spiral of hostility that made the crisis escalate

[30] In this sense, the kaiser would have been much better off pursuing the peace script and coming up with some dramatic breakthrough that could have at least halted the mobilization in place. It was this kind of action – rather than coercion – that previously, on July 29, got the tsar to rescind the order.

occurred during and because of the mobilization crisis and the fear it engendered.

Deterrence Failure Such an analysis sees the July crisis as a case of deterrence failure in the sense that the attempt to coerce the other side from attacking did not succeed.[31] Why did deterrence fail in 1914? In the beginning, each side believed the other would back down. It approached the coercive game confidently. Somewhere between July 30 and 31 the threat of war and mobilization no longer just signaled resolve but became a potential means of preemption and winning the war (Vasquez 2018: 354). This shift was produced by the mobilization crisis and aggravated by the security trap. Deterrence failed, in part, because the leaders gave up on deterrence and sought to win a likely war. It failed also because intimidation gave way to fear. First the tsar and then the kaiser gave in to their militaries. The deterrence model gave way to the spiral model (Jervis 1976; see also Vasquez 2018: 354). A spiral model often results as coercive games repeat, because decision-makers escalate their actions to get the other side to give in.

Time Pressure and the Sweep of Events Another factor that played a role in the escalation of the July crisis to war was the sweep and press of events in the last few days before the declarations of war. From July 28 onward, one action after another put immense pressure on decision-makers, crippling peace efforts and making the crisis spiral out of control. July 29 and July 30 were particularly crucial. On July 28 peace seemed possible; on July 30 war seemed almost inevitable. What happened in the interval?

Text Box 9.2 gives us some idea of the sweep of events and how they pointed toward war. There were no fewer than twenty-four events that required important decisions to be taken, and seventeen of which occurred after July 28. Each of these events had a logic of its own, leading to decisions that in many ways propelled each side toward war. Each decision appears a reasonable reaction to the events that preceded it. All are easily explained and should have been anticipated from a realist logic. As each event took place, all sides became entrapped in a war spiral that was difficult to escape.

This was neither a "slide into war" nor an inadvertent war. It came about as the *pressure* of events made each side take defensive military measures

[31] This is interesting in and of itself but also because the Second World War arose in 1939 out of a similar situation and as a result of a deterrence failure (see Aftermath in Chapter 10).

Text Box 9.2 Events Pressing to the Escalation to War in July 1914

July 23 Austria–Hungary sends Serbia an ultimatum.
July 25 Serbia replies, accepting all but one of the ten demands.
July 25–28 Early mobilizations for local war:
July 25 Serbia
July 25–26 Russia's partial mobilization against Austria–Hungary
July 28 Austria–Hungary's partial mobilization against Serbia
July 28, morning Kaiser reads Serbia's reply and says "*every cause for war has gone*." Conceives his Halt-in-Belgrade plan.
July 28, 11:10 a.m. Austria declares war on Serbia.
July 29, 1 a.m. and 1:45 a.m. Willy-Nicky telegrams begin (ending on July 31).
July 29 Austria–Hungary bombards Belgrade in the morning; this is known in St. Petersburg around 5 p.m.
July 29 Pourtalès meets with Sazonov at 11 a.m., among others.
July 29, 8:20 p.m. (dispatched), 8:42 p.m. (received) Tsar complains of contradiction between kaiser's telegram and Pourtalès' interview.
July 29 Tsar orders mobilization then rescinds order. *Russian generals become concerned about preemption.*
July 30, 1:20 a.m. (dispatched), 1:45 a.m. (received) Kaiser gets tsar's telegram revealing five-day head start on mobilization. *Kaiser and Moltke become concerned about preemption.*
July 30, 2:55 a.m. Bethmann Hollweg puts pressure on Austria–Hungary to accept a peace plan.
July 30 Moltke sends telegram to Conrad telling him to mobilize.
July 30 Moltke and Falkenhayn pressure Bethmann Hollweg to enter *Kriegsgefahrzustand* and extract a promise that he will do so on July 31 (Mombauer 2013: 458–459, doc. 323).
July 30 Kaiser's mediator role and Halt-in-Belgrade plan collapse.
July 30, 4 p.m. Tsar orders general mobilization.
July 31 Franz Josef orders general mobilization against Russia.
July 31 Kaiser gives ultimatum to tsar to cease mobilization.
July 31 Tsar rejects kaiser's demand, saying it is technically impossible to stop military measures, and pleads for continuation of peace efforts.
August 1 France mobilizes. Kaiser signs mobilization order at 5 p.m.
August 1 Misunderstanding begins around 5 p.m. and ends at 11 p.m.
August 1 Germany declares war on Russia. Kaiser tells Moltke, "Now you can do what you want."

because it feared that the other side would gain an insurmountable advantage by mobilization. Fear of preemptive mobilization was the primary motivation, and this fear was brought about because of a security trap.

The Breakdown of the Political Order One of the factors sometimes overlooked that brought about war is the prevailing political order's inability to resolve the crisis. Schroeder (1972b) argued that it was not decision-making alone that brought about the war, but the breakdown of the underlying structure (i.e., political system). In particular, the political order established by the Vienna Peace System and the Concert of Europe collapsed and was no longer able to resolve issues in the collective interest (Schroeder 2007). This can be seen as a structural factor – a prerequisite for the resort to unilateral power politics in major-state relations (see also Vasquez 2002). Schroeder (2007) maintains that Russia and the Concert as a whole failed to take account of Austria–Hungary's legitimate concerns about Serbia. As the crisis evolved, individual interests prevailed over collective interests (see also Wallensteen 1984) and power politics took over from collective problem-solving. This is not to say that Grey did not make a valiant effort to resurrect the Concert to avoid a major-state war, or that the kaiser, in his Halt-in-Belgrade plan, did not also try to mediate to get a collective solution. Nevertheless, the Vienna Peace System broke down because it could not handle the territorial issues associated with the breakup of the Ottoman Empire that had been going on since at least the Greek revolt of 1821 (see Vasquez 2002). The current Balkan crisis was a continuation of the territorial breakup of the Ottoman Empire, with Bosnian and Serbian ambitions for its territory affecting Austro-Hungarian and Russian interests. The question is whether the Concert, or at least its norms with Russian participation, could have been applied to avoid the war.

Could War Have Been Avoided?

If mobilization meant war, then a key to avoiding war was to avoid mobilization; indeed, mobilization overshadowed the two peace proposals on the table. If mobilization could have been avoided, or at least delayed, how might the peace script have played out? Taking a counterfactual approach, it appears that certain things could have been done to avoid the war. Since the local war involved Austria–Hungary and Serbia, their leaders were key to getting a peace proposal accepted. To get Pasic on board, Sazonov had to pressure him to accept some sort of peace plan. The tsar had suggested to the kaiser early on that the question be submitted to The Hague. According to McMeekin (2013: 256), Sazonov just ignored this suggestion. Nonetheless, it was a real proposal and provided a path whereby the tsar might have been able to pressure Serbia.

Could Serbia be delivered? When Serbia first received the ultimatum, Serbia's prince regent, Alexander, had said that it would do whatever

Russia advised, including putting its fate into the hands of the major states. If Pasic could convince his domestic audience and Apis that his hands were tied, this would have provided sufficient political cover so that he could have accepted some proposal. It would be a way out of his dilemma. The Halt-in-Belgrade plan might even have served his interests if the Austrians were able to arrest Apis.

What is often ignored is that Pasic, although he did not formally accept the Halt-in-Belgrade, had already evacuated Belgrade and went with the military to Nish, so the Austrians could just have moved in unopposed. It must be remembered that for the peace script to advance, all that was needed was Pasic's acquiescence. The evacuation came close to this in behavioral terms. This implies that the peace script might have worked if some diplomatic agreement could have been reached among the major states, especially Austria–Hungary and Russia. In terms of implementing the plan on the ground, Serbia was not the main obstacle.

Nonetheless, no direct pressure was put on Pasic to formally accept the Halt-in-Belgrade plan. This seems to be Sazonov's doing. Here, the role of the French could have made a difference. What France *did not do* helped stymie the peace plan and bring about war. It never pushed any peace plan – not Grey's, not the Kaiser's, not even the tsar's own suggestion of going to The Hague. It also neither bolstered the tsar, who stood alone against his own hard-liners, nor pointed out the dangers of mobilization. Instead, Poincaré and Paléologue continuously tried to stiffen the tsar, whom they regarded as indecisive. Paléologue, in particular, constantly reminded the tsar that France was at his side and that it would mobilize when Russia did, as stated in the formal alliance treaty (second clause, Franco-Russian Alliance, 1893; see Gibler 2009: 198). If mobilization was to be stopped and a peace plan pursued, France helped prevent that by actively doing nothing.

With Austria–Hungary things were different. The kaiser's plan misunderstood that the demands in the ultimatum were not of substantive importance to Berchtold and the others, but an excuse to go to war. To get Austria–Hungary to accept a peace plan, the kaiser was going to have to pressure them by withdrawing the blank check. From the morning of July 28 and throughout most of the day on July 29 Bethmann did not exert that kind of explicit pressure; it was not until late into the night of July 29 that he did so via the 2:55 a.m. telegram (on the morning of July 30), wherein "he instructed Tschirschky to tell Berchtold forcefully: 'We … must decline to let ourselves be dragged by Vienna wantonly and without regard to our advice into a world conflagration'" (Albertini 1952, vol 3: 18). At this point, he demanded that Austria accept Grey's proposal for talks or the kaiser's plan.

Berchtold resisted this pressure, as his discussion with Franz Josef on July 30 in the presence of Conrad indicates. The discussion concluded that war plans with Serbia would be continued and that "the English proposal will receive a very courteous reply, without accepting it on its merits" (Mombauer 2013: 454, doc. 321; Otte, 2014: 434–435). This decision was bolstered by Moltke's telegram on July 30 to Conrad asking him to mobilize. This meant that if Bethmann's pressure was going to work it would have to be applied directly on Franz Josef. It was the emperor who had insisted that war could go forward only with German support. If that support was going to be equivocal, he too might become equivocal. If Bethmann could have gotten to Franz Josef more directly, the Halt-in-Belgrade proposal would have had more of a chance. If it could have been made clear to the emperor that the blank check was being withdrawn, he might have restrained Berchtold and Conrad. Franz Josef was a key pressure point that was not used. Bethmann did not fully exploit this opportunity, and neither did the kaiser, but the opportunity was there.

Of course, July 30 saw a number of events that undid the peace process. It was on this day that the tsar ordered general mobilization. This focused the kaiser's attention, but Bethmann still refused to support Moltke, who wanted to enter *Kriegsgefahrzustand* on July 30 (McMeekin 2013: 289), because he continued to hope that he could get Austria–Hungary to accept some sort of peace proposal.

It was up to Grey to deliver the tsar to his plan, even though Britain had an uneasy relationship with Russia because of their previous rivalry and because the 1907 entente was not as firm as the 1904 Entente Cordiale with France. The actor that could really have delivered the tsar was Poincaré, but he and his ambassador did not take that tack. If, however, the tsar could have come to see the occupation solely of Belgrade as an insufficient condition for going to war with Austria–Hungary, then the plan, coupled with some consideration for going to The Hague, might have been put into operation. Pasic would still have been a problem, but he might have accepted the plan if Russia imposed it on him, for this might have made it acceptable.

Such a scenario for avoiding war is not implausible. Opening the black box to look at individual decision-makers and analyzing the multiple contingent factors that led to war reveals some of the key pressure points for peace that existed and how the path to war could have been blocked. The Halt-in-Belgrade plan was consistent with certain interests of most of the key players, which enhances its plausibility. It served Grey's interest in avoiding the risk of the government's falling. It served the kaiser

and Bethmann's interest in avoiding war with Britain.[32] It was consistent with the tsar's interest in not really wanting a war. It served Pasic's interest in avoiding a war he knew would destroy his country while at the same time managing the threat from Apis. The only parties not satisfied were Berchtold and Austria–Hungary, and they would need to be pressured by the kaiser, Bethmann, and ultimately Franz Josef into accepting a partial victory.[33]

But the peace plan needed more time. By the next day (on July 31) no further attempts were made to pressure Austria–Hungary as more evidence of Russian mobilization came in (McMeekin 2013: 306). Later in the day on July 31 the kaiser gave an ultimatum to the tsar to halt his mobilization. With the tsar's resistance and the continuing Russian mobilization, the kaiser gave up on negotiation and gave Moltke free rein. The peace script came to an end. The Russian mobilization killed the plan (see McMeekin 2013: 282–284). Time was the enemy of war in this instance. Berchtold and Moltke understood this, which is why Berchtold declared war before Conrad was ready. The counterfactual analysis demonstrates that the structural conditions did not make a great war inevitable. The crisis could have been managed.

Some have argued that certain structural factors that brought about the war (the so-called powder keg in the room) were paramount. Joll (1984), for instance, sees alliances, militarism, and imperialism as such factors, and Choucri and North (1975) see imperialism as being produced by a systemic lateral pressure that resulted from population growth and the need for more resources. Such factors and the powder keg, however, were in existence for a number of years without exploding. They had been managed before; all the analysis here argues is that they could have been managed once again.

Lessons of the July 1914 Crisis

1. **This crisis escalates to a general war because of deterrence failure**. The major states played a coercive game in order to get each other

[32] Some argue that Bethmann was not really in favor of the kaiser's plan (see Copeland 2014::180-192) for and kept him in the dark at certain key points. While his behavior did not always indicate that he was enthusiastic about the plan, he did write at 2:55 a.m. on the morning of July 30 to pressure Austria–Hungary to accept mediation (Mombauer 2013: 449, doc. 316). He seems to be sincere, and threatens in effect to withdraw support, but soon becomes despondent that war will come about because of Russian mobilization and the sweep of events (see Albertini, 1952, vol. 3: 18).

[33] See Ponting (2003: 223, 230), who thinks a diplomatic solution along the lines of the Halt-in-Belgrade plan could have been reached as late as July 30.

to back down by bringing their ally into the game to support them. This did not work and instead the war spread to each. The hope that allies would convey superior power was not satisfied. Each side thought they were in a superior situation; thus, neither backed down and deterrence failed. The same was true in the Second World War. In both cases, a two-party war involving an attack by a major state on a minor state resulted in a major state – that was a rival of the attacker – coming to the defense of that minor state. In both cases, the defender aligned with the minor state threatened war to deter the initial attack, and this coercion failed.

2. **Alliances are the key contagion process** by which the local two-party Austria–Hungary/Serbia war spread to engulf Europe. Each side believed the other would not fight because the presence of *its* ally gave it sufficient power to win the war. Thus, Russia thought it could stop an Austro-Hungarian attack on Serbia by aligning with the latter and threatening armed intervention. Austria–Hungary thought it could stymie Russia by bringing Germany to bear. The tsar thought that the kaiser would not fight if faced with the combination of Russia, France, and Britain. This coercive game turned out to be a house of cards. When the first actor (Austria–Hungary) declared war, the rest followed in a few days, despite the peace efforts of the kaiser and of Grey.

Theoretically, an important lesson provided by the First World War is how contagion works. Once the local war escalated, with Germany and Russia joining the conflict, the war expanded rapidly through the alliance system. **Alliances can make for a hierarchical diffusion once a war breaks out**. The First World War illustrates how the presence of outside alliances increases the probability that an ongoing war will spread, confirming a statistical trend first documented by Siverson and King (1979; see also Siverson and Starr 1991).

3. Deterrence, however, did not fail simply through a failure of the logic of coercion; it failed because decision-makers, anticipating its collapse, **abandoned the logic of deterring war and opted for increasing their chances of winning the coming war through preemption**. This was caused by the fear brought about by early mobilization. A major lesson is that **the mobilization crisis and the ensuing security trap led to the decision to go to war**. **A key lesson of the July crisis is that the dynamics of the crisis itself – the interactions back and forth at the height of tension, particularly between the kaiser and the tsar – actually brought about the decisions to go to war**. These interactions must be seen as playing the dominant role in bringing about the war, as opposed to more long-term structural factors.

4. The First World War, as well as the Second World War, also illustrate that **a balance of power and relative equality of capability**

do not prevent war but are associated with its onset. This is a well-documented statistical relationship (see Bremer 1992; Morey and Kadera 2021). How this process might work in a specific case is demonstrated here. It would be erroneous, however, to assume, as many do, that an unequal distribution of power – a so-called preponderance of power – is associated with peace. Rather, it is the case that various distributions of power are associated with different *types of war* (see Vasquez 2009: ch. 2).

5. The July crisis also escalated to war because of **a long-term failure of the prevailing political order – namely, the Concert of Europe – to manage territorial issues** put on the agenda by the decline of the Ottoman Empire. There is a territorial thread running through the cases analyzed in this book that involve the Ottoman Empire beginning with the 1839–1841 Eastern Crisis and continuing through the Crimean War, the 1908 Bosnian Crisis, and the two Balkan Wars to July 1914. One of the main reasons the Vienna Peace System unraveled was that it was unable to manage the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire. When the Concert came together to act and rule in the collective interests of the major states, these crises, with the exception of the Crimean War, were handled without major war. In contrast, when states, like Britain and France in 1853 and Austria–Hungary and Russia in 1914, went off on their own and resorted to unilateral uses of power politics, then the ensuing crisis failed to be managed, and power politics resulted in a coercive game that escalated to war. Likewise, war was brought about by the failure of the major states to manage minor states' attacks on the Ottoman Empire. A lesson of the Vienna Peace System is that peace is possible through the creation of mutually acceptable rules. Failure to handle territorial issues in a non-power-politics manner is the key to understanding why major states are sometimes at peace and at other times at war.

6. **Power politics, as a game, failed to give Germany its place in the sun**. An unwritten rule of power politics is that states should be accorded the rewards and benefits of the system according to their power status. As Germany grew in economic and military power, it was not accorded its share of colonies that it thought it deserved. In part, this was because Britain and France had already taken so much. Nonetheless, Britain and France contested what was left, especially in small and distant areas like Samoa, which led to confrontations and resentment. This in turn encouraged Germany to increase its naval power and to a confrontationist *Weltpolitik* policy.

7. The great opportunity provided by world war also shows that total war poses great risks to those who undertake it. Certainly, if Franz Josef had known the outcome of the war, he would never have agreed to it.

Likewise, the tsar, who had concerns about revolutionary activity and had lived through the 1905 revolution, which was related to defeat in war,[34] would not have given in to his generals if he had known the outcome. This case shows that certain central decision-makers – namely, those in Austria–Hungary and in Russia – did not look down the decision tree to what would happen if they lost the war. They therefore did not fully balance benefits against possible risks. **They failed to fully understand what was at stake, and they and their regimes were forever destroyed**.

[34] Of course, the 1905 revolt had domestic causes as well.

10 Munich 1938

The Czechs had long been restless within the Austrian Empire. As the First World War was coming to an end with the Italian defeat of Austria–Hungary in the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, the Czechs and the Slovaks came together to form their own country – Czechoslovakia – at the end of October 1918. The new state was eventually recognized by the Versailles conference in 1919. The same was true of other nationalities that withdrew from the disintegrating Austria–Hungary. When all this was done, a small concentration of approximately six million German speakers remained around Vienna and Salzburg; this became Austria.

The new Czech state was small and consisted of an amalgamation of Czechs, centered in Moravia and Bohemia, and Slovaks in the east. Along the borders of Germany and the new Austria were German speakers who resided in a forested mountainous area known as the Sudetenland. Benes claimed this area for Czechoslovakia at Versailles, largely to give his new state more defensible borders (MacMillan 2001: 234, 236). The 1938 crisis we discuss in this chapter was over the disposition of this area and is therefore rightly labeled by James Richardson (1994: 135) as the Sudeten Crisis. To most of the world, however, it is known as the Munich crisis, based on the name of the city where a conference was held to resolve the question.

Background

The First World War was one of the most devastating wars in European history; only the Napoleonic Wars, which had ended just over a hundred years earlier, approached it in both scope and severity. Battle deaths have been estimated at around ten million (Winter 1985: table 3.4; Prost 2014), with another nine million in civilian deaths.[1] The political and territorial changes resulting from the war were sweeping. These began in 1917 with the separate peace signed by the new Bolshevik regime at

[1] Accurate figures on civilian deaths are difficult to get; see Prost (2014).

Brest-Litovsk. The Bolsheviks had overthrown the democratic Kerensky regime by being committed to ending the war. Lenin and his foreign minister Trotsky had little choice but to sign a harsh peace (see Rich 2003: ch. 2). Russia lost the valuable Ukraine, followed later by the three Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Finland also became independent and eventually a new Poland was recognized at the Versailles conference, which met in 1919 to write up a comprehensive peace.

The war in the west went on until November 11, 1918. Germany and the Allies agreed to an armistice on the Western Front after the kaiser was manipulated by the new socialist government into abdicating and going into exile. It is important to note that no foreign troops occupied German soil and the German army retreated home via the Netherlands, where the kaiser subsequently went into exile. On the Eastern Front, Emperor Karl I agreed to an armistice on November 3 after being defeated by the Italians with the aid of French and British troops. Unlike the kaiser, Emperor Karl I refused to abdicate and tried to the very end to keep his multinational empire intact by granting greater autonomy to nationalities – all to no avail. The Serbs and Croats, Czechs, and Hungarians all broke away.

Given his Fourteen Points,[2] Woodrow Wilson was committed to redrawing the map of Europe based on the nationalist principle of self-determination. Generally, the new states that emerged reflected the self-determinations of nationalities. There were, however, anomalies in that many Germans who had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were now in Czechoslovakia, as were some Poles and Hungarians (Magyars). Likewise, the formation of Poland placed some parts of former Germany, along with the German speakers that resided there, outside of postwar Germany, including the free city of Danzig. Germany itself was reconstituted as the Weimar Republic, while a democratic Austrian state evolved with the ouster of the Habsburgs. The Versailles conference also took away all of Germany's colonies, made it sign a war guilt clause in which it took full responsibility (along with Austria–Hungary) for starting the war, demilitarized its army and the Rhineland region bordering France, and saddled it with a huge indemnity.

The end of the First World War was quickly succeeded by the Spanish flu epidemic. The epidemic started in 1918 and swept the world, killing an estimated 50 million (Taubenberger and Morens 2006) – many more

[2] The Fourteen Points are a statement of principles. US president Woodrow Wilson intended these principles to guide leaders as they rebuilt the postwar international order. See "The Fourteen Points," The National WWI Museum and Memorial, www.theworldwar.org/learn/peace/fourteen-points.

than the war itself.[3] After the Roaring Twenties, the war and death from the flu helped produce a global malaise among the masses and cultural elite. The sense of this is best captured by a quote from D. H. Lawrence:

> Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.[4]

In 1929, an economic depression gripped the industrial world and affected all the major states, including Japan. Inflation due to reparation payments had a deep impact on the new Germany. In 1932, the Nationalist Socialist Party received a plurality of the votes and Adolph Hitler formed a new government.

Hitler had an ambitious foreign policy that centered on revising the Versailles settlement by pushing German nationalist claims. The first objective was to reclaim complete sovereignty over the Rhineland, which had been demilitarized. On March 7, 1936, in a bold and unilateral move, Hitler occupied the German Rhineland and unveiled a new powerful Luftwaffe. This air force was developed secretly under the Weimar Republic, but Hitler unveiled it and deployed it. The occupation was peaceful in that France did not oppose it militarily. This would later lead to recriminations that military resistance here could have stopped Hitler early on and maybe even have prevented the Second World War.[5] At the time, however, neither the French nor the British were opposed to changing the situation in the Rhineland, and they were open to negotiations. What came as a surprise was that Hitler did not attempt to negotiate but moved unilaterally and with the use of force. This was Hitler's first bold action, and it was a major success that increased his popularity and domestic support.

In May 1937, Neville Chamberlain, who was head of the Conservative Party, became prime minister of Britain. He came to power committed to a foreign policy of appeasement, whereby he hoped to make changes to the Versailles settlement to accommodate Germany. The Locarno Pact

[3] Initial calculations put the number of deaths at about twenty-one million. This estimate was increased to – between twenty-four and thirty-nine million in 1991 and more recently to fifty million (see Johnson and Mueller 2002).

[4] Opening line of *Lady Chatterly's Lover* (1928). Penguin 2006 edition, with an introduction by Doris Lessing.

[5] See Churchill (1948: chs. 11–18), who argues the same about Munich. Armed resistance was not really something that Britain or France seriously considered at the time. Nor is it clear that it would have prevented the Second World War, even if it would have worked in the immediate situation.

of 1925 had been an early effort at both a revision to and a new acceptance of the Versailles system; it was signed by the German Weimar Republic, France, Britain, italy and Belgium. Chamberlain hoped to appease Germany's desire to revise the international order – to provide a better place for Germany and thus prevent incidents that might give rise to rivalry and another world war.

As part of this effort, Chamberlain wanted to lure fascist Italy, which had signed the 1936 Rome–Berlin Axis agreement, away from Germany. This was part of an earlier policy that made both Britain and France hedge in imposing the League of Nations embargo on Italy for invading Ethiopia in 1935. Chamberlain, along with his predecessors, also kept Britain out of the Spanish Civil War, where Mussolini had troops defending Franco, as did Germany. They were fighting the loyalist, democratically elected, leftist regime that was being aided militarily by Stalin.

Hitler's next move came in March 1938 with the Anschluss. As early as November 12, 1918, the national assembly of "German-Austria" declared that Austria was part of the new German Republic. In 1921, a plebiscite in Tirol saw 145,302 votes in favor of union and 1,805 against; and a plebiscite in Salzburg saw 98,546 in favor of union and 877 against (www.aeiou.at/aeiou.encyclop.a/a586894_en.htm). Lastly, a customs union was negotiated between Germany and Austria in March 1931, but interdicted by World Court at the Hague (Wright 1944: 622). Much of the pro-union sentiment had to do with the small size of the new state compared to the size of the former empire. The victors at Versailles would not consider union because they strongly felt it would be illegitimate for Germany to increase its territorial size. This was also part of the reason why the Hague had abrogated even an economic customs union.

In July 1934, Chancellor Dollfuss, after moving toward more authoritarian rule, was assassinated by a Nazi contingent. It was not until 1938, however, that real moves were initiated to force Austria's union with Germany. Early in that year Austrian Nazis conspired to unite the two countries. Austrian chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg met with Hitler to try to deal with the situation, but instead of negotiations he found himself bullied by Hitler to include several Austrian Nazis in his cabinet. He was then pressured to resign, and he entreated Austria's military forces not to resist a German "advance" into the country. Austria's president, Wilhelm Miklas, refused to appoint Austrian Nazi Arthur Seyss-Inquart as the new chancellor. On March 12, Germany invaded without armed resistance. The next day Germany annexed Austria. A plebiscite on April 10 gave a 99.7 percent approval to the union (Luža 1975: 70).

Historical Events

The crisis over the Sudetenland began shortly after Germany's peaceful invasion and the March 13 Anschluss of Austria. The precipitating event was the scheduled May 22 local elections. Two weeks after the Anschluss, on March 28–29, Konrad Henlein, the leader of the Sudeten German Party, met with Hitler and requested German intervention along the lines it had done in Austria. Hitler rejected this suggestion and said he had a different idea. He told Henlein to negotiate with the Czech government and make stringent demands that could not be easily granted (J. Richardson 1994: 139). This resulted in the party's Karlsbad program, which sought autonomy for the region just in time for the elections – now a little under a month away.

With the precedent of the Anschluss clearly before them and the anticipation of the Sudeten German Party winning the local elections in two days, the Prague government mobilized its army on May 20 in reaction to a belief that there was an imminent German military threat. This turned out to be both an exaggeration and a misperception. On May 21, France reaffirmed its alliance treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia. Simultaneously, Henderson, the British ambassador to Germany, warned that if France were involved in a war over Czechoslovakia, then Britain might also be obligated to become involved (J. Richardson 1994: 140). This warning was leaked to the press, which portrayed it as a case of successful "deterrence" of Germany, in James Richardson's (1994: 140) words. With this report, Hitler became incensed and went into a rage. Richardson (1994: 141) says that before the press reports Hitler did not want war in the near future unless conditions were highly favorable. Now, on May 30, he changed his attitude and prepared for a possible war to begin by October 1.

The crisis involved the major states because France had signed an alliance with Czechoslovakia in 1924 (Gibler 2009: 245). This alliance was one of several that France made at the time, the key one involving Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Each of these states had come together in a defense pact known as the little entente. Britain had no such alliance with Czechoslovakia, but it did have one with France. These alliances were all aimed at Germany and were intended to keep it in line after its defeat in 1919. The main concern of the British was that if France went to war with Germany because of Czechoslovakia, then Britain would be drawn in by its alliance commitment. The British were wary of becoming involved in a war with Germany in this way – that is, being forced to join a war that its

interests did not warrant because France chose to defend a small state with which Britain was not allied.

British and French leaders did not want war and some, like Ambassador Henderson, thought another crisis might make it difficult to control the situation (see J. Richardson 1994: 141). The British therefore wanted to pressure the Czechs, but the French were still publicly supportive, although they criticized Benes, the president of Czechoslovakia, and wanted him to be more flexible in his relations with Hitler. Meanwhile, Benes was emboldened by the events of the May crisis and felt his mobilization worked to tame the Germans (see J. Richardson 1994: 140).

By July 20, Bonnet, the French foreign minister, felt he had to make France's position less ambiguous and gave an oral warning to Benes. Although France would remain publicly supportive so the Czechs could get an honorable solution, it would not go to war to defend Czechoslovakia. This came as a great shock to Benes (J. Richardson 1994: 141). From this point on, the risk of a European war led France, and particularly Britain, to take the lead in dealing with the crisis.

On September 12, there was a gigantic rally in Nuremberg, at which Hitler inflamed the audience, coupled with military parades. This was meant to intimidate, and it worked. *The Times* (of London), in an editorial, advocated a territorial transfer of the Sudetenland (Faber 2008: 193; Bouverie 2020: 223) – something the Germans had not even formally proposed. The bargaining that followed was intense, complicated, and primarily unfolded through face-to-face meetings between British prime minster Neville Chamberlain and Herr Hitler. Chamberlain was the first prime minister to fly in an aeroplane from England to the Continent. He ultimately made three trips. His first meeting with Hitler was on September 15 in Berchtesgaden, where Hitler used the self-determination principle of nationalism to great effect, putting Chamberlain in a corner (J. Richardson 1994: 143). Chamberlain was willing to accede to the transfer of the Sudetenland based on the nationalist principle of self-determination, but he wanted the process to be orderly and consistent with existing norms (see also Bouverie 2020: 272).

Because Bonnet and Daladier, the premier of France, also did not want to go to war over the Sudetenland, on September 18, just after the Berchtesgaden meeting, they threatened the Czechs with a withdrawal of their support if the Czechs did not accept their proposals. This signal, however, was undercut by Churchill and other French ministers, who did not accept appeasement and encouraged the Czechs to resist (J. Richardson 1994: 143).

Meanwhile, Hitler encouraged Poland and Hungary – states neighboring Czechoslovakia – to make territorial demands. Poland would demand Teschen, and Hungary sought the areas along the southern border of Slovakia. On September 22 Chamberlain met Hitler at Bad Godesberg. The previous day, Benes had unconditionally accepted the British and French proposals that Czechoslovakia transfer the territory, so the allies thought the meeting would simply be wrapping up the details (see Farham 1997: 108). Instead, Hitler rejected Chamberlain's proposals and demanded the immediate occupation of areas that were mostly German, although he would permit plebiscites in mixed areas (J. Richardson 1994: 144; cf. Farnham 1997: 100). This was a new development. Of key importance was that Hitler was very unreasonable and belligerent in this negotiation given that Czechoslovakia had agreed to transfer the territory. Now Hitler demanded more – areas that were predominately German were to be subject to immediate German occupation. The negotiations broke down. Chamberlain went home, the Czechs mobilized, and the French called up another 500,000 men (Farnham 1997: 110). Meanwhile, in a speech broadcast worldwide after the meeting Hitler said (quoted in Farnham 1997: 113) that if the Czechs did not give the Sudeten Germans immediate freedom, "we will go and fetch this freedom for ourselves."

Chamberlain was unable to get the cabinet to support accepting the new terms Hitler presented at Godesberg, and part of the cabinet was ready to go to war, albeit reluctantly. Chamberlain proposed one more negotiation session. This time Chamberlain did not go but sent his close advisor Horace Wilson as his representative with a long letter outlining his position. As Wilson read it, Hitler interrupted him several times. In an ultimate act of bullying, Hitler moved the deadline to meet his demands up to September 28.

Negotiations deadlocked and it looked like Germany would invade if the deadline was not met. After the meeting with Horace Wilson, Hitler readied his troops for invasion while the British mobilized the navy. Still Chamberlain was not willing to go to war. Chamberlain broke the deadlock by getting Mussolini to mediate and head up an international conference to resolve the issue (see Faber 2008: 387–388). The choice of Mussolini as the mediator was very useful for Hitler, since Mussolini was a fascist and close ally. He was also acceptable to the British and French, since they still hoped to woo him away and liked him in a neutral role. Nonetheless, Hitler maintained his intransient positions and and would not even allow Czechoslovakia a place at the table – a demand to which Chamberlain and Daladier acceded. The conference devolved into a

face-saving procedure rather than any compromise or meeting of mutual needs.[6] The proposed solution Mussolini offered was initially suggested by Goering (J. Richardson 1994: 147), head of the German Luftwaffe and Hitler's right-hand man. It was accepted outright by Britain and France, ending the crisis and avoiding war. Benes accepted the loss of the Sudetenland, which was an important strategic territory and now left Bohemia and Moravia open to easy invasion. Without allies, he was no match for his powerful and determined neighbor. The nationalist principle of self-determination left him without any intellectual defense as well.

When the conference closed, Chamberlain was cheered in Munich by the German people. Hitler reacted with disgust to this, thinking his people were not living up to fascist ideals on the glory of war. Chamberlain then traveled to Rome, where again he was cheered. This demonstration of public support among the people of his opponents revealed the depth of public support for peace and the aversion to another world war. Chamberlain finally flew home, where he was cheered even more extensively. Coming off the aeroplane, with his characteristic black umbrella, he held forth a piece of paper with an agreement between the two countries never to go to war with each other again. Shortly thereafter, addressing a crowd from No. 10 Downing Street, he said of the Munich agreement, "I believe it is peace for our time" (Faber 2008: 7).

Czechoslovakia was doomed to lose more than the Sudetenland. With Hitler's support, Slovakia broke away. Teschen was lost to Poland. Hungary got portions of Slovakia and Ruthenia. Then, in the most dramatic move, Hitler forced Emil Hacha, the new president of Czechoslovakia, who had replaced Benes, to agree to a protectorate over Bohemia and Moravia, while Slovakia broke away and sought German protection from the Czechs. Hitler's troops then invaded Prague and took over without any resistance on March 15, 1939, after forcing President Hacha to accept a peaceful surrender. Hitler then established a protectorate over Bohemia and Moravia. Before he came to lead a triumphal parade, Hitler announced to the German people on radio, "Czechoslovakia has ceased to exist."

The takeover of Prague, less than six months after the Munich agreement, had a big impact. For Chamberlain and the British, it meant the end of appeasement. Chamberlain now resigned himself to the realization that Hitler could not be appeased. According to James Richardson (1994: 147), Chamberlain had previously said in a private comment to his parliamentary secretary that "if Hitler kept the bargain, well and good; alternatively … if he broke it, he would demonstrate to all the

[6] Details of the conference are treated in Taylor (1979).

world that he was totally cynical and untrustworthy." Chamberlain now saw that Hitler broke the bargain and had to be opposed. He expressed this publicly as early as two days after the invasion in a speech he gave in Birmingham on March 17 (see P. Bell 1986: 252). He and his party embarked on a major military buildup. Daladier and the French had similar reactions. It is also likely that, at least toward the end of the crisis, Chamberlain thought that a settlement would avoid war and thereby buy time to help Britain build up its air power.

Some, like Ripsman and Levy (2008), see buying time as a primary motive of Chamberlain's appeasement and argue that the latter was not just wishful thinking. We tend to think that appeasement was a sincere policy that Chamberlain hoped would work. The British were committed to avoiding war over Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain wanted to make sure that France did not do anything that would bring about a war. The immediate aim was to concede enough to Hitler – even all of the Sudetenland – if that would avoid war. Concessions were entertained, partly because the nationalist (i.e., self-determination) norm favored the outcome that Hitler demanded. The appeasement policy was initially adopted because British and French leaders believed the Versailles Treaty was unfair and more consideration should have been given to German interests (Marks 2003: 152). However, even if Hitler would not be appeased long-term, the Munich settlement achieved the main purpose, which was to avoid war over Czechoslovakia. An added benefit is that it would buy time to rearm; however, that was a secondary motive, not the main one. As it was, Chamberlain did think (hopefully and perhaps wishfully) that he had achieved peace in his time, even if this claim served his political interests. If that was not the case, then the invasion of Prague would not have resulted in such surprise, shock, and a sense that they had been betrayed and Hitler could not be trusted again.

By November 1938, even prior to the invasion of Prague, the outcome of the Munich crisis had a major impact on FDR, who now saw Hitler and Germany as the principal enemy of the United States (Farnham 1997: 137). This reinforced his earlier belief that this crisis, even if resolved, was bound to lead Hitler to make other demands elsewhere in Europe, as Farnham (1997: 107) puts it. The reason for this was not only that Hitler had broken his word. By his actions he had shown that his objective was not to revise the Versailles Treaty on the basis of the principle of nationalism and self-determination, but rather to expand German power. Nationalism was now seen by the Allies as a cover and a ruse. This lesson would have severe implications for the next crisis – the Danzig–Poland crisis, where again the rights and preferences of German nationals were at issue.

Text Box 10.1 Nutshell Summary: Munich 1938

1. Henlein meets with Hitler and asks for German intervention in the Sudetenland, as was done for Austria during the Anschluss. Hitler says he has a better idea and tells Henlein to negotiate tough terms.
2. Upcoming local elections on May 22 make the situation tense and Czechoslovakia, fearing a German invasion, mobilizes.
3. France reaffirms its alliances, and Britain says that if war comes it will not stand aside. The press reports this as a deterrence victory, which enrages Hitler.
4. Daladier and Chamberlain waver in their support and pressure Benes to accept a peaceful transfer of territory, which comes as a great shock to him.
5. Chamberlain meets with Hitler in Berchtesgaden, expecting an honorable solution given Benes' acceptance of a transfer. Instead, he is bullied by Hitler there and then again in Bad Godesberg, where negotiations break down.
6. The British cabinet splits and war looms. Chamberlain seeks a conference with Mussolini as a mediator to break the deadlock. With Czechoslovakia excluded, the conference transfers the Sudetenland to Germany. Chamberlain returns home, noting that the agreement "is peace for our time."
7. A few months later, on March 15, 1939, Hitler invades Prague. Slovakia secedes, and Poland and Hungary seize territory they had claimed. Czechoslovakia ceases to exist.

After the Second World War, Czech independence and its borders were restored. The new government made sure the Sudetenland would never be an issue again by permanently expelling approximately two million Germans – an action approved at the Potsdam Conference.

Text Box 10.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

Most key variables exert a de-escalatory effect in this case (see Table 10.1). This is the only case in our study in which this occurs. Theoretically, the case is striking for two reasons. First, at the time the crisis was close to escalating to war. Second, Hitler afterward may have regretted war did not occur.

Four key variables – accommodationists within the *domestic politics* of various capitals, *alliances*, a limited territorial *issue*, and *norms* – work to de-escalate the crisis. Many will see British and French *appeasement* as

the dominant de-escalatory factor; it is, after all, one possible *bargaining strategy* for accommodationists to pursue. This perhaps oversimplifies too much, however. Accommodationists in Britain and France prove critical, but largely because they reined in their ally Benes, who was a potential hard-liner. Accommodationists also exert critical influence in Germany – in a more typical way. Goering and the military restrain the hard-line tendencies of Hitler, who seemingly wanted war at this time.[7] This dynamic appears in all three principal major states. Military leaders on all sides impede any movement toward war out of concern that the military is not yet fully ready.

To avoid such a war, Chamberlain and Daladier pressure Benes to accept a solution that would satisfy Hitler. Both are concerned that Benes, their weaker ally, would drag them into a war. This contrasts well with the Crimean War case. Whereas there the prospect of an alliance emboldens the weaker state to reject the peace proposal, *allies* here pressure the weaker state to accept a peace proposal.

The peace proposal addresses the territorial *issue* raised by the Sudetenland Germans. This territorial issue, which triggers the crisis, arises as a result of the nationalist *norm* – namely, that a nation's people should belong to the same state (if they so wish). This norm makes the Sudeten Germans' demands appear reasonable – a characteristic further enhanced not only by the Sudetenland's immediate *proximity* to the German state but also by the fact the major states carved the Czechoslovakian state's borders out of various lands at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. A corollary to the nationalist norm – self-determination – then offers an acceptable means through which the Sudetenland could legitimately change hands. Hitler adroitly uses this self-determination norm, offering to abide by plebiscites in any mixed areas.

Given their general acceptability, it is difficult for states to flaunt these norms. The Sudeten Germans strike a sympathetic chord when they first demand autonomy and then accession to Germany. After all, the Sudetenland mostly contains a German-speaking population, and the norms supply a focal point for finding acceptable terms through which to resolve the dispute.[8] This allows the Sudeten Germans and Hitler to achieve their objectives more easily, while complicating Benes' ability to resist.

[7] For example, Faber (2008: 186) reports that Hitler signed a directive on May 30, saying: "It is my unalterable decision to smash … Czechoslovakia by military action in the near future."

[8] This was the view of Neville Henderson, British ambassador to Germany (Bouverie 2020: 221–222).

Bargaining is not simple and straightforward, however, despite the operation of norms. Hitler engages in bullying tactics, so much so that the British cabinet considers going to war if an orderly transfer of the Sudetenland does not occur. To resolve the issue, the British and French rely on a common conflict-management technique: mediation. Mussolini, a biased mediator, helps to break the bargaining deadlock and avoid war. The mediation admittedly humiliates Czechoslovakia, which does not even get a seat at the negotiating table; yet, the norms on which the peace proposal rest prevent Benes from mounting an effective resistance. Thus, bargaining ultimately plays a moderate de-escalatory role. It successfully produces an outcome that all major states could accept.

Relevant capabilities moderately de-escalate the crisis as well. None of the militaries within the major states feel ready for war; they lack *confidence* in their ability to fight a war successfully at this time. Additionally, Czechoslovakia's relative weakness makes it vulnerable both to Hitler and to pressure from Britain and France.

Several other variables play a more limited, minor role. First, data show numerous *arms races* between the key actors at this time: between Britain and Germany (1936–1940), France and Germany (1936–1940), and Czechoslovakia and Germany (1936–1938) (see Sample 1997). Arms races often increase the probability of crisis escalation, but here the various arms races act to postpone war instead. Major-state militaries wanted additional time for these buildups to supply military advantages, especially with regard to air forces, so no major state had a strong incentive to preempt its adversary. This finding holds theoretical interest because each major-state participant believed time to be on its side; it was better to fight later (J. Richardson 1994: 148, 151, 153–154; Ripsman and Levy 2008).

Second, appeasement was a popular policy in the Western *democracies*. Public opinion encouraged a peaceful settlement, supporting the democratic peace. Third, *proximity* supplies countervailing pressures. On the one hand, it makes Germany's reabsorption of the Sudetenland feasible and easily executable under the nationalist norm's (self-determination) mechanism. On the other hand, Germany appreciates that it has the advantage in conquering the Sudetenland. France (and Britain) will be unable to react quickly enough to counter a German invasion. Given Hitler's apparent desire for war, proximity is seen as having a minor, escalatory effect. Finally, *previous history* slightly encourages escalation as well. The Versailles settlement redraws the European map, which includes the creation of the Czechoslovakian state. All major states – but particularly Germany – see aspects of this settlement as unjust and in need of modification.

Table 10.1 *Variable summary for Munich: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Nature of the issue (territory)	Major		X
Alliances	Major		X
Norms	Major		X
Domestic politics	Major		X
Bargaining strategy	Moderate		X
Relevant capabilities	Moderate		X
Arms races	Minor		X
Proximity	Minor	X	
Previous history	Minor	X	
Democracy	Minor		X
Rivalry	None		
System structure	None		
Hostility	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

The remaining variables play no immediate role in this crisis. The policy of appeasement sets aside *rivalries*. The Munich conference results from dyadic interactions rather than any *system*-level rules of the game. *Hostility* remains in check. And *wishful thinking/overconfidence* is not a problem.

Theoretical Analysis

The Munich case has often been enshrouded in myth. It has been an important policy symbol used to justify standing firm in the face of aggression. Truman employed the Munich analogy when sending troops to Korea in 1950, and Lyndon Johnson referred to it in justifying the Vietnam War (see Khong 1992; see also Weinberg 1988: 165). Because of this, the case still evokes strong political opinions, as do Hitler and the Second World War. Unlike the First World War, which is just beginning to emerge from normative analysis and "the blame game" (Clark 2012: 560), scholarly analyses of the Second World War are still very much in this vein, partly because of the Holocaust, but also because in the West the Second World War is seen as the last good war. So in this case in particular, caution must be used in assessing claims and making theoretical analyses – assuming objectivity is important.

If one tries to be objective, several theoretical questions are raised by this case. The first is why a territorial issue involving homeland territory did not go to war. How was war avoided? What was the role of alliances? Second, could war have occurred, and how? Was Hitler restrained, and by what and whom? Third, why was the public in the various democratic

states so pacific, whereas in other cases, like those of the Crimean War and the Franco-Prussian War, it was so bellicose?

Statistical analyses covering a large number of cases find that militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) over territory have a higher likelihood of escalating to war than those over other issues (e.g., regime questions). The ICOW project has developed several hypotheses and some suggestive evidence on this question (see Hensel and Mitchell (2005); Hensel, Mitchell et al. (2008)).[9]

Interestingly, the Sudetenland crisis had many of the characteristics of territory that make it prone to war: It involved neighbors; it had nationals of one country living on the other side of the border within another country; it involved homeland territory with intangible values of the highest salience; and it involved nonstate actors that wanted to join a different country. Because it had all these factors and yet did not go to war, this becomes an important case for learning how war is avoided. The main reason war did not occur in this instance was that a norm for the legitimate transfer of territory was firmly in place. War was avoided because the nationalist norm for transferring territory was accepted by all. Hitler and Henlein could argue that Germans living in the Sudetenland had a right of self-governance based simply on the fact that their nationality differed from that of the Czechoslovakian government (Weinberg 1988: 168). At first, only some sort of autonomy was publicly sought, but that quickly changed to a demand for the outright transfer of the territory based on the nationalist principle. The relevance and potency of this norm was so obvious that *The Times* of London was one of the first to suggest a transfer of territory as a resolution of the crisis.

The potency of the norm must be tempered by the fact that it was the major states, including Czechoslovakia's potential allies, that accepted and applied the norm on their own against the Czechs, whose homeland territory was being traded away. This is consistent with general realist claims about interest. Britain and France did not want to go to war because it was not in their interest, even though France had a formal alliance to defend Czechoslovakia against Germany. The Soviet Union had such an alliance with Czechoslovakia as well, but since it was not contiguous with Czechoslovakia it would need to cross Poland and/or Romania to live up to its agreement. These countries were not sympathetic to having Soviet troops on their territory. In addition, the alliance

[9] These findings are based mostly on the western hemisphere and parts of Europe, but not the entire globe. By 2018 the project had completed collecting territorial data for the entire globe on some of the main variables, but not all. As of this writing, data analyses replicating some of the main studies discussed herein on territorial claims had not been published.

committed the Soviet Union to going to war only if there were more than two parties involved in it. In other words, only if France lived up to its defensive commitment would the USSR come in.

Chamberlain was the leader who most felt that Britain's interests were not at stake. On the night of September 27, just before Hitler's deadline, he referred to the Sudetenland crisis in a radio speech to the British people as "a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing" (J. Richardson 1994: 146). This sentiment of interest was reinforced by the nationalist norm, which made it easier for the major states to back away from defending Czechoslovakia even at the diplomatic level. James Richardson (1994: 160) makes the point: "For Britain and France the issue did not constitute the *casus belli*."

Instead, they pressured Benes and the Czechs into giving up a key portion of their homeland territory that was of great strategic value. The role of alliances in this case is the opposite of what we see in other cases, where an outside alliance emboldens the weaker ally (see Kang 2012). Munich was the flip side of the Crimean case, and it provides some important insights about alliances and war. In the Crimean case, alignments with the major states made the weaker state intransigent and war resulted; in the Munich case, the alignments with the major states resulted in pressure on the minor state to concede, so war was avoided.

The above factors can be seen as vectors promoting peace in this case and overwhelming the territory vector that increased the probability of war. Nonetheless, war could have occurred in this case, and how it could have come about tells us something about paths to war. Hitler was willing to go to war,[10] so little can be learned that is new from his behavior. It is within the British leadership that we can see how war can come about when it is not desired. If Germany attacked Czechoslovakia, then France would become involved; that would have made Britain involved in the war. British decision-makers were concerned about such a path to war because it would take the decision for war out of their hands and put it into the hands of the French and/or the Czechs (J. Richardson 1994: 150). They therefore tried to prevent a situation from developing that would cause their commitment to France make them enter a war they were not desirous of fighting.

Nonetheless, there were situations in which Britain could be pushed into war. The key had to do with the effect of Hitler's bullying strategy. The dynamic was revealed in something Sir Alexander Cadogan, head of the Foreign Office, said in response to Chamberlain's willingness to

[10] Later he would resent being cheated out of winning through military force (Noakes and Pridman 2001: 112) and not having gone to war (Weinberg 1988: 172).

accept Hitler's Godesberg proposals: "We must go on being cowards up to our limit, *but not beyond*" (quoted in J. Richardson 1994: 145). Halifax, the foreign minister, accepted Cadogan's distinction between an orderly and disorderly transfer of territory. The cabinet then divided, as did the French cabinet over the Godesberg proposals that Chamberlain was prepared to accept. What this meant was that the British decision-making elite were very concerned about an orderly transfer of territory and the process by which the transfer was made. They, along with Chamberlain, would not permit bullying and outright coercion to win, albeit they each had different provocation thresholds that would push them to war. Nonetheless, what underlined this concern was the notion that it was essential to preserve norms and rules. A secondary goal of this diplomacy was to get Hitler to accept the ruling liberal order of global governance and be part of it. The hope was to co-opt the Third Reich and make it more like the Weimar Republic.[11]

The case also provides some insight into the role the military can play in preventing a rush to war. In both states, the military thought it was not ready and advised their governments to wait so more armaments could be built and they would be better prepared. Hitler was eager to use military force even if it resulted in war, and he was supported by his foreign minister Ribbentrop and the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), both wanting him to attack (Noakes and Pridman 2001: 112, doc. 528). Goering and Goebbels, in contrast, were in favor of some peace agreement (Weinberg 1988: 171). Goering's opposition to a war at this time was influential in getting Hitler to go to the peace table (see P. Bell 1986: 241, 243). This was a case of a temporary accommodationist reining in a hard-liner. Goering was a believer in the efficacy of war and violence. However, he wanted more planes before Germany took on France and Britain. In addition, the German military under General Ludwig Beck, albeit a critic of going to war, felt Germany was still quite some time away from having adequate defenses against France (J. Richardson 1994: 148; see also Faber 2008: 187–189). Likewise, the British military was quite concerned about the German Luftwaffe, against which there was limited defense (J. Richardson 1994: 153); the aeroplane was a new weapon that was not fully understood, although its use in the Spanish Civil War raised fears. At any rate, the British military was confident that Britain could outspend the Germans in any period of peace prior to war, and they urged fighting later rather than now (J. Richardson 1994: 154). A second military concern was that British leaders felt that France would not attack quickly from the west to take advantage of Germany's invasion

[11] Hitler was aware of this strategy and resisted it (see Noakes and Pridman 2001: 116).

of Czechoslovakia (J. Richardson 1994: 145); thus, they were hesitant to go to war at this point.

Lastly, the publics and masses in both the democracies and the fascist states seemed reluctant to go to war. The adulation of Chamberlain in Munich, Rome, and London was an indication of their deep aversion to another war. Part of this is easily explained by war weariness. Vasquez (2009: ch. 6) elaborates the causal logic of this sort of hypothesis. He posits that the balance of accommodationists versus hard-liners in a given state is a result of two variables: (i) whether the state was on the winning side in the last major war and (ii) whether people thought the war was worth the costs. Victory should produce hard-liners in the public, but in Britain and France, as well as the United States, the First World War was not seen as worth the costs, so accommodationist sentiment prevailed. In Germany, the loss of the war had a similar pacific effect, but the fascist leadership, along with major policy influencers, felt the defeat was brought about because socialists stabbed them in the back; the war itself had been worth the costs. This made Germany a bifurcated polity. The underlying variables explain why the German public cheered Chamberlain while Hitler was disgusted with his own people's reaction. An important implication here is that the military are not always hawks, as liberals sometimes assume. Militaries can be forces of restraint.

Lessons of Munich 1938

1. The most important lesson of the Munich crisis is that **territorial disputes do not have to go to war even if they involve homeland territory**. Although territorial disputes, particularly among neighbors, often result in war, they do not always have to do so, at least in the short run. In this instance, war was avoided by the utilization of a peaceful solution of the issue involved. While war ultimately came about in 1939, it was not over the nationalist issue of the Sudetenland. Thus, this case shows that while homeland territory increases the probability of war, this probability is not so high that territorial disputes are always a sufficient condition for war. The mere presence of homeland territory does not guarantee that war is inevitable and that peaceful solutions are not possible.

2. A second lesson from this case is that **the nationalist norm for transferring territory, when it is in place and accepted by all the major states, can prevent war** over territorial questions even if they are of the highest salience. The principle of nationalism and self-determination formed a basis for a rational discussion and negotiation of

the disagreement. Hitler and the Sudeten Germans benefited from this norm. Indeed, the norm made it difficult for the British and French to oppose Hitler, especially since Hitler's proposal was couched as a limited objective consistent with the principles upon which the Versailles Treaty redrew the map of Europe. Likewise, it was difficult for Benes to make a normative argument against Hitler's proposal, since the creation of a Czech state in the first place was based on the nationalist norm. In this case, the nationalist norm proved more potent than the realist norm of strategic territory and actual possession of the territory.

3. A third lesson is **that major states can avoid war if they pressure weaker allies to accept solutions that make concessions to their opponents**. Conversely, if they do not, they may find themselves dragged into a war that is not in their interests – in some cases, an unnecessary war, as with Crimea in 1854. This lends support to one of Morgenthau's (1960: 555–556) nine rules of diplomacy: **"Never allow a weak ally to make decisions for you."** As noted earlier, Munich is the flip side of the coin of the Crimean War case. It demonstrates an alliance dynamic opposite to that which appears in the Crimean War. Hitler was prepared to go to war, partly because he was concerned with territorial questions, and the British and French were not, again partly because they had no territorial questions at stake. Benes, as would be expected, was willing to go to war because he had territory at stake, but alone he was no match for Hitler and ultimately bowed to French and British pressure. The case also shows that power played a role in the resolution of this case. Raw power coupled with the norm of self-determination gave Hitler an advantage that made the territory switch hands without a fight.

Although alliances are present and there is no war, this is also a case of deterrence failure. The alliance pattern did not deter Hitler from going to war or even risking it. He was confident that Britain and France would not go to war, and he was correct. Both France and Britain were not prepared to defend Czechoslovakia, as Benes thought they would. This case has to be counted as an instance where the use of defensive alliances to balance power did not produce peace in any causal sense (compare Leeds 2003 with Kenwick et al. 2015).

4. A fourth lesson is that **the military can be a short-term force for peace if it thinks it will be more ready in the future**. On both sides, war was avoided, partly because the military on each side felt it was not ready and pressed for at least some delay. This was particularly important in Germany, where Goering played an influential role in restraining Hitler's hard-line tendencies and even went so far as to play an active role in drafting the peace proposal ultimately used by Mussolini.

5. Nonetheless, Munich, and Hitler in general, presents a difficult case for liberal approaches to peace. **The bargaining process showed that liberal reasonableness does not always work**. Hitler rejected proposals meant to appease him and meet him more than halfway. In response, he bullied his opponents to the point that it almost seemed he preferred war and winning by intimidation than actually making a mutually agreed-upon settlement.[12] The style was as important as the substance (see J. Richardson 1994: 150). Joseph P. Kennedy, the US ambassador to Britain, shortly after the Berchtesgaden meeting reported to Washington that Chamberlain's sentiments about Hitler were that he was "cruel, overbearing, has a hard look and … would be completely ruthless in any of his aims and methods" (quoted in Farnham 1997: 104).

6. This previous lesson has led many – following Churchill's criticism of Chamberlain – to assert that Munich provides an essential realist lesson about the importance of power and the impotency of norms and promises. Our analysis, however, suggests that **the widely accepted Munich analogy is incorrect**. Zinn (1967: ch. 8), in the context of the Vietnam War, showed how the use of this historical analogy was invalid. The analysis here goes further. It shows that the claims that if the Allies had stood firm Hitler would have backed down and that the Second World War would have been prevented are simply not warranted. Such claims make little sense historically. If the Allies had held firm, Hitler would not have backed down, but rather invaded. The evidence presented here and by James Richardson (1994: 135–147) suggests little else was likely. Indeed, given French tardiness, it is probable that Hitler's forces would have overwhelmed the Czechs. At best, then, a firm resistance by the Allies would have brought the Second World War on earlier and certainly not have prevented it. In this regard, the Munich analogy is fundamentally incorrect.

AFTERMATH: THE DANZIG–POLAND CRISIS

In principle, it is reasonable to say that without the takeover of Prague the Munich case would have set a clear precedent for solving the next crisis that came onto the European agenda – Danzig–Poland in 1939.[13] The similarities between Munich and this case are quite striking. Both

[12] For a formal analysis of the bargaining dynamics and the role of information about allied intentions to fight in Hitler's decision-making, see Zagare and Kilgour (2023).

[13] Since this is an afterword, there is no theoretical analysis or lessons section.

involve German nationals living in regimes that were outside the German national homeland. In 1919, East Prussia was cut off from Germany, with about 800,000 Germans living in Poland. In both the Munich and Poland cases, the nationalist principle of self-determination provided an acceptable norm for the transfer of territory among the major states, which the neighboring minor state – in this case Poland – did not support. Both cases were resolvable along the lines of Chamberlain's appeasement policy and were consistent with a revision of the Versailles Treaty.

Danzig was not part of Poland but a free city, albeit surrounded by Poland. Its incorporation into Germany would raise questions. Still, Danzig (modern-day Gdansk) was primarily inhabited by German speakers. They constituted about 96 percent of the population. In 1933 the local Nazi party won a majority of the Volkstag (on these figures, see P. Bell 1986: 250).

The other piece of territory in question was along the Polish Corridor. This was a large swath of land that was taken from Germany at the end of the First World War to give the new Polish state access to the Baltic Sea. It, too, had a large number of German speakers. Of further significance was that the Polish Corridor and Danzig had historically been part of Prussia and were now under a new state. Memel too, with its large German population, was also an issue.

The Munich settlement provided a clear path to peace for resolving this crisis. Indeed, Mussolini expected to be called in as a mediator to end the crisis, and Bonnet tried to pursuit this idea as late as September 3 (P. Bell 1986: 265). It did not happen, however, primarily because Chamberlain and Daladier no longer trusted Hitler and no longer framed this case in terms of the nationalist principle. Instead, they saw the takeover of Prague as not only a violation of Hitler's commitment that he would not violate Czech territory, but also as a revelation of his real foreign policy objectives (P. Bell 1986: 253). These were now seen as German aggrandizement within Europe rather than simply slight nationalist revisions of the Versailles map. The initial result of this change was that Britain and France allied with Poland and made defense commitments to it. Anticipating Hitler, Britain proclaimed a guarantee of Poland's independence on March 31,[14] and subsequently signed a defense alliance with Poland. There was no pressuring of Poland, as there had been with

[14] See Newman (1976) for an unconventional and revisionist view of this guarantee that later provoked a controversy over Chamberlain's foreign policy and Britain's role in the war.

Benes. The hope was that with a firm alliance commitment Hitler would not push the issue to the brink of war.

Part of this effort entertained the idea of having the Soviet Union join the coalition. This would have recreated the coalition of 1914 and faced Germany with a two-front war. Balance of power theory recommended such a tack and Stalin was not only open to it but seemed to want it (see Bouverie 2020: 199). Such a coalition, however, did not come to fruition for several reasons. First the Poles were adamantly against it. Previously, in 1919–1920, they had fought a war with the new USSR. They did not want any Russian troops on their soil (P. Bell 1986: 259, 261). Second, Hitler made a grand bargain with Stalin in the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact and bought Stalin off with territorial promises, giving him "half" of Poland in return for a joint invasion. This ended the threat of a two-front war, which was Hitler's main objective.

The pact was signed in Moscow on August 23, 1939. Hitler believed that with the pact Britain and France would not fulfill their pledge and would remain neutral (P. Bell 1986: 262–263). Up until the revelation of this pact, and even as late as August 29, Chamberlain and Daladier were tempted to make some resolution of the crisis along the Munich lines, at least for Danzig. Nonetheless, when on August 29 Hitler moved to make demands on Poland, Britain and France stood firm and did not negotiate, as they had done in Czechoslovakia. Hitler invaded on September 1; Britain and France declared war on September 3. The invasion on two sides (with the USSR coming in on September 17) resulted in Poland falling relatively quickly before either Britain or France could intervene. There then resulted a period of the "phony war," during which there was no fighting in the west until April 1940.[15]

Although Britain and France stood by Poland and declared war, their alliance must still be seen as a deterrence failure because it did not prevent an attack. In this sense, the two world wars in 1914 and 1939 resulted from deterrence failures, which is an important lesson that is still under-recognized in IR theory. In the Second World War in the Pacific in 1941, deterrence failure did not play much of a role; rather, economic coercion was a major factor.

Key Variables

The invasion of Prague marked a turning point in British and French decisions about Hitler. They were now ready to resist any further

[15] For an analysis of the onset of the Second World War in Europe consistent with the theory underlying the cases within this book, see Vasquez (1996).

aggrandizement, and they distrusted any of Hitler's diplomatic efforts in pursuit of territorial expansion. This makes *previous history* a major variable that promotes escalation here. Without Prague, the Danzig crisis probably would have looked like the Munich crisis.

Previous history also affects two other key variables – *bargaining strategy* and *alliances*. Because the Prague invasion had such a negative effect on Britain and France, they abandoned appeasement and now resorted to a strategy of deterrence: an ultimatum, coupled with an alliance with Poland, were designed to prevent Hitler from acting on his territorial demands. This strategy utterly failed. Chamberlain and Daladier seemingly had little faith in it working – or at least were not surprised by Hitler's response. Although probably not critical, the strategy failed partly because Hitler undermined the stronger balance of power coalition forming against him by buying off Stalin with a nonaggression pact that divided Poland, gave Russia other salient territorial gains, and therefore protected Hitler's eastern front. These three variables – previous history, bargaining strategy, alliances – coupled with the nature of the *issue* (i.e., territory) are the key major variables that encourage this crisis to escalate to war.

Of course, there is more at play here than just the Danzig crisis escalating to war.[16] All the major states, including the Soviet Union, have the prospect of another world war in the forefront of their minds. The nature of the issue is thus larger. Hitler is secretly thinking of his greater ambitions, embodied in his policy of *Lebensraum*. The allies, and especially Stalin, are not aware of these greater goals in any specific terms, but they correctly ascertain that Hitler seeks greater territorial expansion. Stalin's decision to align with Hitler offers a temporary expedient to deal with the German threat, particularly after Polish opposition spurns his efforts to form an alliance with Britain and France. He then uses the pact to restore parts of tsarist Russia to the USSR, including not only part of Poland but also the Baltic states.

Arms races play a minor role. As noted earlier, arms races existed between Britain and Germany (1936–1940), France and Germany (1936–1940), and Poland and Germany (1937–1939) (see Sample 1997, 2002). The case evidence demonstrates that these arms races played more than just a potent, latent role. Beginning with Munich, actors in Germany, Britain, and France felt that delaying the war might benefit them militarily. By the time of Danzig, this belief fades. Hitler would not be stopped, and Goering did not repeat his concerns about military preparedness. The British and French, meanwhile, not only felt compelled to defend Poland (no matter what) but also believed themselves to be in

[16] For elaboration and documentation on the points made below, see Vasquez (1996).

Table 10.2 *Variable summary for Danzig–Poland: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Previous history	Major	X	
Bargaining strategy	Major	X	
Alliances	Major	X	
Nature of issue	Major	X	
Arms races	Minor	X	
Proximity	Minor	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
System structure	None		
Relevant capabilities	None		
Norms	None		
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	None		
Democracy	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

a somewhat better position militarily – although the period of the phony war shows that they were not eager for war and hardly overconfident.

Because of the dominant, crucial role of previous history, many variables that promote war and fuel the underlying hostile relationship – *proximity*, *rivalry*, and *hostility* – play a relatively minor role in this particular crisis, even though they play a greater role in the sequence of crises that builds up to Danzig. The Anglo- and Franco-German rivalries, as well as the hostility these generated, began before the First World War.[17] That war intensified the rivalries. Indeed, the German surrender and harsh Versailles peace created hard-liners in Germany, leading to Hitler's election in 1932. The rivalries then encouraged Hitler to adopt an extensive revisionist agenda, which played a key (albeit indirect) role in the major variables listed in Table 10.2.

Four other variables play no role. First, *relevant capabilities* are of no immediate concern to any actor but were overshadowed by alliance stratagems; hence, they do not directly affect crisis decisions. Second, Poland and its allies ignore *norms*, especially the nationalist norm. Third, *domestic politics* do not significantly affect the crisis outcome. And finally, *system structure* has no impact here. Since there no longer exists any governing system, each actor is on its own.

[17] Thompson and Dreyer (2012: 48–49, 62–65) list the rivalry between Britain and Germany as going back to 1896 and that between France and Germany (Prussia) as going back to 1756.

11 Pearl Harbor

Background

At the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War (see Chapter 6), Japan established a firm protectorate over Korea and acquired Port Arthur, Darien, and Southern Sakhalin from Russia. Prior to that, in the 1894–1895 Sino-Japanese War, it had taken Taiwan and the Pescadores. In the First World War, Japan extended these holding by attacking and conquering the German enclave of Kiaochow in China and eventually the German Caroline and Marshall Islands in the Pacific. Japan also took over Shantung, where Germany had holdings. All of these conquests put Japan well on the way to establishing an imperial empire not unlike the empires of France and Britain, although considerably less extensive.

In 1915, during the war, Japan placed Twenty-One Demands on China, which were intended to consolidate Japan's position. These demands were divided into five sets, but the fifth, which would have ensured extensive Japanese control of the economy and ended the open-door policy, was dropped because of pressure from Britain and the United States (US). Additional compromises with the US were made in 1917 and at Versailles. Nonetheless, Japan's activity in the First World War made for a substantial base in China, from which it could subsequently expand.

Soon after the 1919 Versailles Treaty, which recognized several of Japan's holdings including those in Shantung, the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 set limits on the navies of the US, Britain, and Japan, with capital ships being restricted among the three to 525,000 tons for the US and Britain and 315,000 tons for Japan (Davidson 1960: 437). This prevented a burgeoning arms race among the three states. In the greater scheme of things the treaty also created a system whereby the major-state victors of the First World War established a set of rules of the game to govern their relations in Asia. The foremost example of that was the recognition of Japan's right to leases of Port Arthur, Dairen and parts of Southern Manchuria, as well as Japanese conquests of German

Islands in the Pacific during the First World War, while at the same time returning to China (nominal) sovereignty over Shantung. All sides agreed to consult if issues of concern arose over their relations with each other with regard to the Four Power Treaty, which superseded the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

Within a decade, Japan's incursions into China were to take a major turn. In 1931 the Kwantung army, acting on its own and without the approval or foreknowledge of the civilian government in Tokyo, provoked a clash with the Chinese army at Mukden (Iriye 1987: 7), which became an excuse for the conquest of Manchuria. This action was so popular at home that the government of Wakatsuki Reijiro could do little to protest the actions of the army led by Ishiwara Kanji and Itagaki Seishiro. Rather than openly taking over Manchuria, the army created the puppet state of Manchukuo, from which Japan further expanded into Northeast China in 1933 and 1935.

The army's move was part of a larger domestic opposition to the internationalist and liberal coalition that dominated Japanese politics. This opposition can be seen as a coalition of the military (both army and navy) and nationalist businesses not oriented to international trade. The onset of the depression, marked by the 1929 New York Stock Exchange crash and Britain's later going off the gold standard, greatly affected Japan; free trade as the basis of sustaining and extending Japan's wealth was seen as problematic. This was especially the case as the Smoot-Hartley Tariff and other beggar-thy-neighbor policies began to be implemented. The nationalist–militarist coalition advocated creating a self-sufficient empire, like the empires of Britain and France, to sustain its access to raw materials. This led to the idea of a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (Iriye 1987: 131). Autarky, as opposed to trade, was the overarching goal (Barnhart 1987: ch. 1; Kupchan 1994: ch. 5), and this goal was at the bottom of what Jack Snyder (1991: 115) has called imperial overexpansion.[1]

The struggle between these two coalitions spanned several decades and involved the strategic assassination of political and economic leaders between 1930 and 1936 by the nationalist–militarist coalition (see Sagan 1994: 141). The most infamous assassination was that of Prime Minister Hamaguchi in 1930. He was assassinated mostly for domestic reasons, but his advocacy of the London Naval Treaty also played a role; it would set limits on the Japanese navy below the levels set for Britain and the US – roughly 6.975 battleship tonnage to 10 (Iriye 1987: 5). Another

[1] See also Solingen (2015) for a general model of domestic coalitions that favor self-sufficiency even under the risk of war.

major assassination took place in May 1932; Prime Minister Inukai was killed not long after the Mukden incident (Langer 1980: 1113; Iriye 1987: 17–18). This process reached a high point on February 26, 1936, when the government was almost overthrown during an army mutiny that resulted in the murder of some of the emperor's closest advisors (Bix 2016: xvii). The coup failed, the emperor increased his control over the government, and seventeen involved in the attempt were executed (Taliafferro 2004: 98).

After the conquest of Manchuria, the navy pushed for equality with the US. Meanwhile, with the election of FDR in 1933 the US began its largest navel buildup since 1916. This was partly because defense spending was an acceptable way of priming the economy, and FDR, as a former secretary of navy, favored that branch of the military. Nonetheless, it should be noted that in the very first week the cabinet met – a meeting that was dominated by issues of unemployment and the Great Depression – there was discussion of the possibility of war with Japan (Farley 1948: 39; Current 1954: 128). The next year (1934) Japan withdrew from the London Naval Treaty. Hardline advisors in Roosevelt's administration, like the political scientist Stanley Hornbeck, welcomed this as an opportunity to build up the US navy beyond the treaty limits, and naval expenditures doubled between 1934 and 1937 (W. Carr 1985: 30).[2] At the same time, when Japan declined to sign a nonaggression treaty with the Soviet Union in 1932, the Soviets deployed more troops along the Soviet–Manchurian border in the area. Japan had a difficult time matching the Soviets' forty divisions; it could only muster twenty-eight (W. Carr 1985: 34; see also J. Snyder 1991: 57).

The next major crisis occurred in July 1937 at the Marco Polo Bridge, which resulted in a long-term Sino-Japanese War and eventually the Second World War. In the 1937 war Japan was able to conquer the most important eastern and coastal areas, including the major cities. It could not subdue the nationalist army of Chiang Kai-shek, however, who kept retreating inland. Britain and the United States opposed Japan diplomatically, and later the US included Chiang Kai-shek as a beneficiary of its lend–lease policy, while Britain provided aid through Burma. Meanwhile, Mao Tse-tung conducted guerilla warfare in the north.

[2] Diehl's (1983) sees Japan and the US (and Britain) engaged in a mutual military buildup in 1937 and 1940, but not in 1932. For further discussion of the role of arms races prior to 1941, see Vasquez and Gibler (2001).

Historical Events

This case began with the desire of some Japanese decision-makers to take advantage of the defeat of France to expand Japan's empire into Indochina.[3] After the surrender of France to the Third Reich in June 1940, Paris and the northern part of France was occupied, while Vichy France remained independent and was permitted to keep its colonies, including Indochina. This colony, however, was vulnerable to Japanese desires to expand and create a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere; indeed, Vichy France was in no position to defend such a far-flung entity after its defeat. Such an opportunity was theoretically not unlike that of Japan in 1914, which declared war against Germany to get Kiaochow. Japan demanded the use of airfields and bases in September 1940 and began moving troops into the north. The US imposed more economic sanctions against Japan, adding scrap iron to the embargo (see J. Richardson 1994: 183–184). At the same time, Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in Berlin on September 27, 1940. Article 3 of this pact was seen as aimed against the US (Gibler 2009: 341).

To further complicate these strategic decisions, on June 22, 1941, Hitler invaded the USSR, an invasion that was expected to succeed in short order, even in London and Washington (see Gardner 1993: 91, 93). Earlier, with the signing of the Hitler–Stalin Pact in September 1939, the Japanese had felt betrayed and believed that the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact had been violated. Nonetheless, the anticipated collapse of the Soviet Union provided another opportunity and resulted in a debate within Japan over whether it should pursue a northern or a southern war strategy (Sagan 1989: 333). The former could take advantage of Hitler's invasion to attack the Soviet Union in the Far East, even though Japan had signed a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union on April 13, 1941(see Iriye 1987: 142).[4] It was expected that this would be easy because the Soviet military had its hands full in the west. Such a war had to be initiated before the Soviet Union collapsed or surrendered to Germany, however. Time was of the essence.

[3] For a vivid view of the excitement Germany's 1940 victories in the Netherlands, France, and Belgium generated within the Japanese elite, see Tolland (1970: 60). These victories made Japanese leaders dig in their heels on China, where things had been going badly, as well as expand outside of China.

[4] Abandoning the neutrality pact in favor of a northern Strategy was mainly advocated by the foreign minister Matsuoka (see Huizenga 1953: 643–644). With the adoption of a southern strategy and Matsuoka's replacement, however, the neutrality pact became quite useful. Togo, upon later becoming foreign minister, asked the Soviets on November 28 and again on December 6 if they would adhere to the neutrality pact by not granting anyone bases, and the Soviets said they would (Paul 1994: 78).

The Indochina crisis that culminated in the attack on Pearl Harbor began in July 1941 with a set of demands on southern Indochina that followed up on the previous 1940 demands on northern Indochina. Vichy conceded and on July 24 permitted the Japanese to move in up to 6,000 of their troops (Iriye 1987: 148; J. Richardson 1994: 187; Sagan 1994: 62). These demands in effect resulted in the peaceful transfer of the colony to Japan. The negotiations were conducted in secret, but the US had broken the Japanese code and knew what was transpiring (I. Anderson 1975: 218; Iriye 1987: 146). Subsequently, the US froze all Japanese assets, with Britain, the Netherlands, and New Zealand doing the same on the days that followed. This was a prelude to the US placing an oil embargo and demanding that Japan withdraw the troops that had been sent to Indochina. It was this 1941 embargo on oil that eventually led to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The initial embargo was partial, with demands dealing primarily with Indochina, but the demands expanded to include Japan's withdrawal from China, with which Japan had been at war since 1937. The US had also opposed that war, and now that larger 1937 war became linked with this more recent crisis. As the embargo tightened, Japanese leaders were faced with the prospect of eventually running out of oil, especially because the embargo was joined by Britain and the Dutch East Indies as part of the informal ABCD (America, Britain, China, Dutch East Indies) coalition (Iriye 1987: 131, 134).

On August 9–12, 1941, while FDR and Sumner Welles were in Newfoundland to meet Churchill, Dean Acheson, who was undersecretary of state at the time, was in charge of reviewing oil shipments in the pipeline on a case-by-case basis. He decided to prohibit all shipments of oil to Japan, making the embargo total and complete. The Japanese now estimated that they had about a year's worth of oil for the navy before they would run out. The embargo therefore potentially put Japanese decision-makers in a position where they had to decide to capitulate to the US or at least make some major concessions beyond those they had already made. The alternative was to seize the nearby Dutch East Indies, which had sufficient sources of oil. Such a seizure, although against the small Netherlands government in exile in London, would entail war with Britain and, more importantly, the US. Admiral Yamamoto, commander in chief, when asked privately by Prime Minster Konoye about Japan's chances in a war, asserted, "If you tell me that it is necessary that we fight, then in the first six months to a year of war against the US and England, I will run wild, and I will show you an uninterrupted succession of victories; I must tell you that should the war be prolonged for two or three years, I have no confidence in our ultimate victory"

(Paul, 1994: 197n29, who draws it from Wohlstetter, 1962: 350; see Toland 1970: 90 for a different rendition of the same quote).[5]

These decisions were made in the context of the debate over whether to take the northern strategy (i.e., seize the opportunity to attack the Soviet Union because of Hitler's attack) or go south and seize the oil in the Dutch East Indies. The main focus of the southern strategy was to follow up and consolidate what had already been started in Indo-China. Its immediate goal was to gain a sufficient source of oil to pursue a world war. Taking the Dutch East Indies would accomplish that goal. It would also go a long way to establishing a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, since the resulting war with the US and Britain would mean their assets could also be taken. The Philippines, an American colony, was a natural staging area to invade the Dutch East Indies. In addition, Singapore, with its major British naval base, had to be attacked and this would eventually entail an attack on Malaya, as well as Burma. The latter would aid the war in China by cutting off supplies.

The debate over whether to go with the northern or southern strategy was strongly affected by bureaucratic politics. The army, which would have been in charge of a war attacking the Soviet Union, favored the northern strategy, because it would take place primarily on land. Conversely, the southern strategy, particularly the part dealing with the US, would take place at sea and was favored by the navy.[6] In the end, a compromise of sorts was reached; it was decided to pursue both (see Iriye 1987: 143). Since winter was approaching, Japan decided to go with the southern strategy first. Win there, and then after the winter turn to the northern strategy in the spring (Iriye 1987: 162). The confidence of the military here was, to say the least, amazing. By August 9, however, the northern strategy was abandoned, partly because Germany was not winning as quickly as was expected and relations between Japan and the US were worsening (Iriye 1987: 149) – meaning that Japan would need to secure oil by attacking south rather than waiting and attacking north.

The tightening of the embargo and the possibility that they would run out of oil led the Japanese to attempt to ease the embargo through negotiation. This option was favored by the somewhat accommodationist Prime Minister Konoye, who was supported by the emperor. Konoye

[5] This view that Japan could not win a war that lasted more than a year was not uncommon in the military (see Taliaferro 2004: 105). For instance, Nagano, naval chief of staff, felt the same and believed that only if the US got bogged down fighting Germany would it accept a negotiated peace with Japan.

[6] As Copeland (2015: 179) points out the army was not completely opposed to the Southern strategy so long as it included army occupation of countries in the south and not just projection of naval power.

hoped in early September that a face-to-face meeting with Roosevelt would result in a breakthrough. Such a breakthrough never materialized, however, partly because the FDR administration feared accusations of appeasement (Sagan 1994: 74). James Richardson (1994: 189) notes that the failure of the US to support Konoye and others within Japan who opposed war weakened their influence and was therefore a lost opportunity (see also Iriye 1987: 167).

Nonetheless, at this point the emperor supporting Prime Minister Konoye wanted a serious attempt at negotiations to avoid war (Iriye 1987: 160). This led to a failed attempt to reach a negotiated settlement in the first week of September. Konoye's government fell in October, 1941, and Tojo, the war minister, formed a new cabinet and became prime minister while also keeping the war ministry and adding that of home affairs. Tojo was a hard-liner who was prepared to go to war, but a thorough review of policy permitted the accommodationists, led by the newly appointed foreign minister Togo, to negotiate yet one more time, provided they could reach some resolution that would ease the embargo, if not lift it. The emperor had urged this approach, and Tojo knew that the emperor (who had asked him to form a new government) was opposed to an immediate decision for war (Iriye 1987: 173). When the emperor appointed Tojo, however, he had told Tojo to start with a "clean slate," – that is, not to feel bound by earlier decisions and deadlines (Sagan 1989: 341; Bix 2000: 420).[7] Tojo thus gave a green light to further negotiations, but at the same time also permitted the navy and army to prepare for war (Iriye 1987: 173–175). At the November 2 meeting, the emperor asked Tojo to redouble his efforts to avoid war (Butlow 1961: 324). New deadlines were put in place. Negotiations had until November 13 to succeed; if they did not, the military insisted that the country go to war on December 1. Tojo got the November 13 deadline extended to November 30, with war to follow soon after December 1 (Iriye 1987: 174).[8]

From October 23 to November 1 the Tojo cabinet formulated new negotiating positions. Togo advocated accepting all US demands, including withdrawal from China, but he was the only one. The navy and army split on options. Tojo got the army to agree to keeping troops only in North China, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Hainan Island for twenty-five years, with the removal of all others in two years (Iriye 1987: 174–175;

[7] It must be noted that since the emperor was considered divine, no direct communication was made between him and the cabinet members; everything was discussed through intermediaries.

[8] For a detailed review of meetings with the emperor, see Bix (2000: 423–431).

Sagan 1994: 77). Admiral Nomura, Japan's ambassador to the US, who was an accommodationist (J. Richardson 1994: 185) and had been conducting negotiations since March, was given the fresh deadline of November 13, which was then extended to 30 November.

The US had broken the Japanese code, so it must have had some sense of the Japanese deadlines and Tojo's decision to go to war shortly after December 1. Given this inside information, it is significant that the only attempt by the US to avoid war was the so-called US modus vivendi proposal in the fall of 1941, which was a response to Togo's new plan B (see J. Richardson 1994: 190; see also Sagan 1994: 80–82). That plan provided for an interim agreement whereby Japan would withdraw from southern Indochina in return for easing the oil embargo, which would give Japan a "required" amount of oil (J. Richardson 1994: 190).

The US modus vivendi proposal originated with Cordell Hull. It would ease the embargo considerably in return for (a partial) withdrawal of Japanese forces. The demands on China would be put on hold. American decision-makers including FDR supported the proposal because they believed it would buy time, during which they could better prepare for war (see Copeland 2015: 231, 233). The proposal would have likely been accepted and given the accommodationists in Japan something by which to delay Tojo. It was also consistent with Togo's new plan B. However, the US never delivered it. On November 24, Chinese officials objected to it in a meeting with Hull and other ABCD representatives. That night, Churchill cabled FDR asking about Chiang Kai-shek and whether, with this proposal, "Is he not having a very thin diet?" (Toland 1970: 141).

This joint opposition seems to have in effect vetoed the proposal. Hull decided "to kick the whole thing over" – his own words in a telephone call to the secretary of war Henry Stimson (Grace 1979: 173). In his memoir, Hull (1948: 1081–1082) saw the opposition of the Chinese and Churchill's cable as critical in not moving forward. He said the proposal was not worth the risks associated with pursuing it, especially the risk of a collapse of Chinese morale and resistance. He prepared a memo to the president, in which he said: "In view of the opposition of the Chinese Government and either the half-hearted or actual opposition of the British, the Netherlands, and Australian Governments … [I] withhold the modus vivendi proposal." He then simply notes, "The President promptly agreed." The modus vivendi proposal was the last chance to avoid war, and both Hull and FDR knew that.

This meant that the weaker allies dragged the US into the war, although fear of domestic charges of appeasement also played a role. And what else could be expected? Britain's only chance of defeating

Germany was to bring in the US. It was clear that with an impending defeat of the Soviet Union Britain would be completely isolated against Germany, Japan, and Italy. Of course, what must not be forgotten is that FDR wanted to be dragged into the war.[9] This is the key. It means that the concerns of allies, including the Dutch and Australians, were an ancillary factor. Nonetheless, it illustrates an important theoretical point about alliances.[10]

On November 26, Hull repeated the US terms for lifting the embargo, including Japan's withdrawal from China. This convinced the Japanese that the US had now come to the conclusion that war was certain (Sagan 1994: 82). Without any modus vivendi proposal, the Japanese decided to go to war on December 7. Adhering to the precedent of a surprise attack on the enemy's navy set in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan launched a dramatic attack on the US Pacific navy anchored in Hawaii. While that precedent was important, the Japanese also thought they needed to take the initiative and act quickly if they were to have any chance to succeed, given the steady buildup of US forces in the area (Sagan 1994: 78).

With the failure of the negotiations and the knowledge afforded by the breaking of the Japanese code, FDR knew that an attack and war were probable. It is not likely, however, that he knew that the attack would come at Pearl Harbor. This is not to say that there was no specific intelligence of a coming attack:

> If our intelligence system and all our other channels of information failed to produce an accurate image of Japanese intentions and capabilities, it was not for want of the relevant materials. Never before have we had so complete an intelligence picture of the enemy. And perhaps never again will we have such a magnificent collection of sources at our disposal. (Wohlstetter 1962: 382)

There was, in short, plenty of intelligence that some attack would come somewhere. Wohlstetter (1962: 395) points to the problem with much of this intelligence, however; reports indicating that "A surprise aggressive move in any direction … is a possibility" and "Japanese future action unpredictable but hostile action possible at any moment" were not very useful, in her view, for planning in any detail. Even when there was some specific intelligence, moreover, it was swamped by too much information. Wohlstetter (1962: 387) concludes, "In short, we failed to

[9] Evidence that FDR wanted a war with Japan is provided by his attitude toward the modus vivendi proposal. He regarded it simply as a way of delaying war to gain time to better prepare for it, rather than as a proposal that would push negotiation forward to avoid war altogether.

[10] Copeland (2015: 241–242) dismisses this factor completely, even though he admits that Hull (1948: 1080–1082) and subsequent historians have seen it as the main reason.

anticipate Pearl Harbor not for the want of the relevant materials, but because of a plethora of irrelevant ones. Much of the appearance of wanton neglect that emerged in various investigations of the disaster resulted from the unconscious suppression of vast congeries of signs pointing in every direction except Pearl Harbor." She goes on to say:

> Indeed, at the time there was a good deal of evidence available to support all the wrong interpretations of last-minute signals, and the interpretations appeared wrong only *after* the event. There was, for example, a good deal of evidence to support the hypothesis that Japan would attack the Soviet Union from the east while the Russian Army was heavily engaged in the west. (Wohlstetter 1962: 392)[11]

Just before 8 a.m. local time on December 7 Japan attacked. The Japanese sank five battleships, with another eight damaged. The airstrike killed over 2,300 and wounded over 1,200; all the American airplanes in the vicinity were destroyed or severely damaged (Dallek 1979: 311; Langer 1980: 1153). On the same day (December 8 across the international dateline) Japan attacked the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Malaya; it also bombed the British in Singapore. The result was a massive assault across thousands of miles. Soon after the attack FDR went on the radio and spoke of December 7, 1941, as "a date which will live in infamy" (Bartlett 1955: 951a; Toland 1970: 238).[12] He then asked Congress for a declaration of war against the Empire of Japan, which the Congress gave him in overwhelming votes of 82 to 0 and 388 to 1, the only dissenting vote being that of Jeannette Rankin in the House.

These actions still left opened the question of war with Germany, which FDR had considered his main enemy since Hitler's tactics in Munich and subsequent invasion of Prague in 1938 (see Farnham 1997: 202–203). In Germany, Ribbenttrop, the German foreign minister, told Hitler that Japan was demanding an immediate declaration of war against the US. He told Hitler, however, that Germany's alliance with

[11] Wohlstetter's (1962) study showing that Pearl Harbor was an intelligence failure and that FDR did not know of the impeding air assault has long been the generally accepted position within political science. Early on, major isolationists (e.g., Charles Beard 1948), argued that FDR knew of the attack and did nothing because he wanted to bring the US into the war in Europe through "the back door" (see also Tansill 1952, cited in Dallek 1979: 590). Stinnett (2000: 9–12) is one of those who more recently has made this charge, arguing that there was a deliberate US policy to provoke war with Japan and that FDR and others had warning of the coming attack on Pearl Harbor and did nothing (but see Drea's 2000 review). See Schuessler (2010) for a broader argument on how FDR's actions in 1941 were an act of deception that democracy (by its very structure) may produce under certain circumstances. These accusations will be dealt with further in the Theoretical Analysis.

[12] Dallek (1979: 312) has the quote as "a day which will live in infamy," which is not in the Library of Congress transcript. See https://tinyurl.com/3ef4e4eh.

Text Box 11.1 Nutshell Summary: Pearl Harbor

1. In 1931 Japan's Kwantung army, acting on its own, provokes a clash with the Chinese army at Mukden and conquers Manchuria.
2. In July 1937 an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge leads to a crisis that escalates to the long Sino-Japanese War.
3. With the surrender of France to Germany in June 1940, Japan seeks to expand into French Indochina, puts demands on Vichy France in September for airfields, and moves troops into northern Indochina. This is part of the larger goal of creating a self-sufficient Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, which is the aim of the nationalist–militarist coalition that gradually replaces the internationalist coalition that governed Japan after the First World War.
4. The US opposes Japan's actions by placing economic sanctions on it, banning the export of scrap iron.
5. At the end of September Japan signs the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Japan.
6. Germany invades the USSR on June 22, 1941, providing an opportunity for Japan to attack Siberia – the so-called northern strategy.
7. In July 1941 proponents of the southern strategy win. Japan sends an ultimatum to Vichy for bases in southern Indochina.
8. The US quickly freezes all of Japan's assets, but avoids a complete oil embargo until August 9–12, when Dean Acheson, while FDR was meeting with Churchill to formulate the Atlantic Charter, denies access to all oil.
9. Faced with a complete and total oil embargo, Tojo and Japanese decision-makers seek to make a deal for easing the restrictions in return for some concessions on Indochina and even part of China.
10. Hull and FDR consider offering a modus vivendi proposal that would have done that, but opposition from Chiang Kai-shek and Churchill lead them not to put it forward.
11. Faced with the prospect of running out of oil in about a year, Tojo and his cabinet opt to seize the Dutch East Indies and its oil, as well as to attack along a wide front from the Philippines to Singapore. To gain an advantage, they begin with a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

Japan was a defensive pact and as such Germany was not under any legal obligation to declare war. Hitler responded, "If we don't stand on the side of Japan, the pact is politically dead. But that is not the main reason. The chief reason is that the United States already is shooting at our ships … their actions have already created a situation of war" (Toland 1970: 243). After hearing this statement, Toland (1970: 243) reports, "Ribbentrop must have been confounded. This was a startling reversal of Hitler's own insistence on keeping America out of the European war

at all costs, and for months the Führer had shown remarkable restraint in view of the U.S. Navy's provocative actions."[13]

Hitler declared war on December 11. This relieved FDR from making the case to Congress for a declaration of war on Germany, which would likely have come forth but not as easily as that against Japan (see Dallek 1979: 312). With Hitler's declaration, he could get Congress to easily recognize that a state of war existed between the US and Germany.

Text Box 11.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

Territory is the key variable that accounts for Japan's actions. The goal of creating a self-sufficient empire leads it to seek territory first in China and then in Indochina. Once the oil embargo is total and negotiations to ease it fail, a territorial solution is found in the decision to conquer the Dutch East Indies. The goal of the West, led by the US and Britain, is not to gain new territory but to prevent Japan from conquering land that does not belong to it. In this sense, territory is also a key variable for the West.

War occurs because economic sanctions work and the Japanese need to resort to war to break their stranglehold. Hard-liners in the US, including most likely FDR, make the oil embargo total. In the Theoretical Analysis we discuss whether Dean Acheson, who implemented the total embargo, acted on his own or under orders from FDR. Hard-liners are prevalent in the US but do not dominate at the beginning of the crisis because FDR is sensitive to isolationist public opinion. Once he sees an avenue to war that the public will accept, however, he becomes an open hard-liner. *Hard-liners* and the *domestic political situation* in the US therefore play a major role because the oil embargo policy helps bring about the Japanese attack. Hard-liners are also a key variable in Japan as the nationalist–military coalition takes over from the international–liberal coalition. Tojo does give accommodationists one more chance to negotiate, partly upon the urgings of the emperor, but generally accommodationists in the US and Japan are no match for the hard-liners. Since Britain is in a total war it has no accommodationists.

The one possibility for avoiding war is the modus vivendi proposal that is never put forth by the US. It could have, at a minimum, delayed the

[13] On these naval actions, see Divine (1970: 44–45), especially with regard to the North Atlantic; see also the earlier Langer and Gleason (1953). See Trachtenberg (2013: 9–21) for an argument and evidence that FDR's actions were meant to provoke war with Germany.

war and might under certain conditions have led to a more serious resolution of the China issue. Ultimately, it fails because FDR wants to go to war in Europe and sees the Pacific as a way of doing that. All this means that the extensive *bargaining* that takes place around the sanctions from the beginning of the crisis does not succeed. Bargaining is an important variable, but has only a moderate impact because of the role of hard-liners in each country, especially the US.

Alliances play a more important role. Although the US is not a formal ally of Britain or China, it has a strong alignment with them, which tightens as the crisis evolves. One of the reasons the modus vivendi proposal is not put forth is that Chiang Kai-shek and Churchill veto it, and they veto it because their only chance of victory is for the US to enter the war. This is especially true for Britain and the war in Europe. In the end, however, they are able to veto the proposal because FDR wants to enter the war. This suggests that the hard-liner variable is more potent than the alliance variable, which is seen as only playing a moderate role and subservient to FDR's wishes.

Axis alliances are also important in the case, not so much in that they directly affect the decision to go to war in 1941, but in that the making of them – from the 1939 Pact of Steel to the 1940 Tripartite Pact – increases tensions and escalates *hostility*, although the latter's impact is mostly a function of the ongoing *rivalry*. In this case as in others, alliances and alignments served to produce conflict rather than promote peace. They also abet and intensify *rivalry*, which is a key variable throughout this crisis and the related war in Europe, as is the *previous history* of the major states, especially since 1914.

The *ongoing war* in Europe is also a key variable in this case. As already noted, the war against Hitler is a main concern of FDR, and the Pacific region took a back seat to Europe. For Japan, the ongoing war plays a crucial role in the formulation of its overall strategy. Japanese decision-makers hope that the war with Hitler might defeat or at least greatly weaken the US, resulting in its willingness to negotiate an end to the war. The ongoing war thereby reduces the effect of the differences in *relevant capabilities* between the US and Japan, which would normally make a weaker state hesitant to attack a much stronger one. In addition, the ongoing war, especially Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, provides a great opportunity for Japan and spawns the debate over the northern and southern strategies.

The ongoing war also limits the impact of *arms races*. All three major states – the US, Britain, and Japan – are acutely aware of each other's military spending. The quantitative data (Sample 1997, 2002) show a Horn (1987) and Diehl (1983) arms race between Japan and Britain

Table 11.1 *Variable summary for Pearl Harbor: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Nature of issue	Major	X	
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Major	X	
Alliances	Moderate	X	
Bargaining strategy	Moderate		X
Rivalry	Moderate	X	
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Relevant capabilities	Minor		X
Arms races	Minor	X	
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	Minor	X	
System structure	None	X	
Proximity	None		
Democracy	None		
Norms	None		

in 1939 and 1940, and a Diehl arms race in 1941–1943. There is a Horn arms race between the US and Japan in 1940 and a Diehl arms race in 1942–1943. There is also a Horn arms race between Japan and China during the Pearl Harbor crisis in 1939–1940 and a Diehl arms race in 1940–1943 (but keep in mind that these two states have been at war since 1937). The case evidence, however, suggests that arms races, although present, do not directly affect the decision-making in the actual crisis; they can, however, be said to indirectly affect rivalry and hostility, and thereby play a minor role. Lastly, the Japanese military perhaps was overconfident and engaged in wishful thinking when it believed that it could pursue both the northern and southern strategies, albeit not simultaneously. Nonetheless, overconfidence played only a minor role in the crisis.

A number of other variables do not play a significant role (see Table 11.1). These include *proximity*, *democracy* and *norms*. *System structure* also does not play a role given that there was no governing system after the demise of the Washington Conference system.

Theoretical Analysis

This section will examine four questions related to why the war occurred. First, it will analyze the controversial question of whether FDR deliberately sought war with Japan as a way of entering the war in Europe, along with the related question of the extent to which FDR knew that

Japan was planning an attack in December. Next, the underlying factors that brought about Japan's entry into the Second World War will be discussed by tracing back its foreign policy to 1894–1895. Third, the question of why a weaker state would initiate war against a stronger state will be treated, with particular attention given to the main political science explanations. The section will end with a brief discussion of the role of alliances in bringing about war.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and America's Entry

Franklin D. Roosevelt's words that December 7 would be "a date which will live in infamy" became a widely accepted view of the war, at least in the US. The events that led up to the war, however, were a bit more complicated. The most controversial questions deal with the role of the United States and FDR in bringing about war. There is little doubt that the total oil embargo put Japan in a position where it would go to war rather than surrender its position in China. What is controversial is the extent to which FDR knew it would provoke war and whether he planned to use this policy as a back door through which to enter the war against Hitler. Related to the latter – and most controversial of all – is the extent to which there was intelligence about the coming attack on Pearl Harbor that was deliberately ignored so that war would occur.

In terms of the embargo and war, there is evidence that FDR felt a total embargo of oil would mean war (J. Richardson 1994: 184, 187). It was for this reason that he opposed the recommendation of a total embargo made by his cabinet ministers, including Stimson and Morgenthau, in July 1940. The same was done a year later in July 1941. He believed that such an embargo would result in an attack on the Dutch East Indies (J. Richardson 1994: 184, 187; Sagan 1994: 67–68). Once the embargo became complete, it is therefore reasonable to assume that FDR knew war would likely follow.

What is controversial is whether FDR explicitly decided on a total embargo as a way to enter the war in Europe. Dean Acheson, assistant secretary of state, was in charge of reviewing each shipment of oil. In August 1941, while FDR and Welles were meeting with Churchill off the coast of Newfoundland to discuss what would become the Atlantic Charter, he refused to permit any of the shipments from going forward, thereby making the embargo complete. James Richardson (1994: 188) discusses this as a possible example of bureaucratic politics undermining the president's policy (see also Sagan 1989: 334–336; Sagan 1994: 69–70). The view that a total embargo was not the deliberate policy of the United States but instead resulted from haphazard bureaucratic actions

not ordered by FDR is made most forcibly by Utley (1985: 151–156; see also the earlier I. Anderson 1975: 158–192).[14] Sagan (1989: 335–336) also has argued that the total embargo was "unintentional." He goes on to speculate that FDR did not loosen the total embargo once he found out about it, because to do so might be regarded as "appeasement."

An alternate explanation is that such an important decision, which was widely thought within the administration as likely to provoke war, including a Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies, could not have been made by such a mid-level official without the knowledge of FDR and Sumner Wells, acting secretary of state. This is the view proffered by Trachtenberg (2006: 94–101). He provides evidence that FDR and Welles knew what was going on and even had plans for a total embargo. He writes that on July 18 the British ambassador reported that the "President personally definitely contemplates a full embargo on all oil products" and that a few days before Welles asserted that the president favored a "complete economic embargo" (Trachtenberg 2006: 99, citing documents from Halifax to Eden in footnotes 58 and 59). He then goes further, relying on Heinrichs (1988: 141–142), saying that Acheson was in fact "taking orders from Welles" (Trachtenberg 2006: 99) and that he and FDR wanted no oil released until they had a chance to discuss the situation with Churchill at the Atlantic Charter conference in August. If this is correct, then it is *not* true, as alleged, that FDR only found out what was going on in September; he knew about it all along.

Heinrichs (1988: 141, 246n68) states that: "On July 29 Acheson informed the Foreign Funds Control Committee that he had discussed the matter with Welles 'who thought that for the next week or so the happiest solution' with respect to Japanese trade would be for the Foreign Funds Control [*sic*] 'to take no action on Japanese applications.'" Rather than acting on his own, this evidence suggests that Acheson was taking an action that his superior knew about and approved, albeit an action he desired. It is also noteworthy that both decision-makers were, in Heinrichs' (1988: 141) words, "loath to permit any shipments of oil which might encourage or permit a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union." As Trachtenberg (2006: 99) relates, Heinrichs, in footnote 68 on page 246, explicitly rejects Utley's (1976: 24–28) and Anderson's (1975: 177–178) argument that Acheson acted on his own in a bureaucratic move that brought about a total embargo and subsequently war. Heinrichs (1988: 247n68) further states that "it seems inconceivable that Welles did not secure the president's approval for this course of action, or inaction." Although this is a supposition on Heinrichs' part,

[14] Sagan (1989: 335n27) discusses this view.

the circumstantial evidence seems to support it. More directly, in the same footnote Heinrichs says, citing Acheson's biographer McLellan (1976: 35–39), that Acheson was particularly unlikely to act on his own because much earlier in his career he had been dismissed for refusing to sign an order, and he had learned to be 'watchful' to consider the president's position and interests."

Lastly, Trachtenberg (2006: 98) says one would expect that if FDR and Hull had found out that Acheson acted on his own, they would have been "furious," yet there is no record of any such reaction. He suggests that this might be because they knew what was going on. Likewise, one might add that there should have been some official reprimand of Acheson, but there is no record of one, nor does Acheson (1969) talk of any such reaction, let alone a reprimand, in his memoirs.

Acheson's (1969) memoirs provide an interesting piece of evidence. It must be kept in mind that these were published in 1969 – long after 1941, by someone who is recounting a very distinguished career as secretary of state at the beginning of the Cold War and who has recently consulted with JFK about the Cuban Missile Crisis. The memoirs do not say or imply that Acheson acted on his own. He does not take credit for the action or brag about it. He makes clear that he, Welles, and Morgenthau were in favor of a tighter embargo and that Hull was more hesitant (Acheson 1969: 23–27). He also states explicitly that "Leadership ultimately came from the President" (Acheson 1969: 23), although this is somewhat ambiguous. In short, he always characterizes his own behavior in terms of interactions with others rather than acting alone. For example, he says, "The first policy to guide our committee came in a late-July talk with Welles." Welles suggested taking no action, which meant that there would be no unfreezing of assets to buy oil. As he recounts, "To our surprise and pleasure these proposals met with unanimous support for the first time within our government," which hardly seems like he had acted on his own (Acheson 1969: 26). On the whole, the "policy" in these crucial days seems to be "to have no official-stated policy" but let events unfold. In Acheson's (1969: 26–27) view, this was in line with Hull's "wish … that nothing be said ascribing any particular policy to the United States government." The memoirs, then, do not provide evidence that Acheson acted on his own or that his actions were hidden from Welles, who was close to the president.

An assessment of these two contending explanations is often made in the context of the larger question of whether FDR wanted war with Japan in order to enter the war against Germany through the back door. In terms of this larger question, the differences between these two explanations are not that important. Even if FDR did not explicitly guide Acheson's

decision, he *embraced it* once he learned of it, and he did that because he wanted war with Japan. On the whole, however, Trachtenberg's account seems more reasonable and is consistent with what we know of FDR as a strong leader who often kept people guessing.[15] Kimball (1991: 7), for example, provides a revealing quote where FDR describes himself as a juggler: "You know I am a juggler, and I never let my right hand know what my left hand does … and furthermore I am perfectly willing to mislead and tell untruths if it will help win the war." Although this is in reference to his wartime leadership, it seems to reveal a general trait and one that might help us understand, if not explain, the events that went on around Acheson. In the end, this is far from direct evidence; nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that at this crucial juncture both FDR and Welles would let something this momentous fall between the cracks. A bureaucratic explanation of how the US entered the war rests on the claim that FDR was not overseeing policy, and that claim does not resonate well with what we know about his leadership.

In terms of the question of whether FDR sought a back door, US intelligence at the time provided information to FDR that some attack might occur after December 1. Toland (1970 :141) reports that the secretary of war Stimson recorded in his diary, with reference to the November 25 war cabinet at the White House, that:

> Roosevelt brought up the event that we were likely to be attacked perhaps next Monday [December 1], for the Japanese are notorious for making an attack without warning, and the question was … [ellipsis in Toland] what should we do. The question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves.

This seems pretty damning. The cabinet actually expected some attack after December 1, which was in fact Tojo's deadline, and they discussed possibly "maneuver[ing]" the Japanese into firing the first shot with minimal "danger to ourselves." Toland (1970: 142n) notes that revisionists, like Charles Beard, have made much of this diary entry, but he maintains that FDR and the rest thought the attack would come on Singapore or Thailand, not the Philippines or Hawaii. Not suspecting an attack on Pearl Harbor or the Philippines, while most likely true, does not obviate the backdoor hypothesis but only its most extreme version – namely, that the president knew of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The quote also fails to mention that the US thought that the oil in the Dutch East Indies was

[15] See also Trachtenberg's (2013) broader argument on how FDR's actions against Hitler and against Japan illuminate the role of deception and contradict the liberal institutionalist claims of Reiter (2012).

the most likely target and that other targets, like Singapore, were military objectives serving that ultimate goal.

Japan's Entry

The origin of American policy in Asia toward Japan can be traced back to the 1931 invasion of Manchuria. The US response was not to threaten military force but to use moral force and refuse, as in the Stimson Doctrine (1932), to recognize the conquest. This was part of the long-standing American stance to pursue an open-door policy with regard to major-state penetration of China, which included opposing any move to conquer territory containing exclusive trade zones, not only by Japan but also by Britain or France.

The origins of Japan's resort to war resulted from a fundamental shift in Japanese domestic politics – away from the internationalist coalition, which saw Japan's future lying in its being a trading state integrated with the victors of the First World War, to a nationalist–military coalition, which saw Japan's future lying in the creation of a self-sufficient empire that would build on achievements going back to the 1894–1895 Sino-Japanese War and the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War. The attempt to create an empire within China and then beyond led to a conflict with the United States and eventually war.

Domestic politics, then, can be seen as a key causal factor in the onset of war, albeit not the only factor. Domestic politics, in terms of the struggle between hard-liners, who were committed to the use of force in foreign policy, and accommodationists, who were willing to work within a liberal global system, was central in determining what foreign policy would be pursued. This struggle lasted several decades and included the military acting on its own, as when the Kwantung army conquered Manchuria, or when political and economic leaders were strategically assassinated between 1930 to 1936 (e.g., Prime Minister Hamaguchi in 1930). Contrary to some realist explanations, domestic politics was critical in setting the stage for war.

The domestic political shift was also important in bringing about the collapse of Japan's participation in the liberal global order. This order consisted of two pillars. The first was the Washington Conference system created in 1922 and associated with the Washington Naval Treaty of the same year. The Japanese navy, which was a key part of the nationalist–militarist coalition, felt that these limits were strictures on their growth that needed to be eliminated. The assassination of Prime Minister Hagmuchi, who had signed that treaty, was an important turning point, albeit due more to domestic political reasons than the Washington Naval

Treaty. When Japan withdrew from the treaty and its limitations, this began the breakdown of the prevailing political order.

The second pillar was the League of Nations. As a victor in the First World War, Japan was a key major-state member, which included membership in the council of ministers. The conquest of Manchuria by the Kwantung army and the creation of the client state of Manchukuo led to Japan's condemnation by the League. This in turn led Japan to withdraw from the League in May 1933. Germany followed shortly thereafter in the fall of 1933. Thus began the League's collapse, culminating in the withdrawal of Italy in 1937.

The collapse of the political order was a key element in the long road to the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, but what is often overlooked, or at least underestimated, is the role of the Great Depression. This major global economic disruption laid bare the limits of the internationalist emphasis on trade in terms of advancing Japan. The consequences of the Great Depression favored those that advocated the creation of a self-sufficient empire as a better strategy for sustaining and enhancing Japan as a major state. The collapse of the prevailing political order and the global political economy shows that systemic effects and domestic political factors interact and feed upon each other. Theoretically, this means that treating domestic and systemic effects as a set of interactions is a better approach to explaining behavior than seeing one as always predominating over the other.

If the shift in Japanese domestic politics was an important factor in the onset of war, it was because the kind of foreign policy the nationalist–militarist coalition sought was one that embodied a grand set of territorial ambitions. Such a foreign policy raised a host of territorial issues that are inherently often associated with war. This is because, on the whole, territorial disputes are more likely to escalate to war than other types of issues. This risk of escalation is especially high when hard-liners dominate within the revisionist state and use force to attain territorial stakes. War is even more likely when the presence of hard-liners is combined with a variety of territorial stakes that require numerous changes to borders. We saw this in Chapter 4 with the Italian Wars of Independence. Here, for Japan, force and conquest of territory led to war in 1931, 1937, and then 1941. Each of these years saw a serious expansion of goals and opponents, eventually culminating in overreach and defeat.

Jack Snyder (1991: ch. 4) has a very interesting analysis along these lines; he goes beyond power considerations to examine domestic political factors. Analyzing the wider phenomenon of imperial overexpansion and comparing Japan to several states, including Germany and Victorian Britain, Snyder argues that the key to explaining Japan's war is to uncover

the factors that prevented Japanese decision-makers from seeing that the imperial expansion would result in overexpansion and provoke a balancing response that would ultimately produce defeat. He argues that the nationalist–militarist strategy was unnecessary, since Japan's economy had turned toward recovery by 1936. More importantly, he argues that even if Japan had set out to conquer all of China and Southeast Asia, there would not have been enough resources to fight a long war (Snyder 1991: 119). Furthermore, he points out there were civilians and members of the navy who knew Japan could not win a long war, but could not stop its onset. In the end, Snyder (1991: 152) sees Japan's decision for war as being produced by a domestic pathology that resulted from late development, the dominance of the military, and logrolling. The key insight is that the domestic political context was an essential causal factor in producing a foreign policy goal that resulted in a set of responses that would produce a war that was not likely to be won.

In conclusion, it can be said that Japan entered the war because of a domestic shift from an internationalist government to one that favored a self-sufficient empire. This put a large set of territorial goals on the agenda that ran afoul of the United States and Britain. The former tried to oppose Japanese expansion through economic sanctions. As the oil embargo became complete and in the context of the ongoing European war, Japanese leaders sought to break the embargo by conquering the Dutch East Indies, which entailed war with the United States and an attack on Pearl Harbor.

An Asymmetric War

A key theoretical question in the political science literature is why a country that was clearly weaker would attack a country that was clearly stronger. Such behavior goes against realist expectations that power superiority should prevent war. Jack Snyder (1991: 112), for instance, reports that a Japanese colonel in an August 1941 fact-finding mission concluded "that the United States commanded twenty times the steel production capacity of Japan, five times its capacity to produce aircraft, and ten times its overall war production potential." Several important analyses address this question from different perspectives.

Bueno de Mesquita (1981) sees asymmetric war initiation as a possible anomaly of his expected utility theory, in which superior capability is a necessary condition of war initiation. He argues that many cases where it seems that a weaker state is initiating a war against a superior foe are in fact not instances of great disparities of power, once the possibility of third-party intervention, especially by allies, is taken into account. T. V.

Paul (1994: ch. 4) examines the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as one of several cases of asymmetric conflicts in this light, but adds domestic politics and strategic calculations to his analysis (Paul 1994: 10). He identifies four factors that encourage Japan to attack, including the total embargo on oil, which pushed Japan into a corner; yet, he sees "the changes in alliance configuration" as the most critical factor, which supports Bueno de Mesquita's (1981) claim. Alliances are critical because they increase capability and thus reduce asymmetric power.

In our reading of the case, Paul places too much emphasis on Japan's alliances. Our disagreement here, however, is one of emphasis. We see alliances more as something that bolstered the decision; they provided some reassurance, but they were far from immediate reasons for the decision to go to war. Two alliances were in question: the Tripartite Pact of 1940 and the five-year extension of the earlier Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1941 (Paul 1994: 76). Despite this extension, on the whole, the alliance bonds with Germany were not so tight that Japan could rely on them to overcome the drastic disparity without any other factors coming into play. Japan had considered the 1936 Anti-Comintern Pact a failure once Hitler made an alliance with Stalin to divide Poland in 1939 without even informing the Japanese. The Tripartite Pact overcame this breach, as did the subsequent invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, but even the latter was done without informing the Japanese (Iriye 1987: 129–130, but also see 133).

The embargo was much more important causally because it pushed Japan into a corner (as noted in Paul 1994: ch. 4), forcing it to either fight or surrender most of its previous gains. Indeed, the embargo can be seen as a kind of necessary condition; without a total embargo Japan would not have attacked the Dutch East Indies and thus not the United States. Equally important, and often overlooked, is the role that the ongoing war and contagion played in Japanese calculations. The ongoing war in Europe not only created an opportunity for Japanese expansion into former colonial areas of occupied countries, but also changed global power distributions so that potential opponents of Japan, like the Soviet Union and the United States, might have to fight a two-front war to oppose Japan. It was the latter consideration, rather than alliances, that made the Japanese think they could overcome the long-term power differential vis-à-vis the United States. The ongoing war reduced the prewar asymmetry, at least in the short run, and helps explain why a weaker state might attack a much stronger one. Tojo and others knew that a long war would be difficult to win and might lead to defeat, given US superior economic power and potential military power. However, they also thought that in the long run many things might happen: Germany

could defeat Britain and the USSR, and/or the US might devote most of their resources to fighting Hitler (Iriye 1987: 174; Taliaferro 2004: 105). These sorts of unpredictable outcomes might make their hope of a negotiated settlement more likely. Fighting now would at least give them the chance of winning and was worth the risk, rather than accepting a settlement that would lead back to the "little Japan."

Taliaferro (2004) uses prospect theory to explain this choice. He argues that Japanese leaders were more accepting of risk because they were not willing to tolerate a loss of power. Our analysis, in contrast, focuses on the loss of territory the Japanese had already conquered and occupied. It is the *territorial* loss that is seen, herein, as key in applying prospect theory. Likewise, Japanese leaders – at least in the negotiations – were willing to give up territorial gains in southern Indochina that they had not yet fully actualized. Both of these positions make sense from the perspective of prospect theory. Nonetheless, it must be said that, from the perspective of a strict cost–benefit analysis, arguing that many things could happen in the long run to prevent the US from attaining its potential was a reasonable stance to take, even if the tenets of prospect theory were not in play. Needless to say, however, risk-acceptant leaders and hard-liners are more prone to such an argument. The work of these three scholars – Bueno de Mesquita, T. V. Paul, and Taliaferro – help us understand why a weaker opponent's decision to attack a seemingly stronger one is not as "irrational" as it appears at first glance.

Could War Have Been Avoided?

In one sense, the US–Japan war of 1941 could have been avoided, especially with regard to the Indochina crisis. In another sense, the larger war of Japan seeking a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere and the US opposing it would have been difficult to avoid. Although such questions involve several counterfactuals, certain things are clear.

First, there were accommodationists in Japan who wanted to avoid war. Among these were Konoye, the emperor, Nomura, and Togo. They were willing to make compromises, such as the withdrawal of troops, that would have met some of the demands of the US. Even Tojo was willing to give up certain parts of China or at least withdraw troops outside a key perimeter – keeping troops in parts of Northern China, Mongolia, etc. (Iriye 1987: 175). He was not, however, willing to give up all of China and return to the "little Japan." That would have conceded too much and given up on the idea of an imperial, self-sufficient empire, which was the major goal of the nationalist–militarist coalition. Nonetheless, Tojo

and others were sufficiently in control that they were willing to rein in the more extreme hard-liners, especially in the military.

The Japanese were willing to make certain territorial concessions in return for oil, but the scope of their bargaining space did not include complete surrender. In this sense, the larger territorial ambition of empire, for which the Japanese fought and that we know as the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, was not avoidable. The vastness of the territory involved and the sheer number of borders that had to be changed meant that these goals could only be achieved through the use of force. Nonetheless, Tojo and other leaders committed to the creation of an empire were willing to accept less if it meant not getting involved in a total war with the United States. From the Japanese side, war was avoidable if a bargain could be struck. Even the attack on Pearl Harbor was based on the premise that Japan could only win if the war became a limited war with a negotiated solution (see Paul 1994: 69).

The more difficult questions arise on the American side. Was FDR willing to compromise, and what made him willing to go to war? The United States' modus vivendi proposal that was never delivered provides some insight here. The US was willing to accept a compromise limited to Indochina and hold in abeyance the more difficult solution on China. If this proposal had been adopted, even as a way to gain time, it would have avoided war in the short run and maybe led to a more flexible position about Japan's role in China. This, however, it must be emphasized, was never FDR's position. For him, the proposal was always about gaining time to better prepare for the eventual war, which meant, in part, better preparing the American people for accepting a war.

One thing that is clear from the theoretical analysis is that FDR's desire to go to war with Germany and his decisions regarding Japan were influenced by the ongoing war in Europe. If there had been no war in Europe and no Hitler, would FDR have been more willing to avoid war in Asia? Probably so, because such a war would have had even less domestic support than entering the war in Europe. In addition, given FDR's anglophile predilection and the prevailing belief that England had to be defended to maintain a balance of power, fighting a war against only Japan would have likely been seen as *not* a vital American interest compared to Europe. It is conceivable then, speaking counterfactually, that FDR would have been open to negotiating a solution, or at least not going beyond moral condemnation coupled with partial economic sanctions (i.e., not a complete oil embargo). All of this is to say that contagion played an important role in the US and Japan going to war with each other. A key causal factor in this case was the opportunity that the ongoing war provided for "more" war. The ongoing war in Europe provided an opportunity for Japan to

expand toward the south and the north, and it provided FDR with an opportunity to enter the war against Hitler through the back door.

In conclusion, in and of itself, the US–Japan war would have been difficult to avoid because it involved large territorial shifts that could only be brought about through a resort to war. Nonetheless, the pie was so large that some sort of bargain might have been reached if Asian territory was all that was on the table. The ongoing war in Europe, however, affected the strategic decisions of both sides.

In part, this means that total wars are more difficult to avoid than limited wars, but this begs the question of why total wars cannot remain limited. We know from statistical work on crisis escalation and crisis management that as more issues become linked it is more difficult to avoid crisis escalation to war (Gochman and Maoz 1984; James and Wilkenfeld 1984; Petersen et al. 2004). Total war links a great many issues together. This was true in the ambition to create a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, and it was true in FDR's mind. This helps tell us why it was difficult to avoid this war.[16]

The Role of Alliances

The last major theoretical question that needs to be addressed is the role of alliances. Two things are clear about alliances in this case. First, there existed a crucial moment when weaker allies pushed the stronger ally into the war by vetoing a peace proposal it was considering. Second, as with the Second World War in Europe, the world war in Asia also demonstrates the failure of alliances to deter war.

The modus vivendi proposal considered by the Roosevelt administration in the summer of 1941 would have been a breakthrough in the negotiations that would have eased the oil embargo and perhaps avoided war in the long run. Since this proposal was consistent with Togo's plan B and the emperor's wishes, it would have likely been accepted. If so, it would have enhanced the influence of accommodationists in Japan. It was not put forward, however, because Chiang Kai-shek and Churchill vetoed it. The latter's opposition, in particular, was critical. What is important theoretically about Churchill's opposition is that his only hope of winning the war was to get the US to enter it. Alone, Britain could not hope to win and, as it was, the previous cabinet had seriously considered negotiating an end to war on Hitler's terms in May 1940 (see Lukas 1999). Here, we see not so much that the alliance with the stronger state emboldens

[16] The same reasoning holds for the Second World War in Europe and for the Italian Wars of Independence.

the weaker state, as in the Crimean War, but that the weaker state, albeit a major state (i.e., Britain), drags its stronger ally into an ongoing war.

While the United States' not going forward with a peace proposal provides an important insight, it is on the whole a hidden event. What is more central to the events that unfolded in Asia from 1931 onward is that the alliance system did not prevent war. This was true both for the Axis states and the Western states. For Japan, as well as Nazi Germany, the main alliances were the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 and the Tripartite Pact in 1940, both of which were meant to intimidate and deter the West, especially the United States, from going to war. The US reaction to each of these was hostility and a resort to economic sanctions. Ultimately, these alliances did not prevent FDR from considering war. At the same time, it is important to note that FDR did not go to war because of the alliances per se, but rather because of the expansionist efforts of Japan's leaders to create a new territorial empire. Nonetheless, the Japanese attempt to balance power did not work to prevent a war against it. Instead, its actions lead to a tightening of the ABCD coalition.

Likewise, for the Western side two things are worth noting in terms of alliance behavior. The first is that no formal alliance could be constructed among the countries that were the natural opponents of Japan – Britain, France, the USSR, and the US. Hitler had foiled the obvious balance in 1939 by drawing away the USSR, but the opposition of Poland to any inclusion of the Russians, as well as internal opposition in Britain, shows how difficult it is to create balancing coalitions – a fact that is more consistent with Morgenthau's (1960: 167, especially n1) position that the balance of power is a policy created by leaders, rather than Waltz's (1979) position that balancing is an automatic response generated by system structure. After the surrender of France, a strong coalition between England and the United States was foiled by domestic isolationist opinion in the US, despite various attempts by FDR – from the quarantine speech (1937) to the destroyer deal (1940) and lend–lease (1941) – to support the British. The personal relationship between FDR and Churchill and their mutual understanding of their respective countries' national interests led the two to come together, as realists would expect. Nonetheless, no formal alliance emerged. The closest Britain and the US came to an alliance was the Atlantic Charter, but this was after the European war started. The Atlantic Charter can be seen as a formal statement of what has been called a "common-law alliance" between Britain and the United States (Sherwood 1948: 270). In Asia, this common law alliance was the center of the ABCD coalition.

In the end, in Asia there was no dramatic deterrence failure, as there was with Poland in1939. This was not, however, because Japan thought

that the US and Britain were not acting in concert and would not go to war; rather, it was because such a coalition and the likelihood of war could not deter them from expanding. The embargo pushed Japan to war. The alliance of the West therefore did not bring about the attack on Pearl Harbor; the embargo did. But the embargo was an allied embargo with Britain and the Dutch on board to make it complete. Ultimately, the alignment intensified threat, increased hostility, and failed to deter. The Western alliance, such as it was, did not make for peace by balancing power. Alliances in Asia, although they had nuanced effects, resulted in vectors that increased the likelihood of war.

Lessons of Pearl Harbor

1. The first lesson of this case is that **if coercion works, it may work too well and lead to war**. Coercion can backfire and play into the hands of hard-liners. The US decision to embargo oil as a way to coerce Japan worked well – so well, in fact, that Japan was faced with running out of oil in about a year. This posed a choice of agreeing to American demands or seizing a nearby source of oil by force – namely, the Dutch East Indies – and going to war. Hard-liners recommended the latter and their advice was difficult to ignore in light of the failure of accommodationists to negotiate an acceptable agreement. The lesson here is that even if economic coercion works it may not lead to capitulation, but rather to the use of force to break the sanctions.

This is an important lesson to those who rely on economic sanctions to change the foreign policy of states. Nonetheless, at the same time this case shows that effective sanctions can lead to negotiations, but these must not drive such a hard bargain that the other side prefers war to get out of its position of vulnerability. In this case, Tojo was willing to compromise his position on Indochina, but not on the larger issue of the war with China. The larger the change in foreign policy demanded by the coercing state, the less likely negotiations will succeed.

2. This case also shows **how easy it is for hard-liners, especially the president, to manipulate events that result in the nation going to war**.[17] Although FDR wanted to go to war against Hitler, he was unable to do so because of significant domestic opposition. Even though he engaged in an "undeclared" naval war against Nazi Germany in the Atlantic, Hitler resisted declaring war on the US. It is still a matter of

[17] This case raises the question of the extent to which leaders in a democracy resort to deception to deal with the public (see the discussion in Schuessler 2010, 2015; Reiter 2012, 2013; and Trachtenberg 2013).

debate whether FDR's policy and embargo against Japan was motivated by his desire to go to war in Europe. Nevertheless, the complete and total embargo implemented by Acheson resulted in the attack on Pearl Harbor, which made entry into the war in Europe politically possible with majority support. The extent to which an administration can tighten an embargo permits a leader to manipulate the likelihood of war. In the end, the attack on Pearl Harbor provided FDR with a back door to enter the war in Europe.[18] This sort of manipulation was demonstrated earlier with Bismarck's editing of the Ems telegram. The Pearl Harbor case shows that such manipulations are not confined to nondemocratic leaders. It should also be noted that the isolationist opposition to war in Congress and among the public is consistent with the democratic institutionalist explanation of peace, unlike some of our other cases (namely the Crimean and the Franco-Prussian wars)

3. **Grand territorial ambitions, like Japan's Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere or Hitler's *Lebensraum*, make it difficult to avoid war**. This is because these ambitions entail a large number of territorial shifts, which makes it challenging to negotiate peaceful change. As it is, a single border change is difficult to negotiate; a large number of border changes increases the probability that some actor will resist – bringing about war and also increasing the likelihood that allies will be brought in. As the revisionist state expands, more are threatened and are likely to intervene. Thus, even though some states may capitulate because they are too weak, like Vichy France in Indochina, eventually the revisionist state will encounter countries that will not capitulate, and war will ensue.

This case shows that the heart of imperial overreach is territorial ambition. An important insight of Jack Snyder (1991) is that certain foreign policy goals are likely to lead to a set of responses that may eventually produce a war that is difficult to win. **Foresight is the ability to think down the decision tree and anticipate whether such a war will come about**. Some Japanese leaders were able to see that a war against an economically stronger state could lead to defeat, but they were willing to chance that the military uncertainty both in Asia and, especially, in Europe might permit them to fight and win a limited war. **Their risk propensity interacted with the uncertainty created by the spread of the war (i.e., contagion) and led them to discount their own foresight and take a chance**. All of this, of course, is a function of the greater propensity of territorial disputes to escalate to war.

[18] Although we generally eschew normative analysis in our cases, we do want to note that we think FDR was acting in the interest of the US, especially from a realist perspective.

4. **Imperial wars are special kinds of wars different from the typical dyadic wars over borders**. To avoid these wars one needs to ask why states seek territorial gains well beyond their borders. Are there other ways of getting whatever it is they think territory will give them, such as resources, wealth, etc.? Before and after the Second Word War, Japan satisfied its needs by trading. Part of the democratic peace is based on creating a global economy that benefits major states and makes it unnecessary to gain wealth through war. International relations is not always a zero-sum game, in other words; it can be a cooperative game. Long-term planning and vision are key to avoiding wars of this type.

Crisis management can work, but it is easier for status-quo states to avoid revisionist desires in the first place by bringing those states into the global governing system (and its rewards). Japan's story is one of a major state that left the system, went to war, was badly defeated, and came back into the system to become a wealthy trading state again.

5. The final lesson is important for international relations theory. **Somewhat unexpectedly, large systemic wars among major states typically do not result in the long-term defeat of those that lose the war, even if they lose badly**. As Organski and Kugler (1977) demonstrated statistically for the twentieth century, major states that are defeated tend to come back to their prewar (economic) power after about twenty years. They label this phenomenon the "phoenix factor." Japan certainly experienced such a phenomenon after the Second World War, as did Germany; both were able to return to a high economic status. Japan, before the recent rise of China, was clearly the most powerful nation in Asia, and many felt during the 1980s that it would catch up with the US (but see Russett 1985). Germany became the most economically powerful state in Europe, surpassing both Britain and France. Nazi Germany had also risen dramatically after its defeat in the First World War.

This means that it is difficult to keep major states down in the long run – something shown by Russia in the Crimean War, even though that was a limited war. From a realist perspective, this makes one wonder about the point of the world wars if they could not alter the basic economic trends that make for power. As Siverson (1980) points out with regard to the Second World War, however, although the underlying economic trends were not affected, war had a great political impact on the nature of the system. The defeat of Germany and Japan kept each militarily weak and, more importantly, destroyed their political ideology as a basis of global rule. In addition, it gave their populations pacific attitudes. Nonetheless, each could become nuclear superpowers in short order if they chose.

The two world wars were watershed events in international history. The war with Japan ended with the advent of the nuclear era, which many argue fundamentally changed the character of international interactions and crisis diplomacy. The extent to which it did is the subject of Chapters 12 and 13.

6. Finally, it is important to reiterate that Pearl Harbor is another illustration of **how alliances can promote war, in this instance by vetoing a peace proposal**. While hardly a major factor in bringing about the war, when Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek essentially opposed the modus vivendi proposal being considered by FDR, they removed the last chance to prevent the war by some peaceful accommodation, if only a temporary one.

Part IV

The Nuclear Era

The Second World War ended with the dropping of two atomic bombs, and with that the nuclear era was initiated. The rapid increase in the destructive capability of nuclear weapons soon led to the realization that nuclear war was unwinnable because it would lead to mutual assured destruction – MAD. This very fact, however, became the part and parcel of diplomacy, which now used the *threat* of nuclear war as key to attempts at nuclear coercion where one rival tried to put its opponent in a corner where it had to either go to nuclear war or surrender. This part looks at the two crises where the superpowers came closest to nuclear war – Berlin (Chapter 12) and Cuba (Chapter 13) – to see how war was avoided, but also how war could have come about. To these chapters, two are added dealing with crises that did not come close to nuclear war: the Cod "War" of 1971–1973 (Chapter 14) – a maritime dispute settled peacefully, as expected – and the recent local wars centered on Ukraine (Chapter 15).

12 The Berlin Crises

Today Berlin is the capital of a unified Germany, but at the end of the Second World War, by agreement reached at the Potsdam Conference (August 1945), Germany was occupied by the four victors, with each having its troops in a distinct sector. Berlin was similarly occupied and divided. But the city itself lay about one hundred miles deep within the Soviet zone. The absence of any peace treaty ending the war with Nazi Germany made the agreement at Potsdam and the earlier wartime conference at Yalta in February 1945 between FDR, Stalin, and Churchill serve as a de facto interim settlement at the beginning of the Cold War. Attempts to change the situation by unilateral action led to two crises – the 1948 Berlin blockade and the 1958–1961 Berlin crisis. This chapter will review both crises, but focus on the latter.

THE BERLIN BLOCKADE

Background

The Second World War in Europe ended with the United States (US) and Britain, along with the Free French forces of de Gaulle, entering Germany from the west and the USSR attacking from the east. On May 7, 1945, German army leaders in the west surrendered formally to Western forces at Reims.

Many see the Cold War starting in 1947 with the crises over Turkey and Greece. In February 1948, the world was stunned by the communist coup in Czechoslovakia. On June 7, just before the Berlin blockade, President Benes, who had been restored to power with the defeat of the Nazis, resigned. In 1948, there were also other important events transpiring. In Yugoslavia, a dispute between Stalin and Tito emerged. In Poland, the communists tightened their grip. In Italy, the 1948 elections gave the Soviet Union a major opportunity since the Communist Party was expected to have a strong showing and perhaps even win – though covert intervention in the election by the US prevented this outcome.

Thus, what needs to be kept in mind is that in early 1948 many things were occurring throughout war-torn Europe, and both Stalin and Truman had many different issues they were confronting.

Historical Events

This crisis began on June 24, 1948, when Stalin blockaded access to West Berlin. This was in response to the US and British attempt to economically revive Germany through a unification of their respective zones (the creation of Bizonia on February 6). The Soviets feared these moves, taken without Soviet agreement, might lead to the creation of a separate West Germany. Meanwhile, on March 17, Britain, France, and the Benelux nations signed a fifty-year treaty of mutual assistance. On March 20, Marshal Sokolovsky, the Soviet military governor, walked out of the Allied Control Council, accusing the West of undermining the four-party rule over Germany. A little over a week later Stalin introduced new restrictions on the movement of goods and miliary personnel from the Western zones to West Berlin. The move by the Western countries to unify their currencies on June 20 and the extension of this reform to West Berlin on June 23, led to the full blockade on June 24 (Truman 1955: 122).[1]

Several options existed for how to respond to the blockade. General Lucius Clay, the American military governor of Germany, took the most hard-line approach. In April, when Stalin first announced his restrictions, Clay advocated pushing an armed truck convoy through a Soviet checkpoint before the restrictions were imposed (J. Richardson 1994: 194). His rationale was: "After Berlin will come Western Germany … If we mean … to hold Europe against communism, we must not budge." Despite this foreshadowing of the containment policy, Clay's hard-line option was rejected.

General Bradley took a different line and suggested that since the US did not want to fight a war, it should withdraw because its position was militarily untenable (J. Richardson 1994: 194). On June 28, Truman met with his advisors and cut short any discussion of this option, saying that "we were going to stay, period" (J. Richardson 1994: 196). Truman's decision was consistent with British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin's earlier announcement that Britain would hold firm and resist.

[1] It should be noted that throughout this process the French were hesitant to follow the American and British lead, as illustrated by the creation of Bizonia (J. Richardson 1994: 193, 195).

How the Americans and the British were to resist without going to war was still an open question. With the blockade now fully in place, it was suggested to Clay on June 25 that an airlift be initiated, which he ordered and Truman approved the next day. Clay had General Curtis LeMay at the air force headquarters in Wiesbaden implement it (George and Smoke 1974: 115). At the time, the airlift was seen as a move to buy time until a more complete response could be decided (see J. Richardson 1994: 197, 200). Instead, the airlift worked beyond their wildest dreams. At the height of the airlift, with planes landing every four minutes (Gibler 2018: 937), as many goods were being flown into Berlin as had come through by rail and road before the blockade. It was not clear, however, if Stalin would block the air corridors.

In July, a few weeks after the airlift was initiated, the US, upon Bevin's suggestion, proclaimed that two groups of B-29 bombers would be sent to Britain. These planes were capable of carrying nuclear weapons and were seemingly intended to demonstrate US resolve as well as to spur negotiations, which were not going very well. It is now known that these particular planes did not carry nuclear weapons; how much effect they had on Stalin is an open question that will be addressed in the Theoretical Analysis section.

In July, Clay again proposed his armed convey solution. George Marshall, secretary of state, opposed the proposal. Clay admitted that forcing through an armed convey incurred a greater risk of escalation than continuing the airlift. Truman overruled others in the air force, like General Vandenberg, who opposed an airlift (because it might affect their ability to wage war), at the July 22 National Security Council (NSC) meeting (Truman 1955: 125).[2] However, the expansion of the airlift o include an increase in the number of planes did not escape further criticism. In October, the Joint Chiefs of Staff declared that the airlift was affecting the military's ability to defend the US in case of war and that the US should withdraw from Berlin (the original Bradley proposal). But another meeting of the NSC, on October 21 and with Truman at the helm, reaffirmed and further expanded the airlift strategy. Truman was up for election in November and not expected to win. Once he won, he dug in his heels. The US now proposed that the deutschmark be the sole currency in all the Western sectors.

The turning point came on January 31, 1949, when Stalin, in response to a question on what it would take to lift the blockade, mentioned the lifting of Western trade restrictions and a meeting of the foreign

[2] Historical details regarding the events of June and July are drawn from James Richardson (1994: 194–199).

Text Box 12.1 Nutshell Summary: Berlin Blockade

1. On February 6, 1948, the US and Britain create Bizonia in an effort to revive Germany's economy. Stalin fears this move may lead to the creation of a separate West Germany.
2. On March 17, Britain, France and the Benelux nations sign a fifty-year mutual assistance treaty.
3. Three days later, Marshal Sokolovsky, the Soviet military governor, accuses the West of undermining the four-power rule of Germany and walks out of the Allied Control Council.
4. A little over a week later, Stalin introduces new restrictions on the movement of goods and military personnel to West Berlin from the Western zones.
5. On June 20–23, the Western countries reform and unify the currencies in their respective zones and in West Berlin.
6. Stalin responds with a full blockade on June 24, which begins the crisis.
7. The US rejects suggestions to run through the blockade with armored force. Instead, it implements an airlift to buy time.
8. The airlift works beyond their wildest dreams.
9. As a result, Stalin lifts the blockade in May 1949.

ministers, but *not* the currency issue (J. Richardson 1994: 201). The US reached out in February and secret negotiations began. In return for a meeting of foreign ministers, Stalin agreed to lift the blockade, which he did on May 12. There was thus a return to the status quo ante. Stalin ended what was in effect a trade embargo against Russia, which was significant, but got no change in Western policy on the currency issue or the movement toward West German integration. Ultimately, his blockade had negative consequences in that it accelerated the unification of Western Germany and, in 1949, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Text Box 12.1 summarizes the major events in the Berlin blockade crisis.

Theoretical Analysis

The main theoretical questions raised by the Berlin blockade are:[3] (i) Why was war avoided and, in particular, what role did nuclear weapons

[3] Since our focus is on the Berlin 1961 crisis, we will not give a detailed report of the key variables in the blockade crisis. However, we note that *previous history* (i.e., the Second World War) and *rivalry* are the key major variables bringing about the crisis and that *bargaining strategy* is the major key variable pushing it toward de-escalation, with the *nature*

play? Is this a case of successful nuclear deterrence? (ii) Could war have occurred, and if so, how? (iii) How planned out and strategic was the decision-making about devising a response to the blockade? (iv) Did coercion work?

A key question in the Berlin cases and the Cuban Missile Crisis is whether the presence of nuclear weapons played a major role in preventing the crisis from escalating to war. Of the crises in question, the Berlin blockade is the only one that occurs in the presence of America's atomic monopoly, since the USSR does not get an atomic bomb until 1949. This monopoly, however, did not deter Stalin from *initiating* the blockade (George and Smoke 1974: 135) or taking any of his other actions in the pre-Korean War period. A similar conclusion can be made regarding Khrushchev in the second Berlin crisis and in Cuba. This was a persistent pattern throughout the Cold War (see George and Smoke 1974: 136). Statistically, it has been found that the presence of nuclear weapons on both sides actually seems to increase the probability that a crisis occurs (Asal and Beardsley 2007; Rauchhaus 2009; Geller 2012: 148–149; but see also Bell and Miller 2015). The reason for this is explained by Glenn Snyder's (1965) stability–instability paradox. Actors assume that the mutual assured destruction (MAD) that nuclear weapons introduce when both sides possess such weapons makes all-out war unlikely. Therefore, there is less risk that a crisis will escalate to war, since MAD makes war unwinnable. This in turn makes it probable that crises can be initiated with less risk of war. As a result, more crises can be expected. While this helps to explain Khrushchev's initiation of multiple crises, it is unlikely that the stability–instability paradox captures Stalin's thinking, since 1948 was early in the nuclear era and there was no MAD yet. It is clear, however, that the demonstration of atomic power at Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not intimidate him in his actions in Berlin and Eastern Europe.

While nuclear weapons may not deter the initiation of crises or militarized interstate disputes (MIDs), it is widely argued that their destructive potential should deter an opponent from escalating a crisis or dispute to war. If true, such an effect should be most clearly evident when one side has a monopoly over nuclear weapons. Did America's monopoly prevent Stalin from escalating the Berlin blockade crisis to the point of war?

The only evidence we have that such an effect might have occurred is when the US deployed B-29 bombers to Britain a few weeks after the

of the issue having a moderate impact in de-escalation. *Proximity* and *hostility* have a moderate impact in escalating the crisis and *domestic politics* and *alliances* a minor impact (see Table 16.2).

start of the crisis. A number of these planes were eventually sent. Some B-29s were capable of carrying atomic bombs, but at the time the US did not state whether the specific planes it deployed were nuclear-capable. It turns out that they were not, for as Truman said, "This is no time to be juggling an atomic bomb around" (Altman 2017: 85–86). Altman (2017) further argues that the deployment did not seem to have any effect, since there was no change in Soviet behavior; nor did the Allies expect that the B-29 deployment would change Stalin's behavior. Truman also did not make any explicit threats regarding the deployment (Gaddis 1997: 91), as deterrence theory requires, albeit it should be noted this was before any nuclear deterrence doctrine was fully developed in the US. However, the crisis went on for another ten months, with the Soviets not changing their behavior or reacting to the deployment of the B-29s.

What *did* prevent war? Both sides early on were cautious in their moves. Truman stopped Clay from taking an armed convey through a Soviet checkpoint, and Stalin did not blockade the air corridors after the West launched the airlift. In an article unrelated to this crisis, Mueller (1988) argues that the real deterrent against war in the Cold War was not nuclear weapons but rather the experience and devasting destruction of the world wars. The experience of the Second World War, in particular, was close to the minds of both Stalin and Truman in 1948, and neither country was prepared, let alone wanted, to risk another Continental war in Europe. James Richardson (1994: 202) notes that both sides had an "extreme aversion to war." This factor made each leader cautious, thereby preventing war.

This analysis raises the question of how war might have occurred. The most likely path was that one side would take an action that would lead the other to respond and the situation might spin out of control. The risk of this happening led Truman to restrain Clay. Once the airlift was in place, the most likely way in which things might have escalated to war would have been if Stalin deliberately shot down transport plans and the West responded with armed escorts. Even before the full blockade, a British transport had been buzzed by a Soviet fighter and crashed on April 5 (J. Richardson 1994: 194). Indeed, as General Vandenberg, who opposed the airlift, pointed out, so many transports were required that incidents might occur (Truman 1955: 125). These incidents never materialized and Stalin refrained from any further buzzing (J. Richardson 1994: 194).

A third theoretical question deals with how the West responded to the blockade once it was initiated. It is striking how little planned out, strategic, and coordinated the decision-making was. Once the blockade was in place, Western decision-making was a far cry from the rational

decision-making model that requires the setting of goals and the rigorous evaluation of policy options by ranking means to choose the most efficient means to attain those goals. Rather, the airlift was seen as a temporary expedient to buy time to find a better solution, even though no clear solution seems to have been on the horizon. Compounding this problem was the fact that different decision-makers within the US governing circle favored different options, and there were disagreements among the Allies, especially with France. The different positions within a country and then within an alliance, and the difficulties associated with them, underline the fact that the rational decision-making model is intended for a unitary actor, which countries and coalitions are not.

Rather than a well-coordinated plan that was strategic, Western decision-making was mainly *improvised* and in reaction to the immediate situation and the unfolding interactions. Nonetheless, the stakes involved were seen as greater than just Berlin or even Germany; they were part of an overall struggle for Europe (Truman 1955: 123; George and Smoke 1974: 116; Snyder and Diesing 1977: 560). This perception helped focus reaction and provided greater coherence. That coherence was further enhanced by a US commitment to be prudent and to avoid actions that were likely to increase the risk of war. Indeed, Truman was in charge and exercised control over the generals below him who were governing Germany – namely, Clay and Bradley. All those involved, however, never knew in advance what would work, and went with what did. Ultimately, the success of the airlift was unexpected and ended the immediate problem. Then they began to turn the screws on Stalin.

Despite the release of new material on Soviet foreign policy since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Zubok 2007: xxiii), we still are not privy to Stalin's precise thinking during the Berlin blockade crisis. In particular, the ranking of his goals is unclear; it probably existed only in his own mind because they seem to be fluid. The blockade was in retaliation for the currency reform plan of the West, which Stalin perceived to be a prelude to unifying the Western zones. Snyder and Diesing (1977: 113) see Stalin's maximum goal as preventing the unification of the Western zones, what he saw as a violation of the Potsdam agreement. If he could not obtain that, his minimum goal was to absorb West Berlin into the Soviet zone, but he seemed to be willing to trade absorbing Berlin to gain something on the currency issue.[4] Beyond that, his strategy and ultimate goals seem ambiguous or open to the unfolding of events. In the end, the

[4] For a game-theoretic analysis of how the goals might be related to various bargaining moves, see Snyder and Diesing (1977: 114).

airlift made Stalin cave in, and the larger questions became moot as the status quo ante was restored.

This raises the question of whether coercion worked. For Stalin it clearly did not. The blockade seemed like it would work – that is, to put the West in a position where it would have to at least negotiate. The airlift, however, overcame the blockade, placing Stalin at a disadvantage. Even worse, the blockade was backfiring; it was leading to talk of a formal military alliance among all the Western states, which would eventually become NATO in 1949. Recognizing that and without taking any further measures (that most likely would have increased the risk of war), Stalin lifted the blockade. In that sense, the airlift was a form of coercion that worked. The successful coercion, however, was limited. The larger question of Germany and a peace settlement that would end the Second World War remained unresolved and festered, only to be raised again by Khrushchev in a situation of nuclear parity.

Lessons of the Berlin Blockade

1. The first lesson of this case has to do with coercion. **Coercion is a risky strategy and it is hard to predict its effects even when it works**. Stalin used coercion and it failed. The United States and the United Kingdom used the airlift to break the blockade, but they did not think it would be more than a stopgap measure. Instead, it worked better than anyone anticipated, and then they used it to turn the screws on Stalin. **This shows that coercion correctly applied can work**. **However, from this and Stalin's failure we also learn that the effects of coercion often turn out differently from what was planned**. This makes it a risky strategy in that its outcome can be uncertain.

2. A second lesson has to do with why the airlift and coercion worked against Stalin. Clausewitz ([1832] 1982: bk. I, ch. 1) gives us the basic insight. The objective of *force* and *war* is "to compel our opponent to fulfill our will." To do that "we must place him in a situation which is more oppressive to him than the sacrifice which we demand." The Berlin blockade is theoretically interesting because we can see how this logic works in a specific case. Stalin initiates the blockade to compel the West to stop currency reform and political/economic moves to integrate their zones; he wants to place them in a situation that they find oppressive – namely, a severe restriction on the goods flowing into Berlin, which the Allies have a right to send. The West then counters with an airlift that places Stalin in a situation he finds oppressive.

But how did he find this situation oppressive? It seems that Stalin did not like some of the negative political effects that the blockade

and airlift were producing in Western Europe. France, in particular was drawing closer to Britain and the US, which some thought would eventually lead to the formation of NATO. In addition, the measures were hurting trade. This may have been an important factor. Since the blockade was not working and was imposing harsh economic effects on the Soviet side, something else needed to be done. The only option seemed to be to escalate in a way that would disrupt the airlift, but Stalin did not want to move in that direction since he saw it as greatly increasing the risk of war. In these ways we can see that **the Berlin blockade crisis supports Clausewitz's insight as to how and why coercion can work**.

3. Both sides could have broken their straightjackets by escalating the use of force, maybe even going to war. Why did they refrain from escalation? Both Stalin and Truman wanted to avoid another world war. **The key lesson of this crisis is that the experience of the world war made each leader cautious and committed to avoiding war**.

The Second World War had had a devastating impact on Europe. In the Soviet Union alone – between twenty and twenty-four million people were killed. The Soviet Union was already occupying a large area in Eastern Europe, where problems of food scarcity and the collapse of the economy were rampant. The US also had to deal with food scarcity problems in the German Western zone, France, Italy, even Britain. Further, the US had been under domestic pressure to bring its troops home and had done so, reducing its wartime strength. Neither Truman nor Stalin wanted a World War III. Nor is it clear that the stakes involved in this crisis were worth such a risk. Both sides wanted to keep the risk of war low, and in fact they both kept escalation to a low level. Both avoided provocative moves.

John Mueller (1988) goes much further, claiming that the experience of world war, starting with 1914–1918, produced an aversion to war among both the public and the elite. Prior to the First World War, going to war was seen in a positive light. It was something honorable and embodied such values as courage and sacrifice to a larger goal. Afterward, war was seen as a horrible waste – a carnage created by technology, which accomplished little and took the lives of the flower of Europe's youth. War was now treated in literature and by intellectuals as something unjust and immoral. Given this strong underlying aversion to war, and specifically to world war, it could be expected that Stalin and Truman would avoid war.

4. Does this mean that nuclear weapons and deterrence did not play a major role in preventing war in this crisis ? A key question that needs to be addressed by this case is, **What role did atomic weapons**

and deterrence play in the avoidance of war, especially in light of the impact of the experience of the preceding world war? Some nuclear deterrence theorists raise this question (George and Smoke 1974: ch. 5), and we selected the Berlin cases and the Cuban Missile Crisis to see what, if any, role nuclear weapons played in crisis bargaining.

The argument that nuclear weapons did in fact play a role in this crisis is somewhat deductive. The US had a monopoly on atomic weapons in 1948. In 1949 that monopoly would be enhanced with the explosion of a hydrogen bomb. Stalin would not get anything like the latter until 1953. Two points need to be made upfront. First, Truman did not make any explicit threat regarding the use of atomic weapons. In fact, the administration had dismissed the earlier (April) suggestion by Churchill that Stalin be given the choice of "abandoning Berlin and East Germany, or having his cities razed" (Gaddis 1997: 91). Second, to the extent that Stalin may have been concerned about US possession of atomic weapons, this clearly did not deter him from initiating the Berlin blockade crisis in the first place. Nor did it prevent the initiation of the host of crises that occurred throughout 1947–1948 from Turkey through the Berlin blockade.

If Stalin was not deterred from initiating a crisis, did it prevent him from escalating to war out of fear that atomic weapons would be employed and he would lose the subsequent war? The only evidence given for this inference is the deployment of B-29 bombers that were capable of carrying an atomic bomb. This deployment is seen by nuclear deterrence theorists as a signal that Stalin picked up and that affected his bargaining, making him end the crisis.[5] From the logic of deterrence theory, this inference makes sense. The question is, Did it actually happen? And if it did, was it the primary motive for Stalin's lifting of the blockade? Suffice it to say that none of the things that we would expect to have happened, in terms of nuclear posturing and going to the brink of war, happened in 1948.

In Berlin 1961, nuclear weapons and deterrence were to play a role, but nothing like what occurred in 1948. In the end, we simply do not see this explanation as reasonable as the argument that the experience of world war made the two sides cautious. **The 1948 Berlin blockade cannot be taken as a case in which nuclear deterrence worked, which is a major lesson of this crisis**.

[5] See, for instance, Shlaim (1983: 229–240), cited by James Richardson (1994: 400n58).

BERLIN 1961

Background

About a year after the blockade was lifted the Korean War broke out, leading to an intensification of the Cold War. When North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, Truman thought that Stalin was behind it and that the invasion was a prelude to an attack in Europe. Neither turned out to be true, although the former was not known until much later in the Cold War (Zubok 2007: 78–80). After Stalin died on March 5, 1953, there was a period of collective leadership with Khrushchev as party secretary, Malenkov as head of state, and Molotov as foreign minister. In 1955 relations thawed; the USSR, US, France, and Britain signed a peace treaty that both ended their occupation of and neutralized Austria. No similar development took place with Germany, however. By 1956 Nikiti Khrushchev emerged as the new leader.

At the end of the year Khrushchev faced two simultaneous foreign policy crises – the revolt in Hungary from October 23 to November 11, 1956, and the Suez Canal War from October 29 to November 7, 1956. The Soviets crushed the Hungarian revolt using upward of 200,000 troops (Sarkees and Wayman 2010: 151). Less than a week after street fighting in Budapest, Britain, France, and Israel invaded Egypt, with the former two responding to Nassar's nationalization of the Suez Canal. Khrushchev condemned the invasion, threatening to rain rockets on the European invaders. Eisenhower also criticized the invasion and threatened economic reprisals. All three invaders withdrew, giving Nassar a triumph.

Both these crises were victories for Khrushchev, and a year later, on October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union stunned the West with the successful launch of Sputnik, the first satellite in space. The achievement demonstrated not only the USSR's technological ability but also their missile capability and military potential. This success was further enhanced by the spectacular failure and explosion of the US Vanguard, launched at the end of the year and caught on film for the entire world to see.

Girded with success, Khrushchev initiated the second Berlin crisis, which would last from 1958 to 1961. The crisis began in November 1958 when Khrushchev demanded an end to the four-power occupation of Berlin. He gave Eisenhower and the West a six-month deadline to sign a peace treaty that ended the Second World War and to convert West Berlin into a demilitarized free city. If there were no treaty, the USSR threatened to sign a separate peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic and give it control over Western access to Berlin (Zubok 2007: 132).

By May 1959 an agreement had been reached for a foreign ministers conference in Geneva to discuss the question of Berlin and the situation in Germany more generally. A summit was planned for early 1960 in Paris. On May 1, 1960, the USSR shot down an American U-2 spy plane. Eisenhower publicly denied the US had sent such a plane, whereupon Khrushchev not only produced the fuselage but the captured pilot – Frances Gary Powers. The Paris summit was aborted, and Khrushchev said he would await the outcome of the next election in the US before resuming negotiations over Berlin.

Historical Events

On January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy became president. Less than five months later, on June 3–4, he met Khrushchev in Vienna to discuss a variety of issues. Just prior to the meeting, two important events occurred that would provide an unspoken backdrop to the summit. On April 12, 1961, Soviet achievements in space were extended when Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space, again beating the US. On April 17, Kennedy took one of his major foreign policy actions, refusing to give air support to a covert CIA action. Eisenhower had devised a plan to invade Cuba at in the Bay of Pigs, but Kennedy executed that plan – a disaster of major proportions that did not go unnoticed in Moscow.

In Vienna the Berlin crisis, which had laid dormant since the aborted 1960 Paris summit, was reignited by a determined Khrushchev. The first substantive discussion focused on Laos. The two sides would eventually make some progress on Laos and on nuclear testing, about which JFK had been hopeful but was ultimately disappointed. Then Khrushchev raised Berlin. He reissued the six-month time limit and became angry at several points (Beschloss 1991: 217–219), insisting on a peace treaty that would formally end the Second World War (Sorensen 1965: 584). After lunch, the president wanted to meet Khrushchev alone (i.e., only with interpreters), hoping that an impasse could be avoided if they were one-on-one. That did not happen; instead, they went head-to-head. Khrushchev "slammed his open hand on the table. '*I want peace, But if you want war, that is your problem*' … Kennedy replied, '*It is you, and not I, who want to force a change*'" (Beschloss 1991: 223 [italics in the original]). Khrushchev declared that his decision to sign a peace treaty was firm and irrevocable, saying: "It was up to the U.S. to decide whether there will be war or peace." Kennedy retorted that, "If that is true, it's going to be a cold winter" (Beschloss 1991: 224). As the summit ended, the Soviet delegation gave the US an aide-mémoire, similar to what they had

given the Eisenhower administration, which detailed their position on the demilitarization of Berlin and making it a free city.

At the end of the day, Kennedy met with James Reston of the *New York Times*. In this prearranged interview, Kennedy confessed that he felt Khrushchev thought he may have gotten the better of him and that, "If he thinks I'm inexperienced and have no guts, until we remove those ideas we won't get anywhere with him. So we have to act" (Beschloss 1991: 225). Kennedy believed the weak image Khrushchev had of him meant that Khrushchev would be willing to take risky actions based on the expectation that Kennedy would back down. Kennedy saw this as a miscalculation that could result in war (George and Smoke 1974: 432) unless the Soviets could be convinced of his firmness to go to war. In Kennedy's opinion, Khrushchev believed Eisenhower would resort to massive retaliation to prevent Berlin from being taken by force, but did not believe that Kennedy would resort to nuclear war.

In fact, before the summit Khrushchev did see Kennedy as weak, someone who could be pushed to retreat (Lupton 2020: 120, 127). Most of this was due to Kennedy's actions in the Bay of Pigs rather than to his age, according to Lupton (2020: 118–119). Be that as it may, a weak image was reinforced in Vienna. After the first meeting, Khrushchev returned to the Soviet embassy and proclaimed that Kennedy was "inexperienced" and could be intimidated (Lupton 2020: 121, 127).

Upon returning to the US, Kennedy reported to the nation that the meeting was sober but the danger of misjudgment had been eased. However, he did not mention that Khrushchev had reinstated a six-month deadline (Beschloss 1991: 230–231) – an omission that *Pravda* soon rectified (on June 10, 1961) by publishing the text of the aide-mémoire (Beschloss 1991: 235). Four days after the Vienna meeting Khrushchev discarded his plan to reduce the Red Army by 1.2 million and increased the military budget by one third (Beschloss 1991: 245). This occurred in response to Kennedy's earlier requests to Congress in March and May to increase US spending (George and Smoke 1974: 429).

The next week, on June 17, the US, Britain and France rejected the Soviet proposal to hold a peace conference on Berlin (Langer 1980: 1197). On July 25, the president addressed the nation about Berlin, during which he said, "We cannot and will not permit the Communists to drive us out of Berlin, either gradually or by force" (Sorensen 1965: 592). He also announced the troop buildup and his request that Congress call up reserves and implement a fallout shelter program, the latter capturing the attention of the public. Estimates were that civil defense could reduce American deaths in a nuclear war from seventy-nine million to fifty million (Beschloss 1991: 258). Finally, he left open the possibility

of negotiations to meet Soviet historical security concerns over Germany that stemmed from the two world wars (Schlesinger 1965: 392) and to reduce irritants in West Berlin, (e.g., espionage Beschloss 1991: 260). Eventually, 40,000 troops would be sent to Central Europe (Sorensen 1965: 627) with 1,500 additional troops sent to West Berlin immediately after the wall went up (Sorensen 1965: 594).

It took the US six weeks to formally respond to the Russian aide-mémoire, for which the president blamed the State Department (Schlesinger 1965: 384; Beschloss 1991: 248). Meanwhile, the administration was still trying to finalize a plan of action even after the July 25 speech. At an NSC meeting on June 29, Dean Acheson, former secretary of state under Truman, whom JFK had earlier brought in for advice, presented a hard line; he thought that if there were a blockade the US should break it by force – a position not that different from the one taken in the Eisenhower administration.[6] In addition, he maintained that proposing negotiations would be seen as a sign of weaknesses. Instead, he thought the president should move two or three divisions into Western Germany with more reserves ready to go, declare a national emergency, and make it clear to Khrushchev that if necessary the US would go to nuclear war (Sorensen 1965: 589, Beschloss 1991: 243). Others in the room, like Llewellyn Thompson, US ambassador to the USSR, favored negotiations and not using force to break the blockade, nor sending more troops to Western Germany, and especially not declaring a national emergency (Beschloss 1991: 243–244). Ultimately, JFK would follow Thompson's position on these questions.

The key problem was how to persuade the Soviets that the US was committed to Berlin. In July the administration took measures to convince the Soviets that Kennedy would be firm and not concede. Robert Kennedy met with Mikhail Menshikov, the Soviet ambassador, who had been telling people in Washington, DC, that "when the chips are down, the American people won't fight for Berlin." Kennedy told Menshikov over lunch that "he and the President would prefer death to surrender." When the ambassador expressed some doubt, RFK became angry and "glaring at Menshikov … declared that the United States would never abandon Berlin" (Beschloss 1991: 255). Paul Nitze and Walt Rostow, important advisors to the president, repeated similar messages to Menshikov (Beschloss 1991: 255).

For this to be credible, JFK felt that he had to have some option between all-out nuclear war and surrender (see Schlesinger 1965: 388–389;

[6] During the earlier 1958 Berlin crisis, "Pentagon plans called for sending" a platoon through the blockade, and if the Russians resisted, sending a division (Gaddis 1997: 141).

Sorensen 1965: 587–588). He therefore ordered defense secretary Robert McNamara to come up with some options, which would eventually result in the doctrine of "flexible response." In the near term, Kennedy sent enough troops to Central Europe, and eventually Berlin, to prevent an easy fait accompli conquest of West Berlin (Sorensen 1965: 588). The troops in West Berlin were also seen as a "trip wire" that would insure American escalation to a nuclear war and thus buttress the credibility of US deterrence.

July also saw a new problem emerge for Russia and East Germany. Over 25,000 East Germans had gone to the West in July (Schlesinger 1965: 394; see also Beschloss 1991: 264; Richardson 1994: 212).[7] Walter Ulbricht, head of East Germany, had raised this issue even before Vienna, as this was more important to the East Germans than a peace treaty (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 374). On July 30, in response to a question on national television about the crossing of East Germans into West Berlin, Senator Fulbright said, "I don't understand why the East Germans don't close their border because I think they have a right to close it" (quoted in Schlesinger 1965: 394; see also Beschloss 1991: 264). On July 31, Ulbricht was in Moscow to discuss strategy regarding Berlin. He again raised the border-crossing issue and the drain it placed on East Germany, pleading that the country was in dire straits because so many who left were skilled professionals. To buttress his case he referred to Fulbright's comments (Beschloss 1991: 267). Khrushchev decided in his favor and the decision to build a wall was made. Khrushchev, however, did not assent to a concrete and steel wall; rather, he agreed to initially putting up barbed wire, and if the West did nothing, replacing it with a more permanent structure. At midnight on August 13, the decision was implemented. East Berliners were stunned and rushed to get out by the normal means, but to no avail.

Kennedy was surprised that there was no warning that this would happen when it did. The US protested the action, but did nothing further. Kennedy then remained silent for over a week as the barbed wire was removed and a concrete wall was built (Beschloss 1991: 277). Kennedy deliberately took this stance to avoid escalation and had rejected suggestions to send combat troops down the autobahn. He wanted to avoid arousing the public's anger, which would lead to "more and more pressure … to adopt a harder military posture" (Beschloss 1991: 275). He did, however, send Vice President Lyndon Johnson and General Lucius Clay to West Berlin to show his support for them and, more importantly,

[7] By the end of 1960, 200,000 had fled, up from 144,000 in 1959 (Gaddis 1997: 143).

a battle group of 1,500 troops, whom Johnson greeted the day they arrived (Schlesinger 1965: 396–397).

Later, Kenneth O'Donnell, JFK's appointments secretary, reported that Kennedy remarked, "This is his [Khrushchev's] way out of his predicament. It's not a very nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war" (Beschloss 1991: 278; see also Gleb 1986: 213). This sentiment, along with other evidence, has led some to suggest that Kennedy supported Fulbright's statement about closing the border and used that statement as a signal that Khrushchev could use such a policy as a way out – a point that will be addressed in the Theoretical Analysis section. At the time the wall went up, however, the Kennedy administration did not think the crisis had ended and tried to devise negotiating terms that would end it (Schlesinger 1965: 397–398).

In any case, we have evidence that there were those in the West that did not want to go to nuclear war over closing the border *within* Berlin. For example, we know that Kennedy himself said he could hold the alliance together to defend West Berlin, but not "to keep East Berlin open" (comment to Rostow, quoted in Gaddis 1997: 148). Likewise, when Adenauer was told by John Foster Dulles in February 1959 that the US would use nuclear weapons, he reportedly said (see Gaddis 1997: 141): "For God's sake, not for Berlin."

Nonetheless, despite the wall, the situation remained tense until October. The crisis then began to wane after Khrushchev's speech to the twenty-second Party Congress on October 17, which lifted the six-month deadline. But a little over a week later, on October 26–28, the most intense direct military confrontation occurred between the two countries at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin; both sides confronted each other with tanks over a demand by the East Germans that US civilians submit papers to enter East Berlin (Langer 1980: 1197). First, ten Soviet tanks appeared, then twenty (matching the total number of tanks the West had in Berlin) (Beschloss 1991: 334). The situation defused when the Russians pulled back and the Americans reciprocated. At the time, however, there was concern on both sides that the least spark could start a major military incident. According to Khrushchev, as he later revealed to Kennedy's press secretary Pierre Salinger, he told Marshal Malinovsky "to back up our tanks a little bit and hide them behind buildings where the Americans couldn't see them. If we do this … the American tanks will also move back" (Beschloss 1991: 373). The Kennedys' secret back channel provided by Georgi Bolshakov also may have played a role (Gaddis 1997: 149). Nonetheless, at the end of the month, on October 30, Khrushchev returned to the offensive; he

demonstrated Russia's nuclear power by testing a bomb with a yield of over fifty megatons.

Schlesinger (1965: 397) reports that the crisis faded away, as Khrushchev took no actions on Berlin after December. In fact, it is more accurate to say the crisis segued into the Cuban Missile Crisis (see, e.g., Trachtenberg 1999: 353; see also Schick 1971: 208–211). At the very beginning of the latter crisis, many in the administration speculated that Khrushchev's real aim in Cuba might be to trade it for Berlin (see Beschloss 1991: 428, 432, 434).

Denouement

On June 26, 1963, several months after the Cuban Missile Crisis, JFK flew to Berlin on the fifteenth anniversary of the airlift to give a speech near Checkpoint Charlie. The crowd was immense – about three-fifths of the population – and the president evinced his personal support for Berlin and West Germany (Schlesinger 1965: 884). Reaching a crescendo, he exclaimed, "Ich bin ein Berliner" (I am a Berliner) – that is, he shared their fate and would defend them as he would defend the citizens of Boston (Beschloss 1991: 605). The crowd went wild. Now that the danger had passed, Kennedy more than before expressed his commitment to go to war for the city.[8]

In 1971 the four powers – Britain, France, the US, and the Soviet Union – reached the quadripartite agreement guaranteeing Western access to West Berlin and confirming the continued four-power occupation of Berlin. Four years later, in 1975, the Helsinki accords, under President Ford, recognized the existing borders of Eastern Europe. With the rise of Gorbachev in 1985, Soviet support for hard-line dictators was destined to end. On November 9, 1989, the East German government unexpectedly permitted East Berliners to pass into West Berlin. West Berliners gathered by the wall celebrating and protesting at the same time. They then began to pull the wall down with hammers, chisels, and pickaxes – unopposed by East German troops. Berlin was no longer separated by a wall. A little less than a year later, in October 1990, Germany was peacefully reunited, with Berlin as its new capital. In December 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed. The longest chapter of the European Cold War had come to an end.

Text Box 12.2 summarizes the major events in the Berlin 1961 crisis.

[8] Technically, *Ich bin ein Berliner* referred to a popular donut (Beschloss 1991: 606n), but the crowd knew what he meant and loved it.

Text Box 12.2 Nutshell Summary: Berlin 1961

1. Khrushchev and Kennedy meet in Vienna on June 3–4, 1961. Khrushchev raises the Berlin issue, again setting a six-month deadline.
2. In early July the Allies reject the Soviets' call for a foreign ministers' conference to discuss the Berlin issue, and Kennedy takes actions to make clear to Khrushchev his resolve to remain firm.
3. Later in July Kennedy asks Congress for authority to call up the reserves, increase draft calls, and fund a fallout shelter program.
4. Since the beginning of the crisis the flow of border-crossers from East Berlin into West Berlin, and ultimately to West Germany, has been increasing immensely.
5. On July 30, Senator William Fulbright, in response to a question, says that he thinks the East Germans have the right to close their border.
6. On August 13, the Soviets construct a wall to stop the flow. The US takes no measures to stop its construction and the crisis begins to wane. Eventually, additional troops are sent to West Germany, including (after the wall is built) 1,500 to West Berlin.
7. On October 17, Khrushchev lifts the six-month deadline.
8. On October 26–28, American and Soviet tanks confront each other at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin. The Soviets withdraw their tanks first and the Americans follow.
9. By 1962, the crisis is replaced by the Cuban Missile Crisis. Once that crisis is resolved in favor of the US, JFK goes to Berlin in June 1963 and in a triumphal speech declares his commitment to Berlin: "Ich bin ein Berliner."

Key Variables

The analysis of key variables treats the entire Berlin 1958–1961 crisis on which this chapter has focused, rather than just the 1961 Berlin crisis (see Table 12.1). Five variables play a major role in the Berlin 1958–1961 crisis. Two of these – *proximity* and *rivalry* – bring the crisis about and three more – *relevant capabilities*, *system structure*, and *bargaining* – help bring the crisis to a peaceful resolution. The crisis is initiated by Khrushchev because of two variables. The first is the proximity of Berlin to East Germany – deep within its territory. Khrushchev says Berlin is a "bone in my throat" (Fursenko and Naftali, 2006: 211; see also Garthoff (1991): 143), and this is because of both its location within the GDR and its proximity to the USSR. The second variable is the ongoing rivalry between the US and the USSR. Both of these variables not only bring about the crisis but consistently move it toward escalation.

Countervailing these two variables are three variables that work toward de-escalation. The first of these is each side's nuclear capability. The

Table 12.1 *Variable summary for Berlin 1958–1961 crisis: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Proximity	Major	X	
Relevant capabilities	Major		X
System structure	Major		X
Bargaining strategy	Major		X
Rivalry	Major	X	
Hostility	Moderate	X	
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Nature of issue	Moderate	X	
Arms races	Moderate	X	
Domestic politics	Minor	X	
Alliances	Minor	X	
Norms	None		
Democracy	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

prospect of nuclear war, and the MAD that accompanies it, makes each side cautious. In this sense, the nuclear system structure, where each side has a second-strike capability, works to defuse the crisis. At times, however, both sides are willing to take risks and threaten each other with the prospect of nuclear war in the hopes that this will make the other side back down. Ultimately, the danger of nuclear war makes the states follow a bargaining strategy that ends the crisis by permitting the building of the wall; this ends the drain out of East Germany. What is of theoretical interest is that the bargaining that results in the building of the wall consists entirely of tacit diplomacy, with Kennedy perhaps signaling through Senator Fulbright that he is willing to accept the wall without formally stating this position. While the flow out of East Berlin is a crisis within a crisis (Sorensen 1965: 593), it takes center stage and permits the acceptance of a new status quo that ends the larger crisis, although that was not known at the time. Indeed the closest both sides came to armed confrontation in Berlin was two months later, in October, during the Checkpoint Charlie incident.

Hostility plays only a moderate role in the crisis. It is not openly expressed, although Khrushchev did become angry with Kennedy at one point during their Vienna meeting and was so disgusted with Eisenhower over the U-2 denial that he refused to negotiate until there was a new president. Nonetheless, the main role of hostility was to fuel the rivalry between the two states, rather than playing an open role in guiding strategy. *Previous history* also only plays a moderate role – namely, in that Berlin was a festering issue that had remained dormant since the end of

the Berlin blockade crisis in 1949. By definition, then, the *nature of the issue* plays a moderate role. An arms buildup on both sides promoted escalation. There was, however, no ongoing statistical *arms race* throughout the Cold War, as Sample's (1997) data make clear.

Domestic politics play a minor role; Khrushchev merely hopes that a new president will be more willing to negotiate. *Alliances* also play a minor role. Kennedy is determined not to permit Britain and France to make the key decisions, but rather to keep that power within his own hands (Beschloss 1991: 246). De Gaulle and Macmillan are consulted regularly and do have input, but in the end the Allies, including Adenauer and Willy Brandt, play only a minor role. *Norms*, *democracy*, and *wishful thinking* play no role.

Theoretical Analysis

There are three theoretical questions raised by the Berlin 1961 case. First, how might this crisis have gone to war? Second, how close did the world come to nuclear war? Third, how was war prevented, and in particular what was the diplomacy that resulted in the building of the Berlin Wall, which seemed to defuse the crisis?

First, the crisis could have gone to war if one of several contemplated – but not taken – actions had occurred. On the American side, two different actions were recommended that, if taken, could have encouraged the Soviets to react in a way that might have led war (Fursenko and Naftali 2006). The first emerged at the very start of the crisis. Acheson strongly recommended that in the event of a Russian blockade Kennedy should order an airlift and "if they interfered" he should send in two armored divisions (Beschloss 1991: 243). Khrushchev anticipated this and told John McCloy, when he was visiting Moscow, that "If you attempt to force your way through, we will oppose you by force. War is bound to be thermonuclear" (Beschloss 1991: 263).

At this time, Kennedy was recommending, as in 1948, that an airlift be implemented if there was a blockade (Beschloss 1991: 257). Khrushchev, of course, knew that an airlift could be successful and now was prepared to stop it early on by committing to shoot down planes (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 358). He did not plan a blockade; rather, he planned to "cut off air traffic" and to permit aeroplanes to land in the GDR only in the vicinity of, but not in, Berlin (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 356). Such an action would likely have caused the West to provide armed escorts for transport planes, and that could have produced air fights that might then lead to ground action and conventional war.

From there, if the Americans were in danger of losing the ground battle in Berlin, which was almost certain given Soviet and East German local superiority, Kennedy would have to live up to his threat to go nuclear, at least at the tactical level. The 1,500 ground troops that he sent after the wall was built were to serve as a trip wire, and we have no reason to suspect that they would not be so. Kennedy's plan for a "flexible response," however, meant that there would be a nuclear exchange rather than a full massive retaliation as under Eisenhower. We do not know how this would have played out, but we do know that the risk of some sort of nuclear war would have been greatly increased.

We also know, from revelations about what each side was thinking, the possible ways in which such spirals might evolve. One way, on the American side, would be not to wait, but to exploit US nuclear superiority and initiate a nuclear first strike. Technically, a first strike is one that involves not just any initial strike, but one that eliminates the other side's ability to fully retaliate or, ideally, to retaliate at all. It would spare the other side's civilian population but simultaneously leave that population hostage to further strikes depending on negotiation.[9] Such a first strike was suggested by two aides – Henry Rowen, an aide to McNamara, and NSC staff member Carl Kaysen – in a "back of the envelope" proposal that was brought to Sorenson, who dismissed it immediately and did not forward it to the president (Beschloss 1991: 255–256)). Nonetheless, under different circumstances and with different individuals it might have been considered.[10]

A more likely path to nuclear war would have been Khrushchev's response to a use of military force by Kennedy. Khrushchev had told Italian prime minister Amintore Fanfani "'about twelve times' that if war came over Berlin, it would be nuclear from the start" (Beschloss 1991: 268). His response would most likely be a nuclear attack on Britain and France, and possibly Italy (see Beschloss 1991: 244, 263).

This belief raises our second question: Just how close did the world come to nuclear war? Fursenko and Naftali (2006: 355) firmly state: "The Central Committee documents … reveal that starting with the Presidium meeting on May 26, 1961, the world moved closer to nuclear

[9] McNamara gave this "counterforce/no cities" strategy serious consideration, thinking that attacking (and destroying) only the military arsenal of the Soviet Union would leave its population hostage to further nuclear attack if it did not negotiate (see Trachtenberg 1999: 316–317). Ultimately, he rejected a first strike in November 1962, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, but Kennedy, according to Trachtenberg 1999: 317–318), did not do so until September 1963.

[10] Under the Reagan administration a first strike was also seriously considered (see Smoke 1984: 220–224).

war than at any time since the Soviets tested their first atomic bomb in August 1949." Khrushchev thought he could use force, threaten war, and Kennedy would give in. But Kennedy might not have given in if push had come to shove. Using back channels, his brother insisted that JFK was committed to standing firm.

The third theoretical question is, How was war prevented? War did not occur, because a solution to a problem – not thought of before – was found in August. The solution to the crisis was the Berlin wall. In 1987, just before the end of the Cold War, Ronald Reagan would stand in front of the Brandenburg Gate and declare in the imperative, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" At the time, however, Kennedy saw the wall as a possible way out. The diplomacy around the wall has been hinted at in the literature but not given the emphasis it deserves. There is evidence that Kennedy sent a tacit unspoken signal that he would accept a wall as a solution to the problem of East Germans leaving through Berlin. Three of our main sources – George and Smoke (1974: 436–437); J. Richardson (1994: 212); and Beschloss (1991: 264) – suggest this. They all think that Fulbright's speech of July 30 could have very well been a signal inspired by Kennedy himself. As late as August 10, Kennedy did not disclaim Fulbright's comment when asked directly about it at a press conference (Beschloss 1991: 269).[11] Neither did he nor anyone else contradict Fulbright's assertion that the East Germans and Soviets had a right to close the border, which in fact was a violation of the Potsdam agreement (Beschloss 1991: 279). Early on, George and Smoke (1974: 437) stated that it is "difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Fulbright address … was a conscious signal." James Richardson (1994: 211–212) sees the speech – along with other actions, such as Kennedy's omitting freedom of movement within Berlin from his list of three essential American interests in Berlin – as a signal to encourage the Soviets to believe that a wall "would not be challenged." At the time, however, none of this became public because the domestic consequences would have been very harsh. The American signals about the building of the wall remain an understudied case of how tacit diplomacy can be used to de-escalate and even resolve a dangerous crisis. In the end, it worked because it solved a pressing problem for Khrushchev and Ulbricht, and it produced a public victory that permitted the larger issue to wane.

[11] See Gaddis (1997: 148) for additional details showing that there were signals to the Soviets that the US would not directly oppose the building of a wall.

Lessons of Berlin 1958–1961

1. The first thing this case shows is that nuclear deterrence was used by the United States not so much to prevent nuclear war but as a strategy to contain the Soviet Union. This is an important historical lesson that is often forgotten by those who seek to justify nuclear deterrence as a successful policy for preventing nuclear war (see Allison, Carnesale, and Nye 1985). Kennedy, and Eisenhower before him, were not trying to prevent a nuclear attack against NATO; they were using the threat of nuclear war to prevent a seizure of West Berlin. Such a seizure was tempting because of the overwhelming local advantage of East German and Soviet troops. Taking Berlin by force was the real threat that lay behind Khrushchev's promise that he would sign a treaty with the German Democratic Republic and turn over Soviet responsibility for East Berlin to them if the West did not agree to sign a peace treaty (on the latter, see Gaddis 1997: 147).

Under Eisenhower, any conventional attack would be met by an overwhelming nuclear *massive retaliation* against the Soviet homeland. Nuclear weapons would be the primary means of enforcing containment.[12] The Americans never intended only to prevent nuclear war. On the contrary, they threatened first use and nuclear war to gain a political end. In a sense, one can understand how a state with a monopoly on nuclear capability and then a distinct nuclear advantage would develop such a strategy.

Things changed with the October 1957 launching of Sputnik and the Soviet development of intercontinental ballistic missiles at a level comparable to the US. Now, nuclear weapons would be used to play games of chicken; both sides would go to the brink of war and the one who was in last position to avoid war would have to back down or face destroying the world. Brinksmanship was an idea developed by Dulles and Eisenhower as a way to use nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons facilitated the brinkmanship and the larger containment policies – part of a politico-military strategy in crisis bargaining (Vasquez 1991: 210–211). **In the end, the crisis really was more an exercise in risk-taking and nuclear coercion than simply a policy of nuclear deterrence to avert nuclear war**.

2. **The second lesson is that nuclear weapons and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence did not deter revisionist actors from initiating crises in the first place**. Khrushchev, like Stalin in 1948, was not intimidated by American nuclear strength. Nuclear deterrence might

[12] The entire idea of massive retaliation was developed to save the money it would have cost to match Soviet conventional advantage by stationing American troops.

prevent war, but this and other crises showed repeatedly that it would not prevent revisionist states from using militarized force to bring about change. As noted in the Theoretical Analysis of the Berlin blockade, this was explained theoretically by the stability–instability paradox (G. Snyder 1965).

3. It is important to note **that the logic of how nuclear deterrence would prevent nuclear war was not clarified in this crisis**. Kahn (1960) maintained that there are three types of deterrence, which he labels Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 – the first being "general deterrence" against a direct attack; the second being deterrence against a major provocation, typically an attack on a key ally; and the third being deterrence against a moderate provocation. Kahn dismissed Type 3 as not workable and focused on the first two. The main problem he saw with Type 1 and Type 2 deterrence is that they are logically contradictory. If one worked, the other logically could not. Type 1 deterrence prevents a direct nuclear attack on actor A by actor B. It works because A threatens to retaliate and destroy B if attacked. To succeed, A must be able to absorb a nuclear attack by B and still have sufficient nuclear weapons to retaliate and destroy B. This is referred to as a second-strike capability; without it, nuclear deterrence will not work. Type 2 deterrence, which would later be called extended deterrence, is based on the notion that in a three-party crisis where B threatens an attack on a third party C, A could prevent that attack by threating nuclear war on B. Presumably, A would back down because it would not risk nuclear annihilation to conquer a third party. The problem with this reasoning is that Type 1 deterrence maintains that the threat of a direct attack is not credible if the defender has a second-strike capability, as the Soviet Union did. Thus, Type 2 deterrence was not credible after 1957.

In the Berlin 1958–1961 crisis, the US maintained that any conventional attack against a third-party ally (Berlin, but also West Germany) could lead the US and NATO to the first use of nuclear weapons, making this threat a version of Type 2 deterrence. The USSR responded in effect that it did not believe the West would do this, because it would risk nuclear war; and if the West used nuclear weapons to defend Berlin, it would have to engage in a direct attack on the USSR. To prevent such a direct attack, the USSR would resort to Type 1 deterrence and thus undo the West's use of Type 2 deterrence (assuming that Type 1 deterrence trumps Type 2).[13] The crisis was such that the West used Type 2

[13] Note, however, Kahn (1960) only states that if Type 1 deterrence works, Type 2 cannot logically work, and vice versa. The 1961 Berlin crisis brings the logical contradiction to a head with the world hanging in the balance.

deterrence and, as expected according to nuclear deterrence theory, the Soviet Union responded by resorting (implicitly) to Type 1 deterrence. The case shows two things. First, neither side explicitly spoke in terms of Type 1 and Type 2 deterrence, but the nature of these threats was implicitly clear to each side. Second, while each side approached the brink, neither side actually went to the brink, but instead backed off. **An important lesson of this crisis is that both states avoided war, but it is unclear whether Type 1 or Type 2 deterrence worked**. What we do know is that each leader's fear that things could get out of control made each cautious and unwilling to put either type of deterrence to the test. The end result was that while deterrence theory has received a great deal of attention, **it is unclear that leaders will actually follow it to its ultimate conclusion**. **This is because it is too risky**. **The case shows that leaders (on both sides) were more reasonable (at least in this instance) than so-called rational theorists, whose strategies they ultimately abandoned to find a way out of a looming game of chicken**.

4. **Nonetheless, what this case is remembered for is the prominent role that nuclear weapons played in a crisis**. In fact, 1961 was the closest the world had ever come to nuclear war up to that point. The only time it came closer was a year later during the Cuban Missile Crisis, in which Berlin would again play a role. **Because nuclear weapons were involved and nuclear war was a latent threat, a common lesson of this crisis is that Berlin 1961 shows that nuclear deterrence works**. **The analysis here, however, questions that lesson**.[14] The threat of nuclear war was made primarily by the US; Khrushchev did not have to make it because he had the conventional advantage. The fact that this American threat was made indicates that Kennedy and others were not deterred by Soviet Type 1 deterrence, which shows that it failed. In other words, Kennedy's threat to use nuclear weapons is an instance of Soviet deterrence failure.[15] Of course, this inference assumes that the Kennedys were not bluffing. We cannot know for sure, but we have no direct evidence that they were; all we know is that they took pains to avoid the impression that they were. In the end, it is probably the case that the Kennedys themselves did not know if they would lack

[14] Kugler (1984) and Zagare (1987) early on questioned whether the logic of classic nuclear deterrence was sound; see Zagare and Kilgour (2000) for a reformulation of deterrence theory.

[15] Likewise, the serious consideration given, while developing a flexible response strategy, to a firststrike preemptive nuclear launch must be seen as a failure of Soviet Type 1 deterrence.

the "courage" to push the button.[16] We do know, however, that the entire doctrine of flexible response made it easier to climb the ladder of escalation and that once on that ladder, going to nuclear war at a limited level would be easier. Once that was done, going further would be easier still. **An important lesson of this crisis is how nuclear war might come about even as one tries to avoid an all-out nuclear war**.

Precisely how might that happen? According to the evidence, Kennedy felt that if Western troops were on the verge of defeat, then he would have no choice but to use nuclear weapons to prevent that defeat. In August 1962, a year after the wall went up, he stated in a briefing on contingency planning for Berlin that: "I suppose if we get involved in a war in Europe … we will have no choice but to use nuclear weapons" (quoted in Trachtenberg 1999: 292; see also the quotes in Trachtenberg 1999: 295n39). And he pondered during the crisis (e.g., in July 1961) that if it looked like the crisis might go nuclear, then "the critical point is to be able to use nuclear weapons … before they use them" (Trachtenberg 1999: 293). It is not surprising that later, in December 1961, McNamara deployed "171 Davy Crocketts – a very small nuclear weapon for infantry use" (Trachtenberg 1991: 224). Once these were used, then the Soviets might retreat, but it is just as likely that they might respond with their own nuclear weapons. This was one way nuclear war might occur. Another is that JFK might just opt for a preemptive first-strike attack to take advantage of American superiority – a conclusion that Trachtenberg (1999: 294) believes Kennedy reached by January 1962. In either case, **the path to nuclear war seems to arise out of local conventional battlefield conditions**. A similar conclusion is reached regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis (see Chapter 13).

The question of whether a country would go to nuclear war to protect a third party has been framed by Schelling (1966) as being about the credibility of extended deterrence. One way of bolstering credibility is to tie the decision-maker's hands so that a nuclear response is inevitable. The Kennedy administration's decision to place "trip wire" troops and later tactical nuclear weapons on the battlefield was a way of tying the president's hands so that it would be difficult not to go to war. Realizing this, the Soviets would take the deterrent threat as credible. After the Kennedy administration, local commanders were given more control over tactical nuclear weapons as a way of adding to the credibility of deterrence (see Rhodes 1989). **While this makes sense logically, it**

[16] Interestingly, Trachtenberg (1999: 295n39) states that he used to lean toward the position that Kennedy and his administration were bluffing, but now he thinks the opposite and that they would have gone to nuclear war.

can be easily seen that deploying tactical nuclear weapons makes nuclear war more likely.

5. An important lesson of this case is that **the Berlin 1961 crisis was resolved by a mutually acceptable solution and not coercion**. War was avoided in this case primarily through the mutual acceptance of a solution to the flow of border-crossers that became a crisis within the crisis. The lesson here is that the key to avoiding war is finding some common ground that permits both sides to back away from the brink. The stream of emigrants was so large and so steady that not only was it embarrassing to the communist regime but also potentially would have a major negative economic impact. Solving this crisis was more important than the original objectives that led Khrushchev to initiate the crisis, so this unexpected outcome led him and Ulbricht to reduce the salience of the original goal. Equally important was that Kennedy most likely hinted, through Senator Fulbright, that he would accept the closing of the East Berlin border. In the end, he accepted the solution of building a wall. He saw this as a "hell of a lot better than a war."

In this case, as well as the blockade crisis, **the deep desires of both leaders to avoid war kept them from escalating actions that were possible (and advocated by hard-liners like Clay and Acheson at different times)**. **This kept the crises from getting out of control and greatly increasing the likelihood of war**.

13 The Cuban Missile Crisis

Background

Ninety miles off the coast of Florida, Cuba has always been attractive and of interest to the United States (US).[1] The interest intensified when the Cubans revolted in 1895, and Spain engaged in brutal repression, provoking many in the US to call for intervention. The Cleveland administration consistently resisted such efforts. In 1896, when a congressional delegation notified the president that Congress was prepared to declare war against Spain, President Cleveland firmly opposed such efforts, saying: "There will be no war with Spain over Cuba while I am President" (quoted in Fisher 2013: 52). President McKinley, although less firm, also resisted such congressional efforts. By 1898, however, war hysteria reached a fever pitch. The so-called yellow press, led by William Randolph Hearst's and Joseph Pulitzer's papers beat the drum of war.[2] Congress also increased pressure for a declaration of war, especially after the sinking of the *Maine* on February 15, 1898. McKinley finally relented, put pressure on Spain, and asked Congress for permission to intervene. Congress declared war on April 25.[3]

Although the Spanish American War began over Cuba, it quickly spread to become a global war against the Spanish Empire with Admiral Dewey's naval attack on the Philippines in May. When the war ended, the US acquired the Philippines and Puerto Rico as colonial possessions, but Cuba was not made a colony since in principle the US had gone to war to support Cuban independence. Instead, the Platt amendment was passed in 1906, which gave the US (under Cuba's new constitution) the

[1] For example, the filibusters, who wanted to bring Cuba into the US by invading it with their private armies (Webster 1893). Others thought the US could purchase Cuba from Spain; see the Ostend Manifesto, discussed in Foner (1983: 333).

[2] William Randolph Hearst allegedly cabled Frederic Remington, the artist he had sent to Cuba who wanted to return to the US because everything was quiet: "Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war" (see Creelman 1901: 178).

[3] For an analysis of the negotiations McKinley conducted with Spain and the case in general, see Ray (1995: ch. 5) and Small (1980: ch. 3).

right to intervene in Cuba to maintain stability. The right of intervention was not repealed until 1934. Nonetheless, even after that date the US still had extensive influence, and American businesses, especially the sugar industry, controlled much of the economy. Havana was an American playground, in which there was legalized gambling, big-name entertainment, and easy prostitution, with American mobsters like Meyer Lansky playing key roles. When Castro overthrew Batista on New Year's Day 1959 this would all come to an end. Batista had governed from 1940 to 1944, and then returned to power in 1952 in a coup that overthrew the corrupt president. He received political, financial, and military support from the US.

Initially, the Eisenhower administration was willing to work with Castro, but turned against him once his Communist sympathies and the influence of Che Guevara became clear. The Eisenhower administration gave support to Cuban exiles living in the US, and the CIA developed a plan to use the exiles to invade the island and overthrow Castro. This ultimately became the Bay of Pigs invasion that JFK inherited. It was an embarrassing failure, and led JFK to mistrust the CIA.

Historical Events

On October 15 1962, a U-2 flying over Cuba took photographs. Intelligence analysts determined that these photographs constituted definitive evidence that components for medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), presumably from the Soviet Union, were present in Cuba. By 8:30 p.m. that evening, McGeorge Bundy, special assistant for national security to President John F. Kennedy, was informed, as was Dean Rusk, secretary of state. Bundy decided not to tell the president until the following morning. The defense secretary, Robert McNamara, was shown the photographic evidence around midnight. On the next day, October 16, 1962, a thirteen-day crisis began that was to be the closest the world had come to nuclear war to date.[4]

From the American perspective, the crisis can be divided into three parts: October 16–22, from the first discussions about what to do regarding the missiles to the president's speech to the nation; October 23–28, open confrontations between the US and the Soviet Union through the placement of the quarantine, search for a deal, and Soviet agreement to remove the missiles; and October 29–November 21,

[4] These dates and times, as well as those mentioned hereafter, are drawn from the chronology in Blight and Welch (1989: 373–384) and the reviews in Kennedy (1999) and Hershberg (2010).

denouement that involved Soviet fulfillment of its pledges and JFK's termination of the quarantine.

As soon as President Kennedy learned of the intelligence about the missiles, he assembled on October 22 an unofficial team of advisors that would later become known as the Ex Comm (Executive Committee of the National Security Council) to deal with the crisis.[5] Robert Kennedy recalled in his memoir that President Kennedy telephoned him around 9:00 a.m. on October 16, asking him to come to the White House. Besides Robert Kennedy, the group included the president's closest advisors and the highest officials of the government, such as defense secretary Robert McNamara, secretary of state Dean Rusk, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maxwell D. Taylor, CIA director John McCone, and Vice President Lyndon Johnson, as well as several deputies.[6] The initial group heard a formal presentation of the photographic evidence from the CIA.[7] They were stunned and unanimously felt some firm action had to be taken by the US. This was particularly the case since JFK had publicly stated on September 4, as a way of thwarting domestic criticisms, that the US would not abide Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba (Lebow and Stein 1994: 67–68).[8]

Charles Hermann (1969), as noted in Chapter 1, defines a crisis as a situation in which decision-makers are faced with high threat, a short time to make decisions, and surprise. By October 16 all these elements were clearly present, with the last element being particularly prominent. This sense of surprise was aggravated by Soviet denials after the missiles were discovered (see Blight and Welch 1989: 378; Kennedy 1999: 32–33, 50–51).[9] All of this gave the members of the Ex Comm the impression that they were being deliberately mislead, which added to the shock, surprise, and eventual deep distrust (see R. Kennedy 1999: 51).[10] Each of these elements generated a certain amount of anger within

[5] See Garthoff (1987: 23n32) for details of its origins and subsequent afterlife.

[6] A full list of the key members is reported in Hershberg (2010: 72)

[7] It should be noted that while this initial evidence was clear to the technical experts, the advisors took their word for what was in the photos; see Robert Kennedy's (1999: 19) remark.

[8] The deliberations of the group were secretly recorded by the president and are now available in May and Zelikow (2002). A very readable account of the key discussions, especially the first day, is provided by Beschloss (1991: chs. 16–17).

[9] This included Dobrynin's assurance to Robert Kennedy in a meeting in early September "that the Russians had not placed any long-range missiles in Cuba and had no intentions of doing so in the future." Dobrynin told him that "as far as he knew, there were still no missiles in Cuba" (R. Kennedy 1999: 50–51). In this instance, however, it turned out that Dobrynin had in fact not been informed by Moscow about the missiles.

[10] Kennedy's memoir was first published by Norton in 1969. The 1999 edition is cited throughout here because it includes the foreword by Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

the group, which, according to Lebow and Stein (1994: 80, 82), was partially responsible for some of the intense reactions within it.

The Ex Comm devoted October 16–19 to discussing what should be done. The group divided roughly into two camps: those who called for military action of some sort, including an air strike alone or one followed up by an invasion to overthrow the regime, and those who wanted much more limited action to get the Soviets to remove the missiles based on some coercive action or threat. Dean Acheson, who had been invited to the meeting, argued forcefully for an air strike. He believed it was the only option that assured the missies would be destroyed. The second position, however, was the one eventually adopted by the president and favored by him, McNamara, and Robert Kennedy, as well as others. Robert Kennedy, in particular, was opposed to an air strike because he saw it as similar to Tojo's decision to attack Pearl Harbor and thus inimical to the American character (R. Kennedy 1999: 25, 30).[11] Nonetheless, it should be noted that the president and Robert Kennedy initially seemed to prefer some military action, including an air strike (Beschloss 1991: 470, 479, 480; Lebow and Stein 1994: 103; Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 461).

While JFK did not at the outset favor adopting a quarantine over more aggressive action, he eventually took this stance for several reasons. First and foremost, it was a flexible strategy; a military strike could be tried later if the naval quarantine failed (R. Kennedy 1999: 29). In addition, naval action was less provocative than an air strike and had a lower risk of escalating to war. Even the nomenclature "quarantine" – as opposed to a naval blockade, which technically is an act of war under international law – indicates a desire for less provocative action. An air strike risked some sort of Soviet military response (e.g., the deployment of surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), strikes on missiles in Turkey, or some action in Berlin), all of which were discussed by the Ex Comm. The quarantine also provided more time for Khrushchev to react than did an air strike. Nonetheless, JFK was concerned that the Russians might respond to a quarantine with a blockade of Berlin, and he more than once told others to make preparations for that (R. Kennedy 1999: 46–47).

Supporters of the air strike had varied motives for advocating it. For some, it was the fastest way of preventing the missiles from becoming operational. Others saw the air strike as a prelude to an invasion that would end the Castro regime. Some of these advocates shared the view

[11] This is one of the few analogies used in a crisis to avoid escalation and war rather than advocate it; more typical was JFK's use of the Munich analogy in his October 22 speech to justify the use of force. On analogies and the use of lessons from history in foreign policy decision-making, see Jervis (1976: ch. 6).

of members of Congress who wanted JFK to use the crisis as an opportunity and a pretext to overthrow Castro (Blight and Welch 1989: 51; Lebow and Stein 1994: 129). General Curtis LeMay went so far as to advocate an attack even after Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles (Blight and Welch 1989: 51; see also R. Kennedy 1999: 91). These divergent motives meant that there were fundamentally different goals underlying the various options discussed by the Ex Comm.

By day five, October 20, the president's position had won the day (although the final decision was always the president's), and he ordered a quarantine. One key factor in the president's mind that reinforced his proclivity for naval action was that the Tactical Air Command, General Walter Sweeney, Jr., told him that they could not be certain that an air strike would destroy all the missile sites and nuclear weapons in Cuba (R. Kennedy 1999: 38; see also Maxwell Taylor's comment on this in Blight and Welch 1989: 79–80).[12]

Preparations were made for the president to address the nation on television October 22 at 7 p.m. EST to announce the presence of offensive medium-range missile sites in Cuba, what appeared to be planned intermediate-range missile sites, and IL-28 light jet bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons (President's Kennedy's October 22 speech, reprinted in R. Kennedy 1999: 149–150.) Kennedy called this a "deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country" (president's speech, R. Kennedy 1999: 152). He therefore demanded the removal of the missiles and said that Cuba would remain under a naval quarantine until this happened. He emphasized, however, that the quarantine was only an initial step (R. Kennedy 1999: 43; president's speech, R. Kennedy 1999: 152).

Kennedy then invoked the specter of nuclear war: "We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of world-wide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth – but neither will we shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced" (president's speech, R. Kennedy 1999: 152). He explicitly stated that any nuclear missile fired from Cuba on any nation in the Western Hemisphere would be regarded "as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union" (president's speech, R. Kennedy 1999: 153).

[12] Hawks apparently agreed to the quarantine because they believed the president was making a tacit commitment to conduct an air strike if the quarantine failed (Lebow and Stein 1994: 108).

Prior to the speech, allies were informed and preparations were made for a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS), where the US hoped to gain support. The afternoon before the speech, the president met with congressional leaders, some of whom, like the senators Richard Russell and J. William Fulbright, called for more forceful action, including an invasion (Beschloss 1991: 480; Lebow and Stein 1994: 96), although leaders on the whole supported the president.[13] Advanced copies of the speech were given to Soviet ambassador Dobrynin in Washington and to the Kremlin in Moscow.

With the ordering of the quarantine and simultaneously with the president's address, the US alert level was raised from DefCon 5 to DefCon 3 and the base at Guantanamo was reinforced by three marine battalions (Blight and Welch 1989: 379). These were in addition to a number of actions taken in case the president would move next to the air strike option and even invasion (R. Kennedy 1999: 41, 43). Troops were relocated to Florida and the southeastern part of the US, the 1st Armored Division was moved out of Texas into Georgia and five more divisions were placed on alert, 180 ships were deployed into the Caribbean, the Strategic Air Command was dispersed, and B-52 bombers with nuclear weapons were ordered into the air (R. Kennedy 1999: 41). The president also asked McNamara to prepare a confidential report outlining the requirements for an invasion. Any invasion would likely require "250,000 men, 2,000 air sorties … 90,000 Marines and Airborne" with estimated casualties of 25,000 (R. Kennedy 1999: 43; see also Garthoff 2001: 173 for later estimates). Of course, such widespread preparations could not escape Soviet intelligence, and this may have been the intention.

In the midst of these preparations, the US took a number of diplomatic actions to support its policy, including a legal defense. Gaining support at the upcoming OAS meeting on October 23, the day after the president's speech, was key to the latter. By this time the UN was fully involved. Both Cuba and the USSR requested a meeting of the Security Council on October 23. During this meeting, Adlai Stevenson, US ambassador to the UN, and Valerian Zorin, Soviet representative to the UN, engaged in a dramatic public confrontation that would culminate in their famous exchange on October 25, during which Stevenson said, "I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over" – that is, to

[13] It is interesting to note that it was congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle who were calling for war and the executive that was trying to avoid it. This is another inconsistency with the institutional explanation of the democratic peace revealed by the cases in this book, but this is a relatively minor instance compared to the Eastern Crisis or the Crimean War.

wait for Zorin's reply to his question as to whether the USSR had placed medium and intermediate missile sites in Cuba, followed by his dramatic revelation of the photographic evidence that the US had (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 59). Meanwhile, UN secretary-general U. Thant became involved behind the scenes to find a resolution.

As the public was focused on the UN, action on the high seas reached a serious stage. The quarantine was fully deployed by 10 a.m. on October 24, and the alert level of the Strategic Air Command was raised to Defcon 2 (Blight and Welch 1989: 380–381).[14] As two Soviet ships neared the quarantine, the US prepared to intercept them (by noon). Then Khrushchev suddenly ordered the ships en route to stop or reverse course (R. Kennedy 1999: 55). On hearing the news, Dean Rusk said to Bundy, "We're eyeball-to-eyeball, and I think the other fellow just blinked" (quoted in Beschloss 1991: 498; Hershberg 2010: 77).[15] A serious confrontation was avoided, but things were far from over, especially since there were still missiles in Cuba.

On October 25–26, the US intercepted two ships and boarded one without incident (Blight and Welch 1989: 381–382). Later on October 26, the first indications that a deal might be worked out began to appear. The Russians approached John Scali, an ABC correspondent, indicating that they might be willing to dismantle and remove offensive missiles from Cuba, if the US pledged not to invade Cuba (R. Kennedy 1999: 69).[16] Rusk told Scali that they saw potential in this possibility, and he recommended working through U. Thant. Meanwhile, members of the administration became concerned that construction of the missile sites was proceeding rapidly and that the sites would soon be fully operational.

Around 6 p.m. a long private letter from Khrushchev, apparently written by him personally (R. Kennedy 1999: 66), arrived making a similar proposal to that communicated via Scali. The letter, however, couched the proposal in an emotional appeal to avoid nuclear war. It stated that Russia had sent missiles so Cuba could protect itself. Khrushchev then

[14] In regard to the raising of this alert level, it is important to note that the head of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), General Thomas Powers, took it upon himself to issue this order to the SAC in the clear – that is, without authorization (and unknown to the president, McNamara, or the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). In addition, the Ex Comm thought it went out in code (Blight and Welch 1989: 75; see also Garthoff 1987: 37–38). This was another example of how things were not under the complete control of the key decision-makers.

[15] Khrushchev did blink, but an ancillary reason he turned around the ships was that he did not want some of the technology on the ships to fall into US hands (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 477).

[16] Subsequent information has suggested that this was an unauthorized probe that did not play a role in Khrushchev's decision-making (Garthoff 2001: 187). See also Fursenko and Naftali (2006: 485–486) for more details on how the meeting was brought about.

proposed: "If assurances were given that the President of the United States would not participate in an attack on Cuba and the blockade lifted, then the question of the removal or the destruction of the missile sites in Cuba would then be an entirely different question. Armaments bring only disasters … If people do not show wisdom, then in the final analysis they will come to a clash, like blind moles, and then reciprocal extermination will begin" (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 68). He went on:

> Mr. President, we and you ought not to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter the knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose. Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot, and thereby to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot. (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 68–69).

The letter was studied late into the night, and for the first time Robert Kennedy reported that there was some optimism that the US might find a successful way out of the crisis.

Saturday, October 27, proved to be the height of the crisis. The morning began with the arrival of a second letter from Khrushchev, which was different in tone and seemed to reflect authorship that included the Soviet foreign ministry (R. Kennedy 1999: 71). This letter contained new demands – namely, that "We will remove our missiles from Cuba, you will remove yours from Turkey," and that "the Soviet Union will pledge not to invade or interfere with the internal affairs of Turkey; the US to make the same pledge regarding Cuba" (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 71).[17] This trade was not an unreasonable proposal, as the president pointed out (R. Kennedy 1999: 72). But as any observer could see, it would make the solution to the crisis seem much more like a quid pro quo, and much less like a capitulation to American naval coercion and the latent threat of nuclear war that lay behind it. Rusk used Scali as a conduit to see why this new proposal was being made, while at the

[17] It is true the that the second letter came from the Presidium, but the exchange of Cuban missiles for the ones in Turkey was also Khrushchev's idea (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 483, 488). A more detailed account of the two letters is provided by Zubok and Pleshakov (1996: 266–267), who report that Khrushchev had planned to talk about the Turkish missiles in the first letter but dropped it because he had intelligence (which he later found out to be incorrect) that said an invasion was imminent. When he found out that the intelligence was incorrect, he included the demand about the Turkish missiles in the second letter.

same time the Russian ambassador to Turkey approached Turkey to accept the trade.

The two letters posed a quandary for the Ex Comm. The Joint Chiefs of Staff joined the meeting and firmly recommended an air strike on Monday, followed by a full invasion (R. Kennedy 1999: 73). They said they never thought a blockade would be able to remove the missiles and were not surprised by its failure. As the discussion proceeded, news came in that a U-2 had been shot down over Cuba and Major Rudolf Anderson, who first discovered the missiles back on October 15, killed. This added to the emotion of an already tense discussion. The operational readiness of Soviet–Cuban SAMs also meant that immediate military action would be needed to protect the ongoing U-2 reconnaissance flights. Robert Kennedy (1999: 73) reported in his memoir that "there was the feeling that the noose was tightening on all of us, on Americans, on mankind, and that the bridges to escape were crumbling." The group seemed to agree on an air strike to take out the SAMS, but then the president grew cautious, asking both how the Soviets might respond and how the US might respond to the Soviet response. "It isn't the first step that concerns me, but both sides escalating to the fourth and fifth step – and we don't go to the sixth because there is no one around to do so" (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 74). The president wanted to know, If the United States were to attack Cuba, and if the Russians attacked Turkey or US missiles in Turkey in response, what would the US do next? Should the Turkish missiles be fired at the USSR? What if the Russians responded initially with a move on Berlin instead?[18]

It was decided that the way to deal with the two letters was to ignore the second and respond favorably to the first. The president wrote Khrushchev, prefacing his remarks by saying that work had to cease on the offensive missile bases and then Khrushchev must withdraw the weapons systems. Afterward the US would remove the quarantine and "give assurances against an invasion of Cuba" (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 78).

To deal further with the two letters, it was decided to hold a follow-up meeting between Attorney General Robert Kennedy and Ambassador Dobrynin. They met at the attorney general's office at 7:45 p.m. on October 27. Robert Kennedy began by indicating that he knew work on the sites had continued and in the last few days had been expedited. He also asserted that shooting down the American U-2 and killing the pilot

[18] We now know that such moves were actually discussed in the Presidium, but generally Khrushchev wanted to keep Berlin separate from Cuba (see Lebow and Stein 1994: 62, 137).

was a very "serious turn of events" (R. Kennedy 1999: 82). Finally, he noted that the US needed "to have a commitment by tomorrow that those bases would be removed." This was "not giving them an ultimatum but a statement of fact," for Russia "should understand that if they did not remove those bases, we would remove them" (R. Kennedy 1999: 82).[19]

Dobrynin wanted to know what offer the US was making, at which point Robert Kennedy relayed the terms that had just been sent to Khrushchev. Dobrynin next asked about removing missiles from Turkey. In his memoir Robert Kennedy was very clear and explicit:

> I said that there could be no quid pro quo or any arrangement made under this kind of threat or pressure, and that in the last analysis that was a decision that would have to be made by NATO. However, I said that President Kennedy had been anxious to remove those missiles from Turkey and Italy for a long period of time. He had ordered their removal some time ago, and it was our judgment that, within a short time after this crisis was over, those missiles would be gone. (R. Kennedy 1999: 83)[20]

He concluded the meeting by holding out the prospect that JFK wanted to resolve a number of problems in Europe and Southeast Asia, in addition to dealing with issues of nuclear arms control once this crisis could be put behind them. But, "Time was running out. We had only a few more hours – we needed an answer immediately from the Soviet Union. I said we must have it the next day" (R. Kennedy 1999: 83).

When Robert Kennedy returned to the White House, neither he nor JFK were very optimistic. The president, fearing that bargaining would fail, had already ordered twenty-four troop carriers to active duty for possible use in an invasion. US decision-makers hoped their proposal would work and a bargain would be made, but they did not expect it; what they expected was a military confrontation by "Tuesday and possibly tomorrow" (R. Kennedy 1999: 83).

What they got instead was the bargain the president outlined in his October 27 letter to Khrushchev. On October 28, Radio Moscow announced[21] that the Soviet government would discontinue further work

[19] See the discussion at the Hawk's Cay conference regarding the extent to which this was an ultimatum in Blight and Welch (1989: 66–68).

[20] They were in fact removed in April 1963. For alternate versions of exactly what RFK said about the Turkish missiles according to Dobrynin and others, as well as whether there was a secret deal, see Lebow and Stein (1994: 122–126); see also Welch and Blight (1987/1988): 12–18). What is most ironic is that information in the Kremlin archives suggests that Khrushchev was prepared to accept JFK's offer in the first letter of October 26 before he knew about the offer to secretly dismantle the Jupiter missiles (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 490).

[21] The official copy followed within two hours (Garthoff 1987: 58n89).

on the construction sites, dismantle weapons that the US described as offensive, and "crate them and return them to the Soviet Union" (quoted in Blight and Welch 1989: 384). The US had achieved what it wanted, and the case has gone down in American foreign policy as a successful use of coercive nuclear diplomacy (see Lebow and Stein 1994: 110).[22] Schelling (1966: 69–71, 75) has argued that using nuclear threats to get someone to actively do something, as in the Cuban Missile Crisis, is not an instance of *deterrence*, which he confines to trying to prevent an action (usually an attack), but of *compellence*, because it is using nuclear threats to get someone to take an action that they do not want to take. What in fact occurred is that Khrushchev feared that JFK's upcoming speech was going to be an announcement of war, so he quickly decided to withdraw the missiles (Zubok 2007:148–149; Radcheko 2015: 192). Whether the final decision was solely the result of successful compellence or primarily due to the bargain that was offered is a question that will be treated in the Theoretical Analysis section.

Castro was furious that the deal was made, and in particular that he had not been consulted beforehand; three days later, on October 31, Russia's first deputy premier Mikoyan was sent to Cuba to placate him.[23] Castro would not allow inspections of Russian missiles on Cuban soil, and it was not until November 20 that he informed U. Thant that he would agree to the Soviets' withdrawal of their IL-28 bombers.[24] Kennedy terminated the quarantine the next day.

The crisis was a turning point in the Cold War (George and Smoke 1974: 491; Garthoff 2001: 181). Shortly afterward, Khrushchev called for an end to nuclear tests. In a highly influential speech at the American University in June 1963, JFK called for an improvement in relations and a curb on nuclear arms beginning with a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear tests. In the same month, a hotline was established between the two capitals to better facilitate communication during crises. Two months later, in August, a limited nuclear test ban treaty was signed in

[22] Some who make this claim place emphasis on Robert Kennedy's "ultimatum." It should be noted, however, that many recognize that this is not simply a pure case of successful coercion, as Bosnia 1908 was. George (1991: 256), for instance, says that Kennedy's "coercive diplomacy … worked in the end, but it is fair to say that his carrot and stick version of it relied heavily on accommodation and not just coercive threats."

[23] See Fursenko and Naftali (2006: 496–504) for details of the visit.

[24] The removal of the bombers proved a sticky point that dragged on negotiations; see Fursenko and Naftali (2006: 498–501). For details of the characteristics and use of these Ilyushin-28 bombers in the Soviet Union, see Garthoff (1987: 65n99). Castro never agreed to on-site inspections, so the US and the USSR agreed that the latter would open the decks of its departing cargo ships so the missiles could be observed (Garthoff 1987: 64–65).

Moscow. Subsequently, in 1967, the US and the USSR banned nuclear weapons in outer space.

Finally, it should be noted that Khrushchev himself was a casualty of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was removed from power in October 1964, partly for his handling of the crisis and overall adventurism (for details, see Zubok and Pleshakov 1996: 272–274).

Two decades after the crisis, this historical review would have ended here, but in the late 1980s more information came forward about what was happening on the Russian and Cuban side, which changed our understanding of the crisis in a fundamental way concerning the risk of nuclear war. It is important to note that at the time of the crisis no one in the US was aware of this information. The first and more important piece of information that emerged was that, in addition to missiles and warheads, the Russians had also shipped about one hundred tactical nuclear weapons to Cuba (Garthoff 2001:186; cf. Garthoff 1987: 21–22n31). These were in the hands of the Russians (on the ground), who were in charge of the approximately 40,000 Soviet military personnel stationed in Cuba.[25] The large number of troops would have made an American invasion more difficult, but the use of tactical nuclear weapons would have easily defeated an amphibious assault. The US estimate of 25,000 casualties would have been greatly exceeded and many of the 90,000 marine and airborne troops that would have been deployed for the invasion would certainly have been killed, putting the deaths well above the roughly 2,400 killed at Pearl Harbor. Such a slaughter and the use of nuclear weapons would have certainly meant war and, most likely, some nuclear response from the US. What that response would have been is difficult to say, but suffice it to say it could very well have included some nuclear use, and from there the path to a nuclear war or some nuclear exchange would have been wide open. The likelihood of the US at least responding with its own use of tactical nuclear weapons seems high, since we know that one of the contingency plans for an invasion, according to Raymond Garthoff, included the use of tactical nuclear weapons (see Blight and Welch 1989: 250). We also know that some of the Soviet tactical nuclear weapons were positioned to attack Guantanamo (Jervis 2015: 17; see also Radchenko 2015: 196), thus making an escalation to the nuclear level likely early on in an invasion.

[25] This amounted to four brigades. The figure is reported in McNamara's announcement after the Havana conference (see Tolchin 1992). At the time, the US did not know the precise number of troops. See Garthoff (1987: 21–22n30) for a discussion of the estimates.

Text Box 13.1 Nutshell Summary: Cuban Missile Crisis

1. On October 15, an American U-2 spy plane flying over Cuba takes photos indicating that missile sites are being constructed, presumably by the Soviet Union.
2. The next morning JFK forms a special group, which will eventually become the Ex Comm, to assess the situation. The president concludes, on the basis of a CIA presentation, that MRBM and perhaps IRBM sites are being constructed and that the US must respond vigorously to the placement of missiles in Cuba.
3. The group debates whether the US should respond with an air strike (followed by an invasion) or a naval quarantine. By October 20 the president's position that a quarantine should be ordered is enacted.
4. The president addresses the nation on October 22. He reveals the presence of the missiles, demands their removal, and initiates a naval quarantine. He threatens a full retaliatory nuclear response on the Soviet Union if any nuclear missile is fired from Cuba on any Western Hemisphere nation.
5. On October 24, Soviet ships stop in the water and/or turn around as the quarantine is initiated. Dean Rusk quips to Bundy, "We're eyeball-to-eyeball, and I think the other fellow just blinked." The alert level is raised to Defcon 2.
6. Nonetheless, the US still needs to enforce the quarantine and does so on October 25–26, intercepting two ships and boarding one. No contraband is found and the ships are permitted to continue.
7. On October 26, John Scali, a correspondent at ABC, is approached by the Russians with a possible deal, whereby the Russians would remove the missiles in exchange for a US promise never to invade Cuba. A similar proposal is made more formally in a private letter from Khrushchev to JFK later the same day.
8. On October 27, a second letter from Khrushchev adds the condition that in return for Russia's removing its missiles from Cuba, the US must remove its missiles from Turkey. The US responds positively only to the October 26 letter and ignores this second letter.
9. That evening RFK meets with Dobrynin, telling him that a commitment must be given that the missiles be removed by the next day or the US will remove them. He outlines the letter JFK sent to Khrushchev, which states that in return for the removal of the missiles the US will agree never to invade Cuba. Dobrynin asks about removing the missiles in Turkey; RFK says there can be no quid pro quo but that the president had planned to remove the missiles much earlier and that in a short time they would be gone.
10. The next day, October 28, the Soviet Union announces that the missiles in Cuba will be crated and returned to the USSR.

The second piece of information that came to light is the event associated with Soviet naval officer Vasili Arkhipov.[26] On October 27, at the height of the crisis, the US navy forced the submarine B-59 Arkhipov was on to surface by dropping depth charges on it. At the time, the US did not know that most of the Soviet subs were equipped with one nuclear-tipped torpedo in addition to Soviet standard torpedoes (Savranskaya 2005: 234, 249). The sub had lost contact with Russia and did not know if war had already broken out. The captain of the sub wanted to launch its nuclear torpedo at the ships, but this required the agreement of all three officers. Vasili Arkhipov was the only one who refused, thereby effectively stopping the launch. If he had agreed and the nuclear torpedo had been launched and likely hit such close targets, it is very unclear what the US response would have been. Savranskaya (2005: 251) believes that some nuclear counterresponse was in the cards.[27] All-out nuclear war would not have been the likely immediate response, but the incident illustrates how escalation can occur even when it is not intended. It must also be kept in mind that this incident occurred during the most intense day of the crisis. In both cases these two pieces of recent information indicate that the world was closer to nuclear war than had been thought at the time.

Text Box 13.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

The strategic balance between the USSR and the US, as well as the concerns about it on each side, precipitates the Cuban Missile Crisis. This means *relative capability* is the major variable at the root of the crisis (see Table 13.1). The crisis begins with Khrushchev's placing missiles in Cuba in order to redress a perceived imbalance in the number of missiles. This seemingly changes the balance; it lessens the US lead, which was one motive for the USSR initiating the crisis, even though certain key actors, like McNamara, thought that Soviet missiles did not make any substantial difference. Of equal importance to the US is the *proximity* of the missiles – ninety miles away from the US homeland. Additionally, the US interprets the placement of missiles in its own neighborhood as a challenge that, if unanswered, would lead to other provocative acts, particularly in Berlin.

[26] Details of the incident were first brought to light for the general public by Wilson (2012), but also see the revelations in Savranskaya (2005: 246–247).

[27] Mueller (2021: 44–45) gives a much more sanguine analysis of this incident, which he thinks was unlikely to give rise to a war, but this is a best-case scenario.

Table 13.1 *Variable summary for the Cuban Missile Crisis: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Relative capabilities	Major	X	
Proximity	Major	X	
Nature of the issue	Major	X	
System structure	Major		X
Bargaining strategy	Major		X
Previous history	Moderate	X	
Rivalry	Moderate	X	
Arms races	Moderate	X	
Alliances	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Domestic politics	Minor	X	
Democracy	None		
Norms	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

Secondary to the strategic concern (or perhaps equal to it in Khrushchev's mind), the placement of Soviet missiles and troops, as well as tactical nuclear weapons, in Cuba protects Castro from an invasion that seems highly probable to the two of them. From Castro's perspective, this concern about invasion brings a *territorial issue* into play. Because the territory is very salient to all three major players, contention over it raises the possibility of war significantly.

Of course, the role of nuclear weapons and the *system structure* of mutual assured destruction (MAD) shapes the interactions between all the parties. Nuclear weapons raise the provocation threshold, and the prospect of a nuclear holocaust incentivizes the leaders to seek a way to avoid nuclear war. After their initial threats, their *bargaining strategy* moves toward trying to create some trade-based deal. Each leader acts prudently, taking steps to ensure things do not get out of control. Ultimately, the crisis comes to an end and war is avoided, not because of nuclear deterrence or compellence – even though Khrushchev removes the missiles under threat – but because both leaders make a deal. That deal results from the threat of nuclear war; without nuclear weapons, a military confrontation would have occurred, one that would have likely resulted in a war. Indeed, events that could have occurred, and that were not known at the time (e.g., the presence of tactical nuclear weapons and the *Vasili Arkhipov* incident), could have easily resulted in a military confrontation, or perhaps a partial nuclear exchange or a full-blown nuclear war. There are even those on both sides – most notably Curtis LeMay and Castro – who seriously suggested the use of nuclear

weapons. Leaders rein in both of these hard-liners, though, making *domestic politics* (and weak allies) a variable of only minor influence, even though JFK was concerned about domestic criticism and the upcoming elections.

In the end, relative capabilities, proximity, the nature of the issue, system structure, and bargaining strategy are the major key variables at play. *Previous history* plays an important, but moderate, role in the crisis. Berlin – the most significant US–Soviet crisis in the actors' previous history – reached a climax in the year prior to this crisis (1961; see Chapter 12). Additional incidents, however, influence perceptions during the Cuban Missile Crisis as well. The Vienna summit perhaps gives Khrushchev the impression that he can take advantage of Kennedy and that the latter lacks resolve. The Bay of Pigs invasion (as well as other acts, like Operation Mongoose, where the US tries to overthrow Castro) makes Khrushchev see Castro's fears of an invasion as something to be taken seriously.

Such events encourage the crisis to escalate. The long Cold War rivalry heightens this effect. Without the repetition of crises going back to 1947, concerns about relative capability would not have been seen as serious. *Rivalry*, therefore, plays a key underlying causal role, even though its immediate impact in this specific crisis is more moderate. *Hostility* is also an important underlying cause but, except at the very beginning, it does not shape the interactions of Kennedy and Khrushchev; it therefore has only a minor impact. Both leaders keep their emotions and potential anger under control.[28]

Lastly, arms races exert a moderate effect on crisis dynamics. There is no data pointing to an ongoing arms race between the US and the USSR either before or after (1960–1964) the crisis (Sample 1997). This is largely because arms race data rely on synchronized measures of total military spending, and the synchronization of Soviet spending, which is tied to five-year plans, is slow at best. Nonetheless, there undoubtedly exists a nuclear arms race between the two states; the USSR tries to "catch up" with the US, starting in 1949 and continuing through the 1957 Sputnik launch and beyond. This crisis itself, as well as persistent concerns in both states about first- and second-strike capabilities, indicate that the nuclear arms race features moderately in the thinking of both Khrushchev and the Ex Comm. The buildup undertaken by JFK after entering office further heightens such concerns; it threatens to make

[28] Hostility can be said to play a role when it led Khrushchev to place missiles in Cuba as a way of retaliating for US missiles in Turkey. Hostility was generated in the US by the surprise the missiles caused and the subsequent anger.

the Soviet nuclear arsenal even weaker, thereby giving Khrushchev yet another reason for pursuing the quick fix of placing missiles in Cuba.

Alliances play a relatively minor role. Although Cuba is an ally of the USSR, and one the Russians need and want to support, Khrushchev is not about to let his ally drag him into a nuclear war (see Garthoff 2001: 186). Similarly, Turkey and NATO are US allies that JFK has to consider during the crisis – in terms of not only the missiles in Turkey but also of how his decisions might drag them into a nuclear war (see R. Kennedy 1999: 74–75). Nevertheless, these are relatively minor considerations from the US perspective. Finally, *norms*, *democracy*, and *wishful thinking* do not play any role, but, contrary to the institutional explanation of the democratic peace, JFK (the executive) actively opposes the invasion option, in contrast to the congressional leaders he consulted.

Theoretical Analysis

The Cuban Missile Crisis is unusual in that several conferences involving the participants have been held to discuss in public what precisely happened during the crisis. Also, with *glasnost*, archives in the Soviet Union were opened and several of the participants have been interviewed, giving scholars better insight as to what occurred on the Russian side. The case, along with this new material, raises five important theoretical questions. First, was the crisis resolved because of nuclear deterrence (or compellence) or because a bargain was worked out by both sides? Second, and related to the first, what role did nuclear weapons play in the crisis and in preventing all-out war? Third, how close did the two sides come to nuclear war and, although it did not occur, how might it have come about? Fourth, why did Khrushchev put the missiles in Cuba? And lastly, what was the role of bureaucratic politics in US foreign policy?

First and foremost, did deterrence or a successful bargain prevent war? Was this a case in which successful negotiation met mutual needs so as to avoid war, rather than push a coercive advantage that would give victory to one side? Such questions are not easy to answer since aspects of both nuclear deterrence and bargain-making played a role – and one did not work alone to the exclusion of the other. Nonetheless, the public pledge not to invade Cuba was traded for the removal of the Russian missiles. In addition, the subsequent removal of US missiles in Turkey made the outcome seem more like a bargain than an outcome of successful coercion.

The American decision to trade the Turkish missiles was more a political concession than a strategic one (Lebow and Stein 1994: 44; see also Maxwell Taylor's comment in Blight and Welch 1989: 82). A Polaris

sub could replace the Jupiter missiles in Turkey and even be less vulnerable. The US had considered such a substitution before the crisis, and as a result it did not give up as much in the trade; it merely gave Khrushchev something he really wanted.[29] This illustrates the utility of one of Morgenthau's (1960: 564–563) rules of diplomacy: "Give up the shadow of worthless rights for the substance of real advantage."

A second important theoretical question is, What role did nuclear weapons play in the crisis? Realists believe that nuclear deterrence, when operating under MAD, prevents crises from escalating to war (Waltz 1981; Mearsheimer 1993). The Berlin 1961 crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis are consistent with such a claim. While there are those who question whether nuclear weapons have or will continue to play such a role (see Kugler 1984; Mueller 1988; Vasquez 1991), there is widespread consensus that nuclear weapons have raised the "provocation threshold" (Lebow 1981: 277). In the Cuban Missile Crisis there is no doubt that nuclear weapons raised the "provocation threshold"; they prevented a provocation that would have likely gone to war in the past from doing so now. The evidence indicates that both leaders were concerned about things getting out of control and the prospect that escalation to nuclear war might occur. Indeed, Lebow and Stein (1994: 143–144) argue that "Kennedy feared that escalation would set in motion a chain of events that could lead to nuclear war." We see similar sentiments in Khrushchev's first letter of October 26, where he was concerned that escalation to nuclear war might occur in the presence of military confrontations despite any best efforts to prevent it – "if indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war" (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 66). Khrushchev cautioned, "If people do not show wisdom … they will clash, like blind moles" and "extermination will begin" (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 68). He practically pleaded with the US president, "we and you ought not to pull on the ends of the rope … [tied to] the knot of war" (quoted in R. Kennedy 1999: 68).

We now know that Khrushchev's concerns were not purely theoretical. After sending the October 26 letter, as if to confirm his suspicions about how things could get out of control, Khrushchev received a letter from Castro (again not known at the time) indicating that he expected an invasion within twenty-four to seventy-two hours and that if it should occur Khrushchev should never allow the imperialists to "launch the first nuclear strike" (October 26 letter to Khrushchev from Castro reprinted

[29] There was, however, a cost in terms of relations with Turkey in that it was not pleased. In addition, a sub reduced American benefits of what is called "alliance institutionalization," which is seen as making nuclear proliferation less likely (see Lee 2021).

in Blight et al. 1993: 481). Khrushchev interpreted this as a call for a preemptive nuclear war, and he feared that Castro was becoming irrational (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 490). He consequently cautioned, if not reprimanded, Castro that his suggestion would result in a thermonuclear world war: "In the end, Cuba would have been burned in the fire of war … we are not struggling against imperialism in order to die" (letter to Castro from Khrushchev reprinted in Blight et al. 1993: 486; for Castro's reply, see Blight et al. 1993: 364). Khrushchev was not about to sacrifice the Soviet Union for Cuba (Garthoff 2001: 186). As it was, Castro later made it difficult to implement Khrushchev's agreement with Kennedy by refusing to permit the US to inspect Cuban territory to see if the weapons had been removed. Later, after the announcement of the agreement, Castro had his troops surround the missile bases (Garthoff 1987: 63; Blight and Welch 1989: 56); he would not withdraw those troops until he was persuaded by Mikoyan, who was sent to Cuba on October 31 to get Castro to accept the agreement.

Kennedy was also quite concerned about how easily things could get out of hand through some of the actions being proposed in the Ex Comm. A strike on missiles in Cuba could easily lead to a Russian strike on missiles in Turkey, and the president asked how in that case Turkey, the US, and NATO should respond. Politically more dangerous would be any Soviet move on Berlin in retaliation for any US move on Cuba. In Berlin, the US was committed to using nuclear weapons (and using them first) to match Soviet local conventional superiority. Discussions within the US (e.g., by McNamara and others) about replacing massive retaliation with a "flexible response" could mean that a nuclear war might be fought more slowly – attacking only military targets initially rather than population centers, thereby avoiding an immediate all-out catastrophe. Such a strategy would be based on coercive nuclear escalation, which might make the initiation of a nuclear war more likely and therefore complicate decision-makers' ability to keep things from getting out of control. More immediate concerns were that LeMay and others in the military were convinced that American nuclear superiority would restrain any Soviet response to an air strike – a position that JFK openly questioned in the Ex Comm (see R. Kennedy 1999: 28–29). "LeMay talked openly about a first strike," according to McNamara (Blight and Welch 1989: 29; see also R. Kennedy 1999: 91).[30] All of this made JFK

[30] Garthoff (2001: 33) reports that a three-star general stated during the crisis that if the US struck first, he was quite sure that they would destroy most of the Soviet strategic forces – "at least 90 percent, and possibly 100 percent" – before they reached the US (Garthoff 1987: 113).

aware of how easily, given the right Soviet provocation, things could shift toward a more hard-line within the Ex Comm.

A related theoretical issue is what precise role nuclear weapons played in the crisis. Even though the bargain(s) Khrushchev and Kennedy made defused and ended the crisis, at the same time there is little doubt that they sought to defuse the crisis because of the fear that nuclear war instilled in both. This made each leader cautious. A sense of prudence made each leader unwilling to take actions that would risk nuclear war, and on the whole they avoided using the risk of nuclear war as a coercive tactic – that is, they avoided putting their opponent in the position of either going to nuclear war or surrendering (as in nuclear brinksmanship).[31]

The caution caused by the devastation that nuclear war would bring about, plus the clear acceptance by Kennedy and Khrushchev that nuclear war was unwinnable, made each actively seek to avoid a such a war. In the end, we now know from McNamara that Kennedy was deterred by his unwillingness to risk even a single Soviet nuclear weapon landing on American soil (see his comment in Blight and Welch 1989: 193; see also Lebow and Stein 1994: 108; Hershberg 2010: 73).

The same dread of nuclear war and the prudence it instilled in both leaders also made them open to solutions and to compromise. In this way, nuclear weapons worked to *compel* Khrushchev to remove the missiles; they did so, however, because Khrushchev could obtain something valuable to both the Soviets and its allies, particularly Cuba – namely, a US pledge not to invade Cuba (and later, the removal of the missiles in Turkey).

Could it therefore be said that nuclear deterrence prevented nuclear war? This is a more difficult conclusion to draw. The logic of nuclear deterrence predicts that neither side will launch an attack because it believes that the other side can effectively and credibly retaliate and destroy it, even if it attacks the opponent first. Kennedy set up such a scenario in his televised speech when he warned against the launching of any offensive missile from Cuba. The Soviets, however, did not seem to have any such "first" launch in mind when they placed the missiles in Cuba. We also do not have any evidence that Khrushchev planned any such launch in the future. In a sense, then, there was no deterrence, for there was no realistic threat of a nuclear attack being made.

[31] Garthoff (1987: 114) makes a similar point, quoting JFK's 1963 American University commencement address, during which JFK said that "nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war." A similar lesson was drawn by Russian commentators. See Garthoff's (1987: 126–127) discussion of Fedor Burlatsky.

While it could be argued that such a threat was present in the Berlin crisis of 1961, especially on the American side to prevent a conventional attack (see Chapter 12), an explicit threat to go to nuclear war was not at the center of either Khrushchev's or JFK's actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis. What is more empirically relevant is that the classical doctrine of nuclear deterrence did not work to prevent the kind of unplanned nuclear war that almost happened during the Cuban Missile Crisis. That leads to the third theoretical issue – namely, How close did the world come to nuclear war and how could nuclear war have come about?[32] At the time, conventional wisdom thought we had come closer to nuclear war in Cuba than in the 1961 Berlin crisis.[33] In both cases, the USSR and the US were going to the brink of war to get their way and thought the danger of nuclear war would cause the other side to back down. This was part of the logic of nuclear brinksmanship and nuclear coercive diplomacy. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence was thought to be logically sound enough that war would not actually occur; neither side could win such a war, so starting one was irrational. Nevertheless, the conventional wisdom recognized that both sides were willing to risk nuclear war and that something could go awry.[34] Berlin 1961 was seen as coming close to nuclear war because Khrushchev thought he could use his local numerical troop advantage to win a nonnuclear miliary confrontation over Berlin. Kennedy appeared not only willing to threaten nuclear war to prevent such a loss, but also committed to doing so.[35] The stream of

[32] See Dobbs (2008) for a review of incidents not included herein.

[33] Kennedy estimated the probability of the Soviets starting a war as "somewhere between one out of three and even" (quoted in Lebow and Stein 1994: 119; see also Garthoff 2001: 181). There were other indicators of the danger of war. On Saturday, October 27, the president distributed envelopes to Ex Comm members containing instructions for them and their families in case they would have to evacuate because of war (Lebow and Stein 1994: 118–119). That evening, as he returned to the Pentagon, McNamara wondered whether he was seeing his last sunset (Lebow and Stein 1994: 145). Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union Moscow functionaries sent their families to the countryside (Zubok 2007: 150).

[34] The difference between the hawks and doves within the Ex Comm basically rested on which belief each side emphasized. For hawks – like Nitze, LeMay, and Maxwell Taylor – assured destruction meant Khrushchev would never go to nuclear war. For doves – like Robert Kennedy, McNamara, and the president – the concern was that something might go awry or that the hawks in either the Soviet Union or the US might start a nuclear war. For an analysis of the differences between hawks and doves and who they were in terms of their beliefs about the likelihood or risk of war, see Garthoff (2001: 181–182) and the detailed discussion based on interviews in Blight and Welch (1989: chs. 3 and 4).

[35] It should be noted that fighting such a nuclear war in 1961 or 1962 would be based on the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP). McNamara considered this "a totally unreal war plan" because of the high causalities it assumed on the part of the US and Europe (Blight and Welch 1989: 33, see also pp. 63, 69).

refugees out of East Berlin diverted attention to a certain extent, and the crisis ended with the building of the wall rather than a resolution of the issues that started the crisis. Cuba got closer to the brink because the actual use of military force (the quarantine and the prospect of an air strike/invasion) made it more likely that military escalation could occur.

The new information regarding the presence of Soviet tactical nuclear weapons and the episode involving Vasili Arkhipov demonstrates how specific incidents involving military action can easily escalate to the use of some nuclear weapon. Both incidents could have involved some such use; the American response would have determined how much further escalation might have gone thereafter. The pressure for some response would have been immense, and it is more conceivable that there would have been some nuclear response rather than none, even though it is not known what that response would have been.

What is clear is the path through which a nuclear exchange or war might emerge. That path would have arisen out of local battlefield conditions where the subsequent war was neither expected nor planned. For example, one side (in this case the USSR/Cuba) might use a nuclear device in an unplanned attack, after which the other side would respond in kind to avoid losing the crisis and/or the immediate military confrontation. Although escalation to the nuclear level out of local battlefield conditions was something recognized as far back as Kahn (1965).[36] It was unknown that certain battlefield conditions could give rise to the use of a nuclear weapon that would come as a surprise because it would be unanticipated. This surprise could come from use of tactical nuclear weapons whose deployed location is unknown or the decision of a submarine commander to launch a nuclear torpedo on his own, without direct orders from the central government. The new information about the Cuban Missile Crisis reveals the real possibility that a path to nuclear war is one that could arise from unanticipated events. Such a path can be seen as involving an *inadvertent war*.

Some have argued that accidental or unintentional wars simply do not occur.[37] While it is true that after the fact one can find an intention to go to war on at least one side (this would be true even in the Cuban Missile Crisis if it had escalated to war), this does not mean that wars may not result from escalation of an event that neither side intended to result in war. Aristotle's distinction between efficient and final causes is useful here.

[36] Similarly, "*Hawks, Doves, & Owls* … concludes that the most likely scenario for a nuclear war was escalation from a conventional war" (Nye in Blight and Welch 1989: 89, citing Allison et al. 1985: 235).

[37] See Mueller (2021: 43), based on conclusions by Luard (1986: 232) and Blainey (1973: 141), but Mueller does list the 1969 Football War as an exception.

An efficient cause describes the process through which something may come about. A final cause refers to why something occurred. When we speak of a path to war resulting from an unanticipated event, we are referring to efficient causes – that is, the process by which war may come about – not to any final or underlying cause in terms of the purpose that brought about war. In the path to nuclear war we have outlined, the battlefield conditions escalate in a way that does not reflect an immediate intention on the part of the top leaders to initiate an all-out war – hence the path involves an element of inadvertency. The lesson is that even when leaders are actively trying to avoid war, things may occur that they cannot control and war may result.

This path to nuclear war is not something that was likely to occur in the Berlin crisis, where nuclear war would be seen as the direct outcome of crossing a "red line." It was also not the path to war JFK referred to in his October 22 speech; there, he committed to fully retaliating against the Soviet Union if any offensive missile was launched from Cuba against any Western Hemisphere nation. Nevertheless, the path to war through unanticipated battlefield escalation concerned JFK and Khrushchev; they worried what might happen if things got out of control. For instance, when JFK thought that the Russians could respond to an air strike on Cuba by striking Turkey, he ordered that the nuclear warheads on the Jupiter missiles in Turkey be defused so that they could be launched only on his orders (R. Kennedy 1999: 74). Likewise, local Soviet commanders had early on been given the authority to use tactical nuclear weapons in battle if they saw fit, but on October 22, out of fear that such authority could lead to nuclear war, Khrushchev was convinced (after prolonged debate within the Presidium) to retain control and restore the requirement that any use had to be approved by Moscow (Zubok 2007: 146–147; Radchenko 2015: 193–194; see also Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 473).[38] Despite such efforts, Khrushchev was not able to keep full control over local Soviet commanders. The shooting down of a U-2 on October 27, for example, was ordered by the Soviet defense commander in Cuba without the approval, or even the knowledge, of Moscow (Garthoff 2001: 173).[39] According to Sergei

[38] See the analysis of Blight et al. (1993: 352–355), who have found some documentary evidence to support aspects of General Anatoly Gribkov's account at the Havana conference. Khrushchev granted the local commander pre-authorization to use nuclear weapons, but rescinded it on October 22. Nonetheless, as Abram Chayes notes (in Blight and Welch 1989: 59), even if Khrushchev was the only one who had the authority to use tactical nuclear weapons, "it didn't follow that he was the only one with the ability" to launch them.

[39] See Garthoff (1987: 52n79) for some interesting reading on various stories regarding the U-2 shooting that were circulating at the time.

Khrushchev, it was at this moment, and not before, that Khrushchev felt things were "slipping out of control" and that the missiles therefore had to be removed or disaster would loom (Jervis 2015: 16).

McNamara had similar concerns about local commanders. For example, he spoke to Admiral Anderson about how the quarantine would be enforced. The admiral stated – according to McNamara's recounting of the story – that "the Navy had been running blockades since the days of John Paul Jones, and if I would leave them alone they would run this one successfully as well," at which point McNamara indicated that "no force would be applied without my permission; and that would not be given without discussion with the President. 'Was that understood?' I asked. The tight-lipped response was 'Yes'" (Blight and Welch 1989: 64). What McNamara tried to convey to the admiral, which the latter never really grasped, was that the quarantine was "a political signal … not a textbook military operation" (Blight and Welch 1989: 63). Treating it as a military action was dangerous because that could lead to a military response that might get out of control.

An obvious fourth theoretical question is, Why did Khrushchev decide to put missiles in Cuba in the first place?[40] Even after *glasnost*, we are still not sure of Khrushchev's motives.[41] In his memoirs, Khrushchev reported that he initially got the idea while vacationing on the Black Sea in Bulgaria; there, it was pointed out to him that just across the beautiful water lay American offensive missiles ready to destroy him and all of the Soviet Union.[42] He mentioned at the time and later that he would like to put the Americans in a position where they would know what it is like to have missiles on their border, and he believed that the Americans would learn in time to live with the missiles, just as the Soviets had learned to live with the Turkish missiles (Lebow and Stein 1994: 73; Jervis 2015: 9). Despite this, the official reason Khrushchev gave – and persisted in arguing during and after the crisis – was that the missiles were there to protect Cuba, then under serious threat of a US invasion. Khrushchev rightly

[40] Although Khrushchev was the dominant figure, this decision and several others were discussed and approved within the Presidium, and sometimes with debate after the October 22 JFK speech was announced (see Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 439–444, 467–474).

[41] See Radchenko (2015) for a critical assessment of all Soviet sources available. It should be noted that Morgenthau (1960: 6–7) was skeptical of how useful identifying motives is for understanding foreign policy. See Rosato (2021) for a recent study of intentions in foreign policy and whether knowing a protagonist's intentions is really possible.

[42] See Lebow and Stein (1994: 72–73) for more details and other versions of the origins of the idea. See also Fyodor Burlatsky's comment in Blight and Welch 1989: 229. Fursenko and Naftali (2006: 434) also mention that his thinking in Bulgaria occurred in the context of preceding concerns about improving the Soviet strategic position and about ongoing events in Thailand and Laos.

believed, as he said, that the United States was trying to overthrow the Cuban government (R. Kennedy 1999: 68). This was certainly a motive, especially since there appeared to be a real threat of an invasion at the time. For instance, the US was planning a large military exercise code-named ORTSAC (Castro spelled backwards) to overthrow a dictator on the Caribbean mythical island of Viegues, and Khrushchev was aware of this exercise (Garthoff 1987: 36; Zubok 2007: 149). Nevertheless, no one in the American government at the time saw this as Khrushchev's real motive (Garthoff 1987: 25).

Zubok (2007 :143) puts the invasion motive within a larger context. Protecting Cuba was part of Khrushchev's larger strategy of keeping the imperialists on the run and pushing Communism forward. Just as Berlin was part of Khrushchev's "meniscus" strategy (see Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 414–415), so was Cuba. A setback on Cuba would be regarded as a defeat in this long-term struggle, which he could not permit. Losing Cuba would be seen as a setback to the idea that Communism was "on the march." It would be a defeat in the rivalry with the United States and a victory for those in the US who wanted to roll back Communism (Zubok and Pleshakov 1996: 261; see also Jervis 2015: 12).[43]

Castro had asked for SAMs and 10,000 troops back in September 1961, but the Soviets had dragged their feet, offering only 3,000 troops. Then, suddenly in June 1962, an unexpected offer of offensive missiles came forward. Castro did not believe that their purpose was solely to protect the island; he suspected Khrushchev had other motives. Indicating as such, he nevertheless accepted the missiles (see Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 436–439). Even though the threat of an invasion seems to be a real motive and a real threat posed by the US at the time, in the end Khrushchev accepted a mere US promise not to invade in the future in return for a public removal of the missiles in the present.[44] Unbeknownst to JFK, Khrushchev also removed the tactical nuclear weapons that were the real defense against an invasion, partly because of concerns about Castro (see Radchenko 2015: 194–195).

[43] Radchenko (2015 :188) refers to this motive as one that emphasizes Khrushchev's romanticism and idealism.

[44] No formal signed agreement regarding the no-invasion promise could be reached and in the end the exchange of letters and the oral promise would suffice (see Garthoff 2001: 180). The promise, however, did not include ending covert attempts to overthrow Castro, which continued until 1965 (Garthoff 1987: 91). The failure to come up with a formal agreement was, in part, a result of the United States' not wanting to give a written commitment until the inspection issue was settled (see Garthoff 1987: 80). What is amazing is that later administrations accepted this promise and did not attempt any invasion.

Another motive that Khrushchev likely held was to put missiles in Cuba as a way to redress the strategic nuclear advantage of the US. The American advantage became clear once the alleged "missile gap" – an issue in the 1960 US presidential campaign – was debunked (see George and Smoke 1974: 450, 455–457; Blight and Welch 1989: 116, 118; Lebow and Stein 1994: 34–37; Gellman 2021: 28). Pointed remarks by Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric in an October 21 speech asserted that the US had a second-strike ability that was "at least as extensive as what the Soviets can deliver by striking first" (quoted in Lebow and Stein 1994: 37). The speech was reinforced a couple of weeks later by McNamara, who stated that US nuclear capability was "several times that of the Soviets" (quoted in Lebow and Stein 1994: 38). A major problem, as American intelligence revealed, was that the Soviets had few operational missiles compared to the US, giving the latter a clear superiority, which Khrushchev realized (see Lebow and Stein 1994: 38).[45] Added to this was the major arms buildup Kennedy had passed in Congress after entering office.[46] Fursenko and Naftali (2006: 506) believe that creating parity with the US was Khrushchev's primary motive for placing missiles in Cuba and that the defense of Cuba was not the principal reason (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 485).[47] Others, like Zubok (2001) and Radchenko (2015: 187), disagree, arguing that there were other motives of equal or greater weight than just the strategic considerations.

Even if Fursenko and Naftali (2006) are correct, it is important to point out that the fear of an invasion played a prominent role in Soviet decision-making. For instance, according to Fursenko and Naftali (2006: 455), the first decision to send tactical nuclear weapons was taken by Khrushchev on September 7 in reaction to Kennedy's September 4 speech. He feared that JFK's request for authority to call up 150,000

[45] According to Lebow and Stein (1994: 35), the US had 27 operational missiles plus three Polaris submarines with 48 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) by the spring of 1961. By the end of 1962 the US had 200 operational missiles and 9 subs with 144 SLBMs. The USSR had 20 to 35 operational ICBMs and no long range SLBMs, but they did have short-range SLBMs. This calculation does not include the considerable bomber force on each side. Garthoff's (2001: 31) comments at the Hawks Cay conference give higher numbers for each side (but using different criteria). He said that the US had 156 ICBMs and 144 Polaris SLBMs, while the Soviets had 44 ICBMs and 97 SLBMs in diesel subs, which had to surface before firing.

[46] This may very well have added to Khrushchev's concerns about the imbalance, as McNamara acknowledged after the fact (Lebow and Stein 1994: 42).

[47] It should also be noted that an underlying reason for Khrushchev's motive to redress the balance was to get Kennedy to agree to an improvement in relations, since he believed that the Americans would be agreeable to this only if they believed the Russians were equal to them in power. He had been entertaining the idea of a "grand settlement" since 1959 during the Eisenhower administration (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 455).

reserves might indicate that the US was planning to invade Cuba. An even more important example occurred in anticipation of what JFK would say in his October 22 speech. Khrushchev told the Presidium that the Soviets might have to use the tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba if there was a US invasion, fearing that "If we do not use nuclear weapons, then they could capture Cuba" (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 472). Indeed, from the time members of the Presidium got notification that the president would speak until the time they got the transcript anxiety was at fever pitch that Kennedy was going to announce some sort of invasion. Once they read the transcript of the speech they were relieved. Khrushchev said, "It seems to me by its tone … this is not war against Cuba but some kind of ultimatum" (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 474). He suggested that the Presidium adjourn for the night, but he decided to sleep in his office in the Kremlin in case of an emergency. Lastly, early on October 26 the Kremlin received information that the US was preparing an invasion for October 27. Although this was not firm intelligence, it did come from varied sources and was taken seriously by Khrushchev, who decided to move at once toward a diplomatic solution (Fursenko and Naftali 2006: 486). This means that regardless of JFK's immediate intentions, the prospect of an invasion was a key in Khrushchev's thinking and in his drive to resolve the crisis.

Whether in Khrushchev's mind the motive to redress the balance was more important than protecting Cuba is difficult to know, but most likely both played a role (see Radchenko 2015: 187, 190). Shortly after the crisis, in November 1962, Anastas Mikoyan, Khrushchev's close advisor and first deputy premier, stated as much, as did Khrushchev in his memoirs (Lebow and Stein 1994: 39–40). The actual deployments also reflected both motives; the tactical nuclear weapons and the presence of the Soviet brigades made the most sense for protecting against an invasion, while the missiles and the IL-28 bombers redress the strategic imbalance.[48] For Khrushchev, the missiles clearly enhanced the Soviet capability.[49] This was how American decision-makers saw it too, with some thinking that once they were operational Khrushchev would reveal their presence and make new demands, most likely on Berlin (Garthoff 1987: 28; see also Trachtenberg 1999: 353).

[48] Jervis (2015: 11) makes a similar point.

[49] There were twenty-four MRBM and sixteen IRBM launchers earmarked for delivery, with two missiles for each launcher, which would have redressed the balance. By October there were forty-two MRBMs in Cuba; the IRBMs were on their way when the quarantine was put into place (Garthoff 1987: 20n29; Lebow and Stein 1994: 38; see also Garthoff 2001: 172). During the crisis the US never knew if nuclear warheads had arrived for the missiles, but believed that they had not (Garthoff 1987: 74–75).

At the time, newspapers reported that the medium-range and (the planned) intermediate missiles in Cuba permitted the USSR to strike most of the US mainland (see Hershberg 2010: 74). For some, like McNamara, the new missiles did not pose a substantial change in the level of threat (Blight and Welch 1989: 23, 187); whether Americans were killed by a missile from Cuba or from the Soviet Union, they still would be dead (see also Lebow and Stein 1994: 98). Regardless, these missiles did provide a direct challenge to the US in its own backyard.

Motives, however, may not be the only causes at work. As Zubok (2007: 143) argues, placing the missiles in Cuba had much to do with Khrushchev's "impulsive personality" (see also Jervis 2015: 13). Someone like Brezhnev would not have taken such a decision. This idiosyncratic variable has to be taken into account, which means that the threat of invasion or the strategic imbalance did not alone cause the crisis.

Another factor, although not as central as the above three, was that Khrushchev wanted to refute Chinese criticism that Russia was not sufficiently aggressive in dealing with the West (Blight and Welch 1989: 117; Lebow and Stein 1994: 99; Jervis 2015: 13). All four factors came together in a self-reinforcing manner to bolster Khrushchev's decision-making.

A fifth theoretical question that the case raises – and which received attention early on – is, How can bureaucratic politics undercut the rational actor model that realist analysis uses to explain crisis decision-making? Graham Allison (1971) made this contribution.[50] He demonstrated how in a crisis of the highest order, where the president has even created a special high-level committee to recommend decisions and control the situation, bureaucratic influences can emerge to influence events. His analysis will not be repeated here, but some examples are worth noting. For instance, the navy pushed for a blockade because that would give it more control and more influence than an air strike, since the navy would run it. For similar reasons, the air force opted for an air strike. For Allison (1971), and later Allison and Halperin (1972) and Halperin (1974), such actions show that organizations within a state are guided by their own *organizational* and *bureaucratic* interest when making and recommending policy. The implication is that these interests can undercut the *national* interest.

Another example involves General LeMay. In 1957 when discussing how he would avoid nuclear vulnerability, Lemay said to Eisenhower's Gaither Commission that he would attack "before they take off" if he saw the Russians amassing their planes. When the cochair of the commission

[50] This seminal study was subsequently updated over twenty-five years later in Allison and Zelikow (1999) to include new revelations from Soviet sources.

pointed out that this was contrary to policy, LeMay said, "I don't care … It's my policy. That's what I'm going to do" (Blight and Welch 1989: 349n25, originally reported in F. Kaplan 1983: 133–134).

Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis

1. The first important lesson from this crisis involves the **relative influence of nuclear deterrence and bargain-making on the crisis outcome**. The Cuban Missile Crisis was clearly **ended with a negotiated bargain**. Nuclear weapons played a role; the prospect of MAD made both Kennedy and Khrushchev actively seek to avoid a nuclear war or even any military confrontation that might get out of hand. Compellence also played a role; JFK placed a quarantine on ships coming into Cuba and publicly demanded the missiles be removed. In addition, in the end Robert Kennedy gave an ultimatum that the missiles needed to be removed within one day or the US would remove them. This, however, was done in the larger context of an exchange of letters wherein the two leaders agreed to trade the removal of the missiles for a pledge not to invade. In Robert Kennedy's October 27 meeting with Dobrynin, the attorney general also gave assurances that the missiles in Turkey would be gone soon, which met the demands of the second Khrushchev letter, even though RFK insisted that there could be neither a quid pro quo nor a public agreement. On the whole, the bargaining aspect seems to be weightier in ending the crisis than the coercive aspect. Even insiders, like Garthoff (2001: 180), accept the interpretation that the case ends more due to a bargain than successful coercion. If one also looks at the crisis from a counterfactual perspective, it seems that if there were no bargain or trade, existing coercion would have led to an air strike, which in turn would have probably led to an invasion and then some sort of use of tactical nuclear weapons.

2. A second important lesson – also present in the 1961 Berlin crisis – is **that nuclear deterrence, in particular Type 1 (general) deterrence, does not always deter**. It certainly did not deter Curtis LeMay, who actually wanted to launch a nuclear strike and thought it would succeed. This stance was not simply risking nuclear war but actually thinking it could be won – a notion that contradicts the very foundation of deterrence, specifically the logic of MAD. More importantly, nuclear deterrence did not deter JFK; he maintained in his televised speech that the launching of an offensive missile would meet the full retaliatory response of the US – the same position he held in the 1961 Berlin crisis and one that we have no reason to question. If Type 1 deterrence, as Kahn (1960) called it, or "general deterrence," as it is known

today, worked, Kennedy should not have had this policy, nor should the US had ever had a policy of "extended deterrence." Indeed, as Kahn (1960) pointed out, Type 1 and Type 2 (extended) deterrence could not *both* work since they were logically contradictory. In the end, however, deterrence prevailed. The more dominant position held by both JFK and Khrushchev was that MAD was operative and something to be avoided at all costs; that sentiment carried the day, luckily for all of us.

Nonetheless, the horror and complete destruction of MAD made particular leaders in the US – for instance, McNamara – try to develop something between all-out nuclear war and surrender that would at the same time reduce the likelihood of deterrence failure. This was the notion of "flexible response," which McNamara broached publicly in his 1962 commencement speech at the University of Michigan (see also McNamara 1983: 64–69). In terms of fighting a nuclear war, the idea was to switch from an all-out massive response against cities to a narrower focus on destroying armed forces instead, the so-called counterforce doctrine.[51] Something like this may have influenced how the US might have responded to the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba, but we do not know how long such a restrained exchange could have been sustained. Of course, once implemented the doctrine of "flexible response" would make nuclear war more likely to be fought because it undercut MAD.

3. Despite the fact that deterrence did not always seem to work, an important policy lesson derived from this case at the time was that **a limited nuclear arsenal could in fact deter an opponent**. As McNamara noted after the fact, JFK in particular was unwilling to have any nuclear bombs land on the United States. Garthoff (2001: 183) notes a sentiment widely shared soon after the crisis that a modest but secure retaliatory response would be enough to deter countries (see also Abram Chayes' comment in Blight and Welch 1989: 25–26). McNamara concluded the same thing (Blight and Welch 1989: 199). Overkill was not needed. This assumption, of course, was the basis of France's nuclear deterrence and currently that of China's.

4. A fourth important lesson of this case is **how easily crises can get out of control and escalate to the nuclear level** once limited military force is used. This lesson is best illustrated by the two things not known at the time – the probable use of Soviet tactical nuclear weapons to block an invasion, and what might have happened if Vasili Arkhipov had not vetoed the firing of a nuclear torpedo.

[51] See Gavin (2001) for an analysis, based on de-classified documents, of how this policy was actually implemented.

5. On a more positive side, this case offers several insights into how leadership can manage a crisis to reduce the likelihood of war. Both Kennedy and Khrushchev show **the importance of leaders being *prudent* during a crisis**, a virtue that Morgenthau emphasized in his realist theory. Morgenthau (1960: 10) argued that in realist diplomacy it is important always to anticipate the consequences of one's actions and behave accordingly. Kennedy exhibited this by **looking down the decision tree** to see what the likely consequences of his actions might be, especially when he asked how the Soviets might respond in Berlin and in Turkey. Likewise, Khrushchev used the catastrophe of nuclear war to try to move both himself and Kennedy to find an alternative way out of the crisis and specifically to make a bargain. Khrushchev also seems concerned that an unintended consequence of his placing the missiles in Cuba might be his loss of control over them to his underlings or even his Cuban ally.[52] We do not know what precise impact Castro's letter about first use of nuclear weapons had on Khrushchev, but it seems to have made him more cautious and more desirous of a quick solution. Likewise, Curtis LeMay's suggestions had a similar effect on JFK.

The Soviet commentator Fyodor Burlatsky (see Garthoff 1987: 127) summarized some of the key lessons for crisis management from the Russian perspective as: maintaining close control over escalation, keeping direct communication open between leaders, being ready to compromise, and not pushing an adversary into a corner. He also added secret diplomacy, which he no doubt included to shield compromises from domestic hard-line criticism. All of these lessons were also learned by the Americans who were in charge of managing the crisis. Putting these crisis management techniques into practice is what made both leaders prudent.

6. **The last and most ominous lesson of this crisis is the role contingency might play in the onset of nuclear war**. It was best put by Robert Kennedy: "The 10 or 12 people who had participated in all these discussions were … bright and energetic people. We had perhaps amongst the most able in the country and if any one of half a dozen of them were President the world would have been very likely plunged into catastrophic war" (quoted in Schlesinger 1999: 14–15; see also Schlesinger 1978: 525). If Curtis LeMay had been president this would certainly have been true. The fact that Robert Kennedy thought there were five or six people like that on the Ex Comm is frightening. But we know that later, at the time of the Reagan administration, several commentators advocated for a US first strike and believed that the US could win a nuclear war (see, for example, Gray 1979; Gray and Payne 1980).

[52] See Garthoff (2001: 182) on the general concern about loss of control.

Assuming that Robert Kennedy's assessment was correct – and there is no reason to doubt that it was not – then one cannot rely on the logic of nuclear deterrence to convince everyone. This, in turn, means that whether nuclear war is fought could very well be contingent on the leaders in charge at any given moment. An important lesson of the Cuban Missile Crisis is that one cannot rely on Waltz's (1981) and Mearsheimer's (1993) confidence that the structure of MAD will make all leaders everywhere and at every time prudent and risk-averse, if only because the conditions of MAD may not always exist. This is particularly ominous in the long run because nuclear deterrence must work not only once, but ad infinitum, if the planet is to survive. Some better solution that involves less risk needs to be found.

14 The 1971–1973 Cod War

During the Cold War Iceland confronted the United Kingdom (UK) repeatedly – over fish. Given the importance of the fishing industry to the Icelandic economy, as well as to certain districts within the UK, domestic actors pressured both governments to adopt a hard-line bargaining stance. A series of escalatory events then unfolded – a general pattern repeated, to a certain extent, in each of four episodes: 1951–1956, 1958–1961, 1971–1973, and 1975–1976.[1] Iceland would first extend its maritime boundary, which the British resisted. Bargaining then occurred, but stalemated, at which point each side escalated its behavior. Iceland issued various threats and harassed British fishing vessels, while British officials sent the Royal Navy to protect British fishing vessels in the disputed waters. Low-level military clashes followed. Finally, against the backdrop of these maritime tangles, diplomacy continued, third parties intervened, and eventually Britain conceded. These various "Cod Wars" demonstrate the conditions under which democracies threaten or use military force against one another, even if they rarely do so.[2]

This chapter focuses on the 1971–1973 episode, primarily because it alone aligns with our case selection criteria. The 1951–1956 (first), 1958–1961 (second), and 1975–1976 (fourth) episodes do not significantly feature a major state on both sides of the crisis. In the 1971–1973 (third) episode, however, Icelandic actions created a different situation. Besides threatening to break diplomatic relations with Britain and to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Iceland also considered evicting the forces of the United States (US)

We owe a special thanks to Sara Mitchell, who shared the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) narratives on the Cod War disputes with us. The ICOW data appear online at www.paulhensel.org/icow.html.

[1] Other states feature in these episodes too (e.g., Belgium and West Germany). Most diplomatic and military action, however, occurs between the UK and Iceland. The chapter therefore mentions other actors as appropriate but focuses on British–Icelandic relations.

[2] On the term "Cod War," see "'Cod War' Dangers: Unpleasant End to Limericks?" *The Manchester Guardian*. September 10, 1958, p. 1.

from Keflavík air base (Ingimundarson 2003b). This gave the US a more direct substantive interest in the episode – an interest more closely aligned with the Icelandic position (i.e., opposite the British; for a similar situation, see Chapter 2). In the end, even though no chance of war existed between the US and UK, the former pressured the latter to reach a settlement with Iceland. The case therefore highlights not only the importance of third-party conflict management, but also that major states – even democracies and those linked by a long history of alignment or a special relationship with each other – can face serious disagreements.

Background

An extensive international legal regime exists today to govern maritime spaces: the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).[3] Its provisions, inter alia, supply common definitions (e.g., what constitutes the "territorial sea"); enumerate the rights of both coastal and non-coastal states (e.g., the right to "innocent passage" through the territorial sea); set guidelines for behavior on the high seas (e.g., to assist those in need of rescue); commit states to the preservation of marine resources; promote cooperation in scientific research; and establish a highly legalized, compulsory system to manage disputes that arise between states parties to the convention. UNCLOS, in other words, covers a staggering breadth of topics; yet, the agreement that we observe today belies the disagreement from which it initially arose (for a history of international law in this area, see Rothwell and Stephens 2010).

In September 1945, the US issued the Truman Proclamation, which claimed the "natural resources [e.g., oil] of the subsoil and sea bed of the continental shelf beneath the high seas but contiguous to the coasts of the United States as appertaining [exclusively] to the United States, subject to its jurisdiction and control."[4] This undercut the long-held norm that coastal states exercised sovereign jurisdiction over a narrower, uniform area of maritime space (usually – three to four miles; see Kent 1954). A flurry of similar claims followed, presenting a global problem. Continental shelves around the world range in width from less than a mile to 750 miles from the coast (on average, forty-two miles; Trumbull et al. 1958: 12). States with shorter (or no) continental shelves wanted rights equal to those with longer shelves, while those with more advanced technologies (i.e., for exploiting deepwater resources) wanted to protect

[3] The convention appears online at www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/closindx.htm.

[4] Proclamation 2667. Available at https://tinyurl.com/3n8c3yx8.

their ability to exploit marine resources further from their coast – and in areas that other coastal states might claim. Without further guidance and coordination, conflict proliferated, and global maritime borders entered a fluid, uncertain phase.

Iceland approached this environment with some caution (Jónsson 1982; Ingimundarson 2003b). The fishing industry played a critical role in the Icelandic economy. In 1970, for example, it alone supplied roughly 80 percent of Iceland's merchandise exports, employed approximately 15 percent of its working population, and accounted for roughly 15–20 percent of its gross domestic product (Agnarson and Arnason 2007). Domestic groups therefore pressured the Icelandic government to protect both the fishing industry and the resources on which it relied. In response, Iceland argued that excessive foreign fishing hurt fish stocks, thereby creating a long-term, salient threat to the Icelandic state. That argument provoked nationalist sentiment and encouraged a particular policy response – namely, a proactive policy that aggressively staked out and defended maritime resources.

At the same time, Iceland preferred to move incrementally. International law was "developing in Iceland's favour" (Jóhannesson 2004: 547). Iceland, moreover, needed international law to help constrain the actions of other states; it could not defend any extended maritime claims on its own. Mindful of this, Iceland initially upheld the long-standing norm of a three-mile maritime limit, while also claiming a right to control the fish stocks off its coast (Jóhannesson 2004: 545). To extend its maritime limits further, Iceland waited for precedent, which the UK quickly provided. In 1949, the UK initiated proceedings against Norway at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), arguing that Norway could not exclude the UK from certain fishing grounds within four miles of the Norwegian coast. The ICJ ruled in Norway's favor in December 1951, finding that Norway's claim to a four-mile maritime limit did not contradict international law.[5] Within three months, Iceland extended its own maritime limits to four miles.

The UK government responded indirectly. It supported the British trawler industry's embargo on Icelandic fish, which compelled Iceland to find other markets (Jóhannesson 2004). In 1953, amidst an intensifying Cold War, it signed an oil-for-fish agreement with the Soviet Union. This agreement alarmed the US. Iceland was not only a founding member of NATO but also offered the alliance a valuable strategic position for trans-Atlantic flights and submarine monitoring. A closer relationship

[5] The UK generally accepted Norway's four-mile limits but disagreed with Norway over how to define these limits given various geographic features. See Evensen (1952).

with the Soviet Union threatened that position. The US therefore pressured Britain to concede, which the UK did in 1956 (Jóhannesson 2004).

Against this backdrop, various actors laid the groundwork for a standardized, global maritime law. The first United Nations (UN) Conference on the Law of the Sea occurred from February 1956 to April 1958. During these deliberations, a twelve-mile fisheries limit emerged as a focal point. When the conference failed to reach agreement on the limits to the territorial sea, Iceland immediately seized upon this focal point. In May 1958, Iceland announced its intention to extend its fishing limits to twelve miles. This set off the 1958–1961 Cod War.[6]

A full account of the 1958–1961 Cod War lies beyond this chapter's scope. Nevertheless, a few of its characteristics merit attention because they feature prominently in later Cod Wars too. First, under pressure from the British Trawlers' Federation (BTF), the British used the Royal Navy to protect fishing vessels operating in the disputed waters. Second, domestic politics drove the Icelandic government's behavior as well; "no Icelandic politician could recommend caution or compromise" (Jóhannesson 2004: 570) because the British threat (and use) of force unified "the Icelandic nation, from Left to Right, for the first time since the Republic's foundation in 1944" (Jóhannesson 2004: 564). Third, Iceland leveraged its strategic position to pressure the British. Domestic actors demanded that Iceland withdraw from NATO and break diplomatic relations with Britain. The Icelandic government did not officially advance these demands at this point, but would do so in the later Cod Wars.

Finally, the British ultimately conceded. The 1958–1961 Cod War ended with an exchange of notes between Iceland and Britain (United Kingdom 1961). In this agreement the parties: (i) recognized Iceland's twelve-mile limits; (ii) defined those limits; (iii) permitted the UK to fish in certain geographic spaces for three years, subject to a rotating schedule; (iv) banned UK fishing in certain geographic spaces for three years; (v) noted that Iceland would supply six months' notice of any further extension; and (vi) prescribed that either party could refer any disagreement about a future extension to the ICJ. These provisions resolved the immediate dispute.

Historical Events

The 1971–1973 Cod War began rather innocuously.[7] After signing the 1961 agreement, the right-leaning Icelandic government maintained

[6] For a historical narrative of the First Cod War, see Jónsson (1982) and Jóhannesson (2004).

[7] This narrative draws largely on Hart (1976), Jónsson (1982: ch. 5), Ingimundarson (2003b), and United Kingdom (1973a).

power for another decade. International law continued to develop in the interim, pushing maritime boundaries farther from the shore and encouraging the left-leaning Icelandic opposition parties to call for yet another maritime limits extension. The right-leaning government wanted such an extension too, but its legal advisers believed that an extension was incompatible with international law at the time. Iceland would, in their view, first need to nullify the 1961 agreement, and it had no grounds on which to do so. Then, if it cleared that hurdle, it would have to wait for international law to catch up to Icelandic ambitions. This might take years. Indeed, in December 1970, the UN General Assembly decided to convene another Conference on the Law of the Sea – to begin in 1973.

Rather than wait, Icelandic leaders predicted that most states at the upcoming conference would support a more extensive maritime limit than the twelve-mile one that appeared in their 1961 agreement. After observing that no state had yet claimed more than a 200-mile limit, Iceland proposed a seemingly more moderate extension – to a fifty-mile limit (Ingimundarson 2003b: 99). This proposal featured prominently in Iceland's June 1971 elections. Because public opinion favored such an extension – and the incumbent government advanced a more complicated extension formula than the opposition – the incumbent government lost the election (Ingimundarson 2003b: 100). A new, left-leaning coalition government assumed power on July 14, 1971. That same day, the new prime minister, Ólafur Jóhannesson, announced the government's intention both to terminate the 1961 agreement and to extend Iceland's maritime limits from twelve to fifty miles, beginning on September 1, 1972.[8]

Within days, the UK ambassador handed the Icelandic foreign ministry an aide-mémoire, in which the UK "regretted" Iceland's decision to act "without prior consultation with or advance warning to the British Government" (United Kingdom 1973a: 9). More importantly, it argued that Iceland lacked the authority to terminate the 1961 UK–Iceland agreement unliterally. That agreement contained no termination clause and noted that any dispute about the further extension of limits should, "at the request of either party, be referred to the International Court of Justice" (United Kingdom 1961: 3). The UK consequently argued that the agreement remained in force.

[8] This dispute also involves West Germany. We omit the West Germans here, however, because (i) Iceland insisted on managing the dispute bilaterally, (ii) the West German response largely followed and coordinated with the British one, and (iii) the military confrontation occurs largely between the UK and Iceland.

Iceland adopted a different legal position (Jónsson 1982). It argued that the 1961 agreement constituted a quid pro quo; Iceland offered concessions to the UK (e.g., ICJ involvement in future disputes) because – at that time – the UK did not accept any twelve-mile maritime limits. The UK changed its position, however, in 1964, when it extended its *own* maritime limits to twelve miles. According to Iceland, this action significantly changed the situation.[9] The UK's concession to Iceland disappeared – and with it, the need for Iceland to (continue to) make any concessions as well. The 1961 agreement, in other words, served no further purpose. It therefore terminated.[10]

Icelandic officials visited London and Bonn in August 1972 in order to outline their position. They argued that the need for a fifty-mile limit derived from five interrelated considerations: (i) Iceland lacked any significant, non-maritime natural resources; (ii) all states control the resources they hold; (iii) if coastal states hold the resources below (i.e., oil) and attached to (i.e., living creatures) the seabed, then they must also hold the resources in the waters above that same seabed (i.e., fish);[11] (iv) overfishing threatened fish stocks; and (v) only coastal states were motivated to conserve fish stocks off their coastlines. The British response focused on two points. First, Iceland overestimated the risk to fish stocks, making conservation less immediately urgent.[12] Second, international law prohibited a unilateral extension of maritime limits. An extension could arise only through negotiation or an ICJ award (under the 1961 agreement). On these grounds, the UK offered only to reduce its fishing catch. Iceland rejected that offer, restated its intentions (August 30), and the UK protested yet again (September 27).

The British offered a similar catch reduction during talks on both November 3, 1971, in London and January 13, 1972, in Reykjavík. Iceland refused to negotiate further on these offers too, largely because they attempted to short-circuit discussion of the maritime limits extension that Iceland wanted. Each round of talks consequently ended without agreement, after which Iceland ratcheted up the pressure on Britain.

[9] *Rebus sic stantibus*, an international legal principle, maintains that "[w]hen a change occurs in the circumstances that formed the cause, motive, or raison d'être of the consent of the parties [to a treaty], … the treaty obligation ceases to be binding" (David 1975: 16).

[10] The new Icelandic government also claimed that Iceland signed the 1961 agreement under duress, since the British Royal Navy sat in the disputed waters. This, however, is a dubious argument.

[11] Iceland was slightly ahead of international law on this point – at least until the UNCLOS emerged in 1984. See also the 1958 UN Convention on the Continental Shelf, available at https://tinyurl.com/mrkhkc6n.

[12] On the status of Icelandic fisheries at the time, see Hart (1976:ch. 3).

For example, on November 15, 1971, Prime Minister Jóhannesson introduced a draft resolution in the Althing (the Icelandic parliament) to formalize the limits extension. Talks continued while Icelandic political parties debated the resolution. When the next round of Iceland–UK talks failed, the Althing passed the (now revised) resolution unanimously (February 15, 1972), and Jóhannesson asked the Nordic Council for diplomatic support (i.e., Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, in addition to Iceland). The Icelandic government also issued new regulations for extending the maritime limits to fifty miles and notified Britain (and West Germany) that it had officially abrogated the 1961 agreement (February 24).

Negotiations then moved outside the bilateral–ministerial level along three tracks. First, an Icelandic delegation traveled to London to meet with Austen Laing, director-general of the BTF on February 28–29, 1972. The BTF naturally wanted to maximize the space in which British trawlers might fish. It therefore advocated that the UK limit any Icelandic extensions. British policy responded to this advocacy.

At the February talks, Iceland proposed that British trawlers gradually withdraw from the newly extended fifty-mile area. In exchange, it asked the BTF to recognize its jurisdiction within that area. Laing rejected the offer. He reasoned that through such an action he would be implicitly agreeing that Iceland had a legitimate claim to all fish within the fifty-mile limit. Iceland could then decide whether and how to allocate fish-catch allowances from those waters among foreign and domestic fishing vessels. The BTF found this unacceptable. By April 1972, Laing publicly asserted that Iceland's "fish conversation issue was phony," worried that the new limits risked 100,000 jobs within the British fishing industry, and speculated that the new limits would cause British fish landings to fall by 20–30 percent (Hart 1976: 20–21). He consequently vowed to ignore Iceland's limits extension, with the expectation that the British Royal Navy would support the BTF's fishing vessels if necessary.

A second negotiation track involved the European Economic Community (EEC). In March 1972, the EEC offered a 50 percent tariff reduction on Icelandic fish products, but only if Iceland resolved its fishing disagreement with EEC member states (i.e., dropped its limit extension). Although Iceland refused to shift its policy, the EEC's conditions appeared in the final, negotiated tariff agreement that Iceland signed on July 22, 1972.[13] Implementation of the tariff agreement would therefore wait until 1975.

[13] Protocol No. 6, Regulation (EEC) No. 2842/72 of the Council of December 19, 1972. Available online at www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/1972/2842.

A third negotiation track used the ICJ. Seeing little progress in talks thus far and facing a recalcitrant Icelandic government, the UK invoked a clause from the 1961 agreement and filed an application with the ICJ on April 14, 1972. Iceland refused to participate in the ICJ proceedings – on the legal grounds that the ICJ lacked jurisdiction to hear the case. The ICJ moved forward anyway.

Bilateral talks resumed against the backdrop of the ICJ case. The parties first met in Reykjavík immediately after the UK court filing (April 18, 1972). At this meeting, the UK again proposed an interim agreement focused on a catch limit. It would accept a 12 percent reduction from its 1971 catch – a limit that still sat well above its catch in the years 1968–1970 (United Kingdom 1973a: 25). Iceland, however, also wanted some restrictions on foreign fishing vessels. These demands perhaps masked general opposition to British vessels; yet they also concerned differences between Icelandic and international law (Hart 1976: 21). Iceland did not permit its nationals to use the advanced technology that larger foreign vessels used for fishing, thereby putting the Icelanders at a disadvantage. To preserve the Icelandic share of the total fishing catch – a key goal of the Icelandic government – Iceland needed to restrict foreign vessels that operated with technologically advanced gear. That proved unsatisfactory to the British, and talks broke off again without agreement.

Further bilateral negotiations took place in London (May 24–25, 1972 and June 19–20, 1972) and Reykjavík (July 10–12, 1972). At these talks, Iceland first proposed an interim arrangement, under which Icelanders would hold exclusive fishing rights "in some areas," arrest British trawlers for violations, and permit a reduced UK catch (Hart 1976: 21–22). The British rejected this arrangement because it lacked precision and granted Iceland enforcement powers. The latter became a recurring theme throughout the remainder of the crisis. Iceland repeatedly sought to enforce its extended limits, even in "interim" agreements. The British, however, would not permit such actions. They felt that doing so would imply acceptance of Icelandic jurisdiction in the disputed waters, which would weaken the British case before the ICJ. An impasse therefore developed.

The July 1972 talks yielded still further proposals. Iceland now offered to create six fishing zones – each of which would be open to British fishing vessels on a rotating basis. It also planned to exclude the British from fishing within twenty-five miles of the Icelandic coast and to ban British fishing vessels greater than 160 feet long. The British refused this offer too. They predicted that their share of the catch under such an arrangement would be lower than they desired. More importantly, however, they

worried that accepting the twenty-five mile provision would weaken their case before the ICJ, since it again implied an acceptance of Icelandic jurisdiction in the disputed waters. The talks consequently ended without agreement, although Iceland "agreed in principle" to a British catch limit of 156,000 metric tons (Hart 1976: 22).

Immediately after the July 1972 talks ended, Iceland officially published its limits extension and set September 1, 1972, as the implementation date. Four days later, the UK requested further assistance from the ICJ. Under its statutes, the ICJ can "indicate, if it considers that circumstances so require, any provisional measures which ought to be taken to preserve the respective rights of either [disputing] party" (Article 41).[14] The disputing parties must then comply with the measures set by the court – until the court either modifies them or issues a final ruling in the case. Provisional measures therefore allow the court to mitigate dispute escalation by minimizing damages to the disputing parties and freezing the status quo. They also often pressure the disputing parties to negotiate in earnest, lest the court decide the matter in full (and, perhaps, with terms the disputing parties dislike).

Consistent with this logic, Iceland made two concessions shortly thereafter. On August 11, it offered to expand UK access within the "zone arrangement" it proposed in July and to relax the size restrictions it wanted on UK fishing vessels. In exchange, Iceland asked the UK to recognize its preferential rights within the fifty-mile limits and to allow Iceland to enforce those limits. The UK rejected this offer (on August 15), preferring to wait for the ICJ instead.

The ICJ issued its provisional measures on August 17. These measures asked (i) Iceland not to enforce its proposed fifty-mile limits; (ii) the UK not to exceed a catch limit of 170,000 metric tons; and (iii) both parties not to aggravate the dispute, curtail one another's rights, or prejudice the case before the court.[15] In response, Iceland took three noteworthy steps that escalated the dispute. First, the day after the court ruled on provisional measures, Iceland notified the court that it intended to enforce the fifty-mile limits beginning September 1, contrary to the court's directive. Second, it deployed three gunboats with trawl wire cutters to enforce the extended limits. Trawl wire cutters, engineered during the previous Cod War, allowed the gunboats to cut the British trawlers' fishing nets, thereby causing the trawlers to lose

[14] The ICJ Statute appears online at www.icj-cij.org/en/statute. See also the ICJ Rules of Court, available online at www.icj-cij.org/en/rules.

[15] *Fisheries Jurisdiction Case (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* v. *Iceland)*, Interim Protection, Order of August 17, 1972. Available online at www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/55/055-19720817-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf.

their catch and (usually) to return to port for new nets (Jónsson 1982: 137). Finally, Iceland hinted to the Americans that escalation of the fishing dispute might endanger Iceland's membership in NATO, as well as the ongoing US deployment at Keflavík airport (Ingimundarson 2003b: 106).

The US had thus far remained neutral in the crisis. It could not jeopardize its relationship with either the UK or Iceland, as each was a vital Cold War ally. Iceland's importance to NATO – generally, less well understood than Britain's – derived from its strategic position. Having Iceland participate in NATO permitted alliance members easier air travel across the Atlantic and supplied a premier location from which to track Soviet submarines. These advantages enhanced NATO members' collective security.

The specific *American* deployment to Keflavík resulted from a bilateral defense agreement. Shortly after Iceland joined the alliance, NATO outsourced protection of Iceland to the US. Iceland supplied the space (part of Keflavík airport), while the US provided equipment and personnel. The US and Iceland negotiated – and could renegotiate at any time – the size and duration of the US deployment. Either party could also terminate the bilateral agreement after passing through three steps: (i) initiating a NATO review of the agreement's continued need; (ii) negotiating for six months to resolve any desired adjustment; and (iii) if no resolution were reached, giving twelve months' notice to the other of an intention to terminate the agreement.[16]

Having previously received a Swedish expert's report on the base's continued value, Iceland essentially hinted in August 1972 that it would formally start the American/NATO base termination process (i.e., initiate the negotiation period), a move that it formalized in April 1973. To be fair, the Icelandic government had wanted to revisit the basing issue since it came to power. Unlike the maritime (fisheries) limits extension, however, which united all political parties within Iceland's coalition government, the base issue divided the government, causing policy to stall. The government therefore pursued the issue that united its ranks: the maritime limits extension. That allowed Lúðvík Jósepsson, the minister of fisheries, to drive foreign policy, rather than the foreign minister Einar Ágústsson, and resulted in a schizophrenic foreign policy (Hart 1976: 30; Ingimundarson 2003b: 105). Prime Minister Jóhannesson and the foreign minister signaled a desire to compromise with Britain (i.e., more pro-Western), while the fisheries minister signaled the opposite

[16] Defense of Iceland: Agreement between the United States and the Republic of Iceland, May 5, 1951. Available online at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/ice001.asp.

(i.e., more anti-Western). And even though Jósepsson "never tried to mix the fishery issue with that of the military relationship with the United States and NATO" (Ingimundarson 2003b: 104), stoking nationalism with respect to the maritime limits indirectly raised the basing issue. If Icelanders perceived foreign powers like Britain to be encroaching on Icelandic jurisdiction, would NATO generally – or the US more specifically – intervene to defend Iceland?

This question came to the fore in September 1972, when Iceland followed through on its maritime limit extension. Immediately upon its coming into effect, both Jóhannesson and Jósepsson promised to enforce the new limits, and they did. On September 5, Iceland cut the trawl wires of a British vessel. The UK government officially protested, but Iceland vowed to continue similar enforcement efforts (Hart 1976: 28). The UK issued a veiled threat in response. It deployed a frigate to the Faroe Islands, between the UK and Iceland. Although pitched as an action independent of the maritime dispute, the Icelanders interpreted this as aggression and issued a warning in response: Using the Royal Navy would undermine negotiations – and, implicitly, escalate the crisis.

Icelandic and British ministers next met in the shadow of the UN General Assembly meeting in late September 1972, and again shortly thereafter (early October).[17] These talks yielded divergent understandings. Both sides apparently agreed on area closures (i.e., times and places where British vessels could not fish). Beyond that, the British understood that the talks reached agreement on a British catch range of 156,000–170,000 metric tons. Icelandic officials, in contrast, maintained that Iceland accepted no such range, and the Icelandic cabinet subsequently rejected the area closure agreement that the talks produced.

Iceland's behavior confused the UK, for British officials could interpret it in one of two ways (Hart 1976: 30). Either the Icelanders had no intention of reaching an agreement, or the government was divided (see also J. Richardson 1994: 316–317). The latter seemed most likely; "having committed themselves to a relatively hostile stance toward foreign fishing, the Icelanders may have found it politically impossible to accept any of the British proposals at this time" (Hart 1976: 30). Indeed, the Icelandic population seemingly encouraged such a hard-line stance (e.g., through public demonstrations and supportive bumper stickers). The British could do little with this information, though. If they did not assume that the Icelandic government was unified, it would be impossible to negotiate with Iceland at all (Hart 1976: 30).

[17] In September 1972, West Germany tried to join the talks. Because Iceland preferred to manage the dispute bilaterally, however, it rejected the idea.

As diplomatic progress stalled once again, Iceland accelerated its enforcement actions. In mid October it resumed trawl wire cutting – having stopped such actions to negotiate – and began firing blanks at offending vessels. One gunboat even collided with a British vessel that defied its enforcement attempts. In addition to these actions, Icelandic officials ordered port authorities to deny assistance to any British (or German) vessels in need (e.g., those that required maintenance or shelter from the weather).

These Icelandic actions fueled two domestic pressures on British policy. First, the British Transport and General Workers Union placed a landing ban on all Icelandic goods from Icelandic vessels. In effect, this closed UK ports – and therefore markets – to Icelandic products. The British government did not officially endorse this policy; yet it did not actively work to circumvent it either. Second, the Deepsea Fishing Industry Committee reissued its call for British naval intervention. Protection against Icelandic enforcement attempts undoubtedly motivated their request. Confrontation and bad weather, however, could also damage ships. If those ships could not seek repair or refuge in Icelandic ports, the British navy would need to assist them, or vessels would be unable to continue fishing the disputed waters.

Enforcement actions continued in the months ahead.[18] Meanwhile, talks also resumed – first in Reykjavík (November 1972), then in Brussels (December 1972) – but yielded no agreement. Thus, on January 18, 1973, a cadre of British trawlers – unable to stand enforcement actions any longer – gave the UK government an ultimatum: Unless the Royal Navy intervened, the trawlers would leave the disputed waters. On January 19, ten trawlers fulfilled that pledge. These actions placed the UK government in a bind. Naval intervention would engender support for Iceland among third-party states; it fed the Icelandic narrative that Iceland was a small state under siege by a colonial power. Naval intervention, moreover, would restrict British vessels' fishing; as the previous Cod War demonstrated, vessels need to group tightly and travel together for successful protection, which leads to suboptimal catches. As a compromise, the British responded by dispatching a tugboat, which could insert itself between Icelandic gunboats and British trawlers to prevent rammings and wire cuttings.

At this point, diplomatic talks hit another wall. In the shadow of the NATO meeting in December 1972, the Icelandic and British foreign ministers made significant progress toward an agreement. Ágústsson not only suggested that a consensus proposal might exist – namely, one

[18] See Jónsson (1982: 220–221) for a full account.

that combined catch reductions and area closures – but also asked the British foreign minister, Sir Alex Douglas Home, to bring such a proposal before the British cabinet (United Kingdom 1973a: 14; Hart 1976: 34–36). Home fulfilled that request, aligning the proposal closely with what Ágústsson had suggested. Iceland received this proposal in January 1973, rejected it, and confusingly indicated a willingness to receive new proposals. On January 30, Iceland reminded the UK that talks would not resume unless the British advanced another proposal. The two governments therefore stalemated on who would move next – with the British eventually threatening (March 7, 1973) naval action unless Iceland advanced its own proposal.

Throughout March 1973 Iceland accelerated its enforcement actions once again. These actions came on the heels of three key events. First, the ICJ ruled that it had jurisdiction to hear the case (February 2). Second, the EEC ratified its trade agreement (from July 1972) with Iceland. It also reminded Iceland that the EEC would not implement any agreed tariff reductions until Iceland resolved the maritime limits dispute. Finally, the Soviet Union condemned Icelandic policy (on March 14) because of concerns about how the Icelandic limit extension would affect global Soviet fishing interests. In similar, past disputes, the Icelanders turned to Soviet markets when the British market closed to Icelandic products. Cold War tensions then encouraged the US to court Iceland, lest it stray into the Soviet orbit. With the Soviets against Icelandic policy, however – and with broader international support for Iceland eroding – Iceland's bargaining position weakened.

Iceland escalated militarily in response. It began using live ammunition against British ships on March 18 – a policy that repeated throughout April. This encouraged talks to resume (e.g., in Reykjavík on May 3–4), but the failure of these talks produced another British warning: If the armed attacks did not cease, the Royal Navy would intervene. Iceland did not heed this warning. Under further pressure from its trawlers – namely, another ultimatum and an exodus from the disputed waters – the British government relented. It dispatched the Royal Navy on May 16, 1973, sending notification of its decision to NATO a few days after the navy arrived in the theater.

Iceland naturally complained to the UK, arguing that the British were taking hostile action against a NATO ally. It also banned the Royal Air Force from the NATO base at Keflavík and forbade any British aircraft from entering Icelandic territory. Public sentiment likewise turned harshly against the British. On May 24, a demonstration of 20,000–25,000 people marched on, and broke windows at, the UK embassy in Reykjavík.

Iceland then dragged NATO further into the dispute. On May 28–29, it appealed to NATO to take "all necessary measures" against the UK – diplomatic code for using force, if necessary – to halt British naval action in the disputed waters. NATO, in response, urged further negotiations, discussed the dispute in council, and dispatched Secretary-General Joseph Luns to mediate. Luns began his involvement immediately, but after his initial efforts failed, further clashes at sea followed, leading Iceland to escalate once again. On June 12, 1973, it notified the US that it would request a revision to the US–Iceland 1951 basing agreement. On June 14, Prime Minister Jóhannesson also hinted that Iceland's future relationship with NATO now hung in the balance. Finally, the Icelandic cabinet passed a resolution threatening to break diplomatic relations with the UK if the Royal Navy did not stop ramming Icelandic vessels.

These various threats had mixed credibility. On the one hand, they would inflict significant costs on Iceland if carried out. Icelandic trade with the US (23 percent) and the UK (16 percent), for example, constituted nearly 40 percent of its total annual trade flows (1970 values; Barbieri and Keshk 2016). Adding other NATO members raised that figure further. Similarly, the NATO base at Keflavík brought in USD 50–70 million per year, or 4–8 percent of Iceland's 1973 gross domestic product (Hart 1976: 43). It therefore seemed unrealistic for Iceland to follow through on its threats. Indeed, Iceland had made similar threats before but not fully acted on them. On the other hand, when it issued those similar threats historically, Icelandic organizations and public attitudes had not backed them as strongly (Jóhannesson 2003: 173, 178–179). The Icelandic government, in other words, might not be willing, or even able, to back down once it crossed an unknown threshold; to do so could jeopardize either its future credibility or its standing with domestic groups, which might – if angry enough – push the government out of power.

Western states, not knowing what might transpire, took Iceland's threats seriously. Two weeks after the Icelandic cabinet resolution, Luns traveled to Reykjavík to discuss them (September 14–15). The British prime minister, Edward Heath, offered a "truce" on September 26, albeit one that offered to retract the navy from the disputed waters if Iceland promised not to enforce its right to them. Iceland interpreted this as a proposal to negotiate "under duress," since it was backed with a forceful "occupation." They therefore rejected the British offer, and Luns traveled immediately to meet Heath in London.

As Hart (1976: 45) notes, "[t]he subject of these talks will probably never be known in full," but "[i]t is widely conjectured that Dr. Luns put pressure on Heath to come to an agreement with Iceland for the sake of

NATO." The importance of that pressure remains unclear; by this point, the British were planning for the upcoming UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and understood that most coastal states favored maritime limits beyond the twelve-mile limit (Hart 1976: 44–46; for a contrasting opinion, see Ingimundarson 2003b). The UK, in other words, perceived itself on the losing side of the issue yet again.

On October 2, Heath unilaterally withdrew the Royal Navy and invited Jóhannesson to talks in London. These talks occurred on October 15–16, during which Heath advanced a settlement proposal. Jóhannesson carried that proposal to cabinet the next day. Although some liberal representatives found the proposal unacceptable, its terms leaked to the Icelandic press, and the people of Iceland supported it. On November 8, the Icelandic government approved the proposal, and the Althing approved it shortly thereafter as well. Icelandic and UK officials then exchanged notes on November 13.

The final settlement terms echoed many of the ideas discussed throughout the crisis. It set maritime zones that would open (and close) to British fishing vessels on a rotating basis; established conservation areas; created

Text Box 14.1 Nutshell Summary: Cod War of 1971–1973

1. Iceland extends its maritime jurisdiction from twelve to fifty miles on February 15, 1972, to take effect September 1, 1972.
2. In accordance with a standing agreement, Britain submits the dispute to the ICJ on April 14, 1972. The court issues an order for interim measures on August 17, 1972. Iceland does not recognize the court's jurisdiction.
3. After repeated warnings, as well as incidents in which the Icelandic coast guard cuts the nets on British trawlers, the British Royal Navy intervenes on May 16, 1973. Low-level military incidents follow (e.g., rammings and shootings).
4. In June–August 1973, Iceland threatens to sever diplomatic relations with Britain, leave NATO, and (relatedly) evict US forces from the Keflavík air base. These issues link to the fisheries issue when neither the US nor NATO defends Iceland in the face of what Iceland perceives to be British aggression.
5. The fisheries dispute ends on November 13, 1973, after NATO mediation and the development of international law place Britain in a weakened position. The British prime minister withdraws the Royal Navy, and the parties agree to a two-year settlement – the terms of which largely reflect what they previously discussed.

zones in which British vessels could not fish; set a catch expectation (but not a strict limit) on British vessels of 130,000 tons; reduced the size and number of permissible British vessels; addressed joint enforcement of the terms; and set the agreement to expire after two years.

Text Box 14.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

Several variables impeded crisis escalation in this case. Of these, the *nature of the issue* and *alliances* played a major role. Iceland and Britain disputed maritime entitlements. States find these entitlements important, but generally less important than land-based territory (see Theoretical Analysis). Thus, even though states may use force to signal the issue's importance, bolster their negotiating positions, or defend their perceived entitlements – as both Iceland and the UK did here – they typically do not escalate the matter to war. The issue does not merit incurring such high costs.

Alliances likewise favored crisis de-escalation. Both states belonged to NATO. Iceland leveraged the alliance to drag the US (and NATO more broadly) into the crisis – a form of escalation. It threatened to leave NATO and started the official process through which to evict US forces from Keflavík airport. In this way, Iceland's alliance emboldened it to adopt a more hard-line stance. The US attempted to remain neutral, as it needed to be on good terms with both alliance members. Eventually, however, the US and NATO pressured Britain to concede. In this sense, NATO restrained the UK from further escalation, although the specific details of NATO's influence remain unclear.

Norms and *system structure* exerted a more moderate, de-escalatory effect, as did *previous history*. Each Cod War crisis opened with uncertainty about the maritime limits that Iceland could claim – and with international norms shifting toward more expansive, acceptable limits. Iceland adopted expanding limits, the norms continued moving in Iceland's direction, and the UK acquiesced. This all unfolded in a universalist period, during which major states worked together (alongside minor states) "to work out acceptable rules of behavior" (Wallensteen 1984: 243).

Iceland and the UK also relied on elements of a coercive *bargaining strategy*. Each used military force deliberately, and in ways they knew would – from their *previous history* of similar episodes over the same issue – escalate the conflict. Two factors, however, circumvented a serious escalation, thereby allowing coercive bargaining to play a more minor role. First, both states primarily used (low-level) military force to bolster

Table 14.1 *Variable summary for the Cod War of 1971–1973: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Nature of issue	Major		X
Alliances	Major		X
Norms	Moderate		X
System structure	Moderate		X
Previous history	Moderate		X
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	Moderate	X	
Democracy	Moderate	X	
Bargaining strategy	Minor		X
Relative capabilities	None		
Proximity	None		
Rivalry	None		
Hostility	None		
Arms races	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

their bargaining position and to facilitate diplomatic negotiations. The exchange of proposals ultimately fostered de-escalation. Second, in their previous history Iceland and the UK had resolved similar episodes without war. This strengthened their expectation that the current crisis could also be resolved diplomatically.

As Table 14.1 notes, pressures toward war came from two main variables in this case: *domestic politics* and *democracy*. For Iceland, overfishing constituted a salient economic interest; were its fish stocks to dwindle, its economy might suffer significantly. The fifty-mile extension featured prominently in the 1971 Icelandic elections. When the left-leaning coalition that advocated for a hard-line position won the election, the new Icelandic government immediately announced its intention to fulfill its campaign promise. For Britain, fishing constituted a major economic interest as well, although largely to a few key coastal constituencies with loud voices. As in Iceland, these British constituencies encouraged a more hard-line stance as well.

Relatedly, both states are *democracies* during this crisis. As in other crises we have examined, democracy here fostered crisis escalation, rather than de-escalation, in two ways. First, divisions within the Icelandic government led to a schizophrenic foreign policy that complicated bargaining (Hart 1976: 30; Ingimundarson 2003b: 105). Second, domestic audiences in both states encouraged the government to take a more hard-line stance. This happened most clearly in Iceland, where "fear of public opinion made it difficult for the Icelandic government to compromise

with the British" and "[p]ublic pressure … neutralized opposition political parties" (Steinsson 2018: 349). Similar factors guided British policy, including its decision to deploy the Royal Navy. Ultimately, however, each state controlled these escalatory pressures, leaving domestic politics and democracy with only a moderate escalatory effect.

The remaining variables played no significant role, largely because of the asymmetry involved. Asymmetric *relative capabilities* often prevents conflict from arising in the first place; once it occurred, however, Iceland eliminated its further importance by adopting an intrepid stance, demonstrating firm resolve, and involving NATO allies. That same intrepidness, coupled with domestic politics, also overcame the traditionally pacific role of greater distance, leaving *proximity* no role to play. The capability asymmetry and common alliance membership, in turn, undermined the potential for *rivalry*, as well as the *hostility* and *arms races* that often accompany it. Even the major states involved had no *arms races* with one another at this time (i.e., the US, the UK, and the USSR; Sample 2002). Finally, given the asymmetry, nobody engaged in *wishful thinking* or military *overconfidence*; should a war erupt, everyone understood that Iceland would lose.

Theoretical Analysis

The 1971–1973 Cod War does not escalate to war. Three factors explain why. The first factor concerns the salience of the disputed issue. As we note elsewhere, territorial disputes militarize, recur, and escalate more often than nonterritorial disputes (e.g., see Chapter 4; Hensel 1996; Vasquez 2009: ch. 4). Maritime space often seems "territorial" at first glance, but it is not. Hensel et al. (2008: 121) provide an issue typology that illustrates this conceptual argument. Within this typology, which appears in Table 14.2, each disputed issue varies in salience, or importance, along two dimensions: tangibility and intangibility. An issue gains

Table 14.2 *An issue salience typology*

		Intangible salience	
		Low	High
Tangible salience	Low	Policy toward firms, industries, or individuals	The treatment of ethnic kin
	High	River or maritime claims (e.g., the Cod Wars)	Territorial claims (e.g., *irredenta*)

Source: Hensel et al. (2008: 121).

tangible salience from its physical qualities (e.g., natural resources or a militarily strategic position). An issue receives intangible salience, in contrast, through symbolic, nonphysical attributes. When, for example, a state wants to reunite ethnic kin within a given geographic space (e.g., the Italian *irredenta*; see Chapter 4), views a geographic space as its homeland, or worries about the treatment of its ethnic kin abroad (e.g., Russians in Crimea; see Chapter 15), intangible salience rises.

Territorial (i.e., land) space possesses – on balance – high tangible and high intangible salience. On the tangible side, it has geographic features that offer military advantages (e.g., the Golan Heights or the Khyber Pass); ground on which a population can live (i.e., a wellspring of economic activity, tax revenue, or military conscripts); life-sustaining natural resources (e.g., water wells, rivers, or agricultural lands); and economically valuable assets (e.g., oil). On the intangible side, territorial space often evokes symbolic meaning as a given people's "homeland." The drive to acquire, hold, and defend the homeland often involves identifying a people (e.g., ethnic kin) and then associating that people with a specific geographic area. It can also threaten a state regime's survival, for citizens brand leaders who give away the homeland to others – or fail to defend it adequately from external threats – as traitors or failures (e.g., Garibaldi never forgave Cavour for ceding Nice to France). Leaders therefore take threats to the homeland seriously and avoid conceding (portions of) the homeland if possible. Protracted bargaining over territorial (i.e., land) spaces follows.

Maritime space, in contrast, possesses high tangible salience, but low intangible salience. States prize it largely for the resources it contains (e.g., fish, oil, or a strategic choke point such as a strait; see Chapter 2). In the Cod Wars, for example, Iceland and the UK disputed access to fish – a tangible, finite, economic resource. We see this tangibility (and lack of *in*tangibility) expressed during the dispute. Both the UK government and the BTF worried primarily about access to an acceptable share of fish. The UK government pursued this economic goal through international law, focusing particularly on the fulfillment of existing agreements (e.g., the 1961 agreement). It highlighted Britain's historic access to Icelandic fisheries too – a more symbolic trait – but primarily to buttress its legal argument (International Court of Justice 1973b: 289). The law and history both served economic goals.

The Icelandic position stressed the need to conserve fish stocks and to obtain a larger share of the total fish catch for Icelandic fishermen. Iceland also introduced an ostensibly intangible value – namely, the need to preserve a "distinct Icelandic national culture" (Hart 1976: 56); yet, even then, the tangible considerations dominated. Fishing, as

a significant part of Icelandic culture, would continue to exist regardless of how the dispute ended. The main points of contention therefore concerned conservation and economics. The cultural preservation argument conveniently stoked nationalism to strengthen Iceland's bargaining position; with domestic actors demanding greater cultural preservation, Icelandic officials would find it more challenging to offer concessions on the tangible issues under dispute. The British would need to concede instead.

Why does this matter? The risk of crisis escalation rises as the salience of the disputed issue rises. This holds true both within and across different claim types. States find some land territory, for example, more salient than other land territory, and they disproportionately fight over the more salient land. That same behavior carries across claim types. On balance, both maritime and territorial claims possess some tangible value; yet maritime claims contain low (to no) intangible salience, while territorial claims generally hold some intangible salience. This means that states generally find land territorial issues more salient, overall, than maritime issues and are therefore more likely to escalate disputes over territorial issues. The chance of war remains low(er) in maritime, as opposed to territorial, disputes.

Table 14.3 lists all land and maritime claims between Iceland and the UK during the period 1816–2001, according to the Issue Correlates of War Project (Hensel et al. 2008; Frederick et al. 2017). As the table demonstrates, the Iceland–UK dyad never disputed land territory. It contested maritime zones, however, on four historical occasions – namely, each time that Iceland extended its fishing limits and the UK challenged that extension. The issue constellation within the dyad therefore suggests that war – although possible, and still perhaps more

Table 14.3 *Territorial and maritime claims between the United Kingdom and Iceland*

Territorial claims	Maritime claims	
	Claim years*	Zone claimed
None	3/1952–11/1956	Between 3–4 miles from Iceland's coast
	3/1958–3/1961	Between 4–12 miles from Iceland's coast
	9/1971–10/1973	Between 12–50 miles from Iceland's coast
	7/1975–12/1976	Between 50–200 miles from Iceland's coast

* The Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) project supplies the claim years. These dates may differ slightly from those in the Historical Events section, as an ICOW claim must be both *officially advanced* (i.e., not merely threatened) and *contested*.

Sources: Hensel et al. (2008); Frederick et al. (2017).

probable than if the involved states fought over less salient issues – would be relatively unlikely.

Of course, salience can vary across states too, which sheds light on some of the crisis participants' behavior. The limits extension was more important to Iceland than to the UK – whether for economic or cultural reasons. This helps explain why Iceland confronted the Royal Navy and why the British backed down. Salience asymmetry encourages the state that attaches less importance to the disputed issue to concede, which also impedes escalation.

A second, related explanation for non-escalation involves issue (de-) linkage. In theory, issue linkage increases opportunities for actors to strike a successful bargain (e.g., see Fearon 1995). When, for example, a company tries to hire a new employee, negotiations might focus on salary. Because the employee always prefers a higher salary, while the company always prefers a lower salary, an impasse easily develops. To break that impasse, the negotiators introduce additional issues (e.g., vacation days, flexible work schedules, health benefits, and so on). Doing so opens a multidimensional bargaining space, in which each negotiator can concede issues of lower value (to them) in exchange for issues of higher value.

The same logic theoretically extends to interstate negotiations, but does not always work. Dreyer (2010), for example, shows that the probability of militarized conflict (i.e., escalation) among rival states increases as the rivalry accumulates disputed issues. This results from two forces we saw in earlier cases: combining numerous issues together into a single, overarching issue (the rivalry relationship; see Chapter 9); and sidelining accommodationists (i.e., those who do not adequately defend the state against the rival; see Chapter 6).

The 1971–1973 Cod War shows elements of both logics. Iceland originally demanded a greater total catch share for Icelandic fishing vessels, as well as conservation measures to protect that total catch from eroding. Excluding British vessels from waters within the fifty-mile limit served both purposes but was not the only policy that could achieve such results. The British catch limits counterproposal would, in theory, do the same thing. Because Iceland preferred to extend its jurisdiction, however, British proposals were unacceptable, an impasse developed, and talks stalled.

To jump-start negotiations again, Iceland introduced new dimensions to the fisheries–conservation issue (e.g., rotating open/closed areas, or restricting vessel sizes), as well as additional, major issues (e.g., the status of its NATO membership, the Keflavík base, and the US force presence in Iceland). The former opened new space for agreement; indeed, the

1973 exchange of notes stipulated a combination of catch limits, rotating area closures, and vessel restrictions (United Kingdom 1973b). The latter, being disconnected from fishing altogether, theoretically offered an ideal opportunity for issue linkage to open a truly multidimensional bargaining space; yet that did not happen, at least not cleanly. It initially escalated the dispute, pulling in other major states and organizations. Iceland, for example, used the issue of the American force presence – a thorny domestic matter in Iceland – to pressure the US into supporting it (Ingimundarson 2003b: 110–112). The threat to leave NATO likewise struck more widely at the Western alliance's integrity. These various threats eventually encouraged NATO mediation. Regardless, the evidence suggests that both NATO and the US found the Icelandic threats credible, surprising, and alarming, especially given the Icelandic public's increasingly anti-NATO position (Ingimundarson 2003b).

Why, then, did the introduction of these major issues *not* escalate the dispute? It perhaps introduced issues that mattered more to the British than fishing – namely, its relationship with NATO and the US (Ingimundarson 2003b: 120). Nevertheless, because Iceland introduced these issues well before the crisis escalated and then settled, such a conclusion seems weak. More likely, the actors drawn into the crisis through these issues *delinked* them from the fisheries dispute – the opposite of what issue linkage logic suggests. The US remained impartial on the fisheries issue, persuaded NATO to do the same, and threatened economic repercussions if Iceland moved forward with either threat (Ingimundarson 2003b). As tensions heightened, the US then moved quietly in the shadows, pushing Luns "to work out a secret deal" with terms similar to those eventually adopted (Ingimundarson 2003b: 118). The goal was to separate alliance politics from the fisheries dispute. Finally, after the fisheries dispute was resolved, the US and NATO turned their attention to the Keflavík and US force issues (see Ingimundarson 2003b: 120). Although these military issues remained unsettled when the Icelandic governing coalition collapsed in May 1974, delinking them from the fisheries issue moved the crisis along a less escalatory path.

A third potential influence on crisis escalation involves regime type. Studies in international relations repeatedly report a "democratic peace" – that is, an empirical regularity that democracies do not fight wars against one another (Russett and Oneal 2001). To explain this finding, scholars initially focused on the characteristics of democratic systems, leading to a long list of potential, overlapping explanatory mechanisms: institutional constraints (e.g., systemic checks on the executive's ability to go to war); peaceful norms (e.g., that democracies, as in their domestic politics, commit to resolving international political disputes via

nonviolent channels; Dixon 1994); audience costs (e.g., democratic publics abhor fighting other democracies and punish leaders who do; Fearon 1994); electoral consequences (e.g., voters evict leaders who escalate a conflict and lose; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999); a free press (e.g., disseminating more information facilitates successful negotiations short of war); credible signaling (e.g., agreement between governing and opposition parties about the desire to escalate a conflict sends a clearer signal to adversaries about a state's resolve, thereby preventing escalation; Schultz 1998); and so on. Some even propose that these various mechanisms lock in peaceful conflict management throughout the international system (Mitchell 2002), a system that democratic states themselves have historically built and maintained (McDonald 2015).

Both the UK and Iceland qualified as strong, liberal democracies at the time of this crisis;[19] and yet, we do not observe many of the popular mechanisms that scholars believe impede conflict onset and escalation among democratic states (Ingimundarson 2003b; Steinsson 2018; see also Hellmann and Herborth 2008). First and foremost, domestic audiences in both states *encouraged*, rather than discouraged, conflict escalation against a democratic counterpart (Steinsson 2018). Second, both Iceland and the UK deliberately used military force, and in ways that they *knew* – from previous, similar episodes – would escalate the crisis. Iceland deployed gunboats with trawl wire cutters, while the British sent the Royal Navy. Dangerous maneuvers followed, including wire cuttings, rammings, collisions (some accidental), and shootings. These actions hardly conform to the idea that democracies resolve political disagreements via nonviolent methods. Third, no domestic institutions obviously checked escalatory policies in either state. Fourth, the free exchange of information did not dissuade escalation. Indeed, each state understood well the other state's basic bargaining position, interests, capabilities, and resolve– not only because information flowed relatively freely, but also because the crisis largely mirrored what occurred in two similar, previous episodes.

Finally, besides democracy, the other pillars of the peace triad – trade and international organizations (IOs) – performed poorly as well. The

[19] Although most conflict scholars use the Polity dataset to measure democracy, it does not include Iceland (Marshall and Gurr 2020). We therefore used the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) data to compare the UK (which receives the highest Polity2 score possible, or +10) with Iceland across five V-Dem indices: electoral democracy, liberal democracy, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, and egalitarian democracy. Our comparison suggests that, for the years 1945–1975, Iceland is at least as democratic as the UK. For the V-Dem codebook and webpage, see https://doi.org/10.23696/mcwt-fr58. For a discussion of the data, see Lindberg et al. (2014).

trade pillar, for example, maintains that solid trade relationships foster both democracy and peace, as potential belligerents exchange prosperity for the disputed issues. The 1971–1973 Cod War undermines that logic. British actors deliberately *cut* trade with Iceland to try to wring concessions from it. The EEC likewise made its trade deal contingent on the end of the dispute. Neither action curbed Icelandic resolve – even though the UK was Iceland's second-largest trading partner, Iceland traded significantly with EEC states, and an EEC trade agreement would promise greater economic gains still if Iceland were to resolve the limits extension. More puzzling, Iceland responded by threatening to kick out *its largest trading partner* (i.e., the US). Iceland preferred the disputed waters to assured prosperity.

IOs performed slightly better, but not convincingly so. According to this pillar, involvement in IOs encourages both democracy and peace because IOs typically defend democratic principles and offer channels for nonviolent dispute management (e.g., courts). Did these channels work? For crisis onset, the answer is no (Steinsson 2018). Key IOs, such as NATO, initially remained on the sidelines, even though they understood the Cod War pattern by 1971. For crisis escalation, the answer becomes more complicated. The EEC attempted to pressure Iceland into concessions via a trade agreement; yet these efforts failed. The UK then activated the ICJ (i.e., a UN organ), but Iceland refused to participate in the proceedings or adhere to its rulings. NATO's involvement likewise floundered. The UK notified the NATO Council that it would send the Royal Navy to Iceland, and in response Iceland furiously requested NATO take "all necessary steps" to stop that action. After an additional Icelandic demand – and Icelandic threats to leave NATO altogether – the NATO Council urged negotiations, appointed Secretary-General Luns to mediate, and debated the matter. NATO's efforts thereafter depended almost entirely on Luns' informal mediation efforts, which perhaps contributed toward the eventual resolution (Steinsson 2018; but see Hart 1976). This hardly demonstrates a robust pursuit of peace through IOs, regardless of whether we consider the initiatives of the disputing states or the IOs themselves.

Despite the above conclusions, some defenders of the democratic peace maintain that "the presumed impossibility of [a full-scale war in this case] … made initiating small-scale violence … a viable option in the first place" (Hellman and Herborth 2008: 482; see also Steinsson 2018). Such a position suffers from two sleights of hand. First, it fails to link non-escalation with any of the democratic peace causal logics. Exactly *why* war is unthinkable matters. Is it because of some democratic trait, or do other non-regime factors play a significant role (e.g., the types of

issues involved)? Second, to argue that democracies behave more violently because they expect non-escalation violates the logic of some democratic peace mechanisms, while also presupposing that decision-makers think they can control escalation. On the former, imagine arguing that armed robbery is "peaceful" because nobody gets shot; aggressive military maneuvers, like armed robberies, should not occur among those who resolve political conflicts with each other only via nonviolent means. On the latter, we see many cases where decision-makers understand that they cannot control escalation (e.g., Chapter 13). Indeed, when decision-makers employ coercion, they generally appreciate and accept the escalation risk involved, even though they might expect that risk to be minimal. The same holds here: Escalation to war would be *unlikely*, but not *impossible*.

Aftermath

In October 1975, Iceland extended its fishing limits once again – from 50 to 200 miles.[20] International law had been moving in this direction for some time (Nandan 1987). As early as August 1974, an international consensus began to emerge that supported the Icelandic position (United Nations 1974: 243). The final Convention on the Law of the Sea reflected this consensus: a 200-mile limit, within which coastal states gained the right "to determine the allowable catch of the living resources," the right to "give other States access to the surplus of [that] allowable catch," and the responsibility to conserve natural resources (Articles 61–62).

Despite trending international law, the British – again under pressure from the trawler industry – protested the new Icelandic extension and immediately deployed the Royal Navy to protect British vessels operating in the disputed waters. These actions launched the next Cod War, during which the now-familiar plot repeated itself. The deployment of the Royal Navy enflamed public opinion in Iceland. The Icelandic government then adopted a hard-line policy; it banned British aircraft from Keflavík, closed its ports to British vessels, broke diplomatic relations with the UK, and threatened to leave NATO (Steinsson 2018: 349–352).[21] The US, along with other NATO members, pressured Britain

[20] For histories of the 1975–1976 Cod War, see Jónsson (1982: ch. 6) and Steinsson (2018: 349–352).

[21] Accounts differ about whether Iceland threatened the American presence at Keflavík in this Cod War. See Steinsson (2018); Ingimundarson (2003a); Jónsson (1982). Less doubt exists about the threat to, and response of, the US in the 1971–1973 Cod War that we analyze (Ingimundarson 2003b).

to concede. It eventually did so, but to be fair, it could hardly have done otherwise. The British trawler industry had been advocating a 200-mile maritime limit for Britain since at least 1974 (i.e., before the final Cod War began), even as it pressured the British government to resist those same limits for Iceland (Jónsson 1982: 167–168). That contradiction, combined with the emerging international consensus, all but guaranteed a British capitulation.

Lessons of the 1971–1973 Cod War

1. The first lesson that we can derive from this case is that **a bargaining model of war struggles to explain why the 1971–1973 Cod War occurs**. Over the last thirty years, the bargaining model of war has increasingly dominated war studies (Fearon 1995). This model begins from the premise that war is inefficient. War offers states a means through which to divide a disputed good (e.g., territory or maritime space); yet it also carries significant costs. Rational actors consequently search for a less costly means through which to reach the *same* (i.e., postwar) outcome. Negotiation offers such a means. In theory, states could – before a war begins – agree to divide the disputed good in a way that reflects the division they expect a war to produce. That prewar bargain promises the benefits of division without paying the costs of war, making it a more efficient and attractive option than going to war.

Why, then, do rational actors fight wars? The model offers three explanations. First, private information about capabilities or resolve, along with incentives to misrepresent this information, interfere with the disputing states' ability to find the prewar bargain that would avoid a war. Simply put, states cannot agree on how a potential war between them would likely end. Fighting the war then becomes necessary to resolve *that* disagreement; it reveals information about capabilities and resolve, and in a way that states cannot misrepresent because military battles produce winners and losers. Second, commitment problems undermine the stability of any prewar bargain states might reach, leading them to prefer no bargain at all. On occasion, a bargain threatens to shift power significantly between the disputing states. The to-be-strengthened state cannot then credibly promise not to use its more powerful, future position to force additional concessions from the to-be-weakened state. Anticipating this, the latter foregoes the bargain. It prefers not to place itself willingly in a more vulnerable future position. War solves this dilemma too; it either destroys the source of the potential power shift or (eventually) demands that the vanquished concede to the victor. Finally, states perhaps cannot divide certain issues, leaving only two possible prewar divisions: all

or nothing.[22] If each state holds fast to its indivisible position, war then determines who receives (all of) the disputed good.

The 1971–1973 Cod War does not escalate to war. The bargaining model's three mechanisms superficially explain why, but on closer inspection encounter some problems. Iceland and the UK did not disagree about how a militarized conflict between them would end. Both understood the significant power disparity involved, as well as how hard each would fight over the issue (for details, see Jónsson 1982: 216–217). After all, they had experienced two similar episodes in recent years (1952–1956 and 1958–1961). Military fighting, then, would not reveal further information about capabilities or resolve, making it unlikely that an information problem short-circuited effective prewar bargaining – or that war would be needed to resolve a bargaining impasse.

One might propose that disagreement did arise about the definition of "power." Johannesson (2004: 544), for example, argues that Iceland held *diplomatic* power and that, in this crisis, "[a]ctual power was not measured in manpower or men-of-war" (i.e., militarily). Such a redefinition, however, does not fit within the bargaining model of war, which asks states to anticipate how a war between them would end. War outcomes depend on military capabilities (i.e., the resources with which one can fight) and resolve (i.e., the costs one will bear in pursuit of objectives). Even accounting for a margin of error (i.e., reasonable levels of miscalculation, given good information), both parties knew the British Royal Navy's strength vastly surpassed that of the Icelandic coast guard; indeed, Iceland maintained *no standing military*. They also understood one another's resolve over fisheries issues from the two prior, similar episodes.

Prior bargaining rounds also suggest that neither the commitment-problem nor the indivisible-issue logic operated. Did, for example, either Iceland or the UK believe that a diplomatic settlement of the 1971–1973 Cod War would shift power between them so fundamentally that the actor strengthened by the agreement would wring additional concessions from the weakened one in the future, causing any potential settlement to be unstable? If we define power militarily, that seems nonsensical. Greater control over fisheries would not meaningfully change the existing military disparity between Iceland and Britain. The same conclusion obtains, however, if we instead define power as a bargaining position under international law. The UK undoubtedly worried about the precedent that an Icelandic agreement would set; yet that worry is not

[22] Fearon (1995) argues that issues are rarely (if ever) indivisible. For a contrary opinion, see Goddard (2010).

identical to the one underlying the commitment-problem logic – namely, that any agreement would be unstable because Iceland would become more powerful and demand additional concessions. Iceland admittedly *did* demand greater fisheries limits across successive episodes during the period 1952–1976; in each episode, however, it moved incrementally with – or, perhaps, slightly ahead of – global international law. This suggests that the instability in any agreement resulted from larger, systemic legal developments rather than Icelandic strength. Finally, given that Iceland and the UK reached agreement on a fisheries limit extension in 1956 and 1961, it seems unlikely that decision-makers believed the 1971–1973 extension to be indivisible. The empirical record confirms such an interpretation. Both sides introduced terms to divide the issue, relying on previous agreements to supply the possible solutions.

Proponents of the bargaining model may rush to note that, in this case, (i) the mechanisms the model expects to lead to war do not drive crisis behavior and (ii) that war, as commonly defined empirically (i.e., a militarized event that generates at least 1,000 battle-related deaths) did not occur. Iceland and the UK, in other words, avoided war – a potential vindication of the model. To reach that conclusion, however, one must answer two questions. First, why did Iceland and the UK escalate the crisis in the first place? The model's logic – appertaining to war – applies to the escalation of militarized disputes short of war as well. Military force is inefficient when bargaining will suffice. Evidence of that inefficiency appears repeatedly in this crisis: British vessels fished the disputed waters, but only with a naval escort (eventually), which restricted the fishing area available to the vessels and produced suboptimal catches; the British government spent considerable sums to deploy the navy (e.g., at its height, seven [or 13 percent] of its available frigates; Jónsson 1982: 216); each side enforced landing bans on one another, dislocating their own economic markets; and Iceland closed its ports and airport to the British. Perhaps more illuminating, the proposals that Iceland offered during the negotiations proved far better than what the British eventually received. The British received worse terms over time!

Despite no unclear information, no commitment problem, and a known divisible issue, the UK and Iceland escalated the dispute from the diplomatic to the military realm. This likely occurred because each state used the military to bolster its bargaining position. This is *not* equivalent to saying that they either lacked information about one another's capabilities and resolve, or could not envision how a militarized encounter would end. Rather, although less salient than land territory, each state used military force to defend a salient issue. Domestic audiences

encouraged each government to do this, even though they were unwilling to fight a full-scale war.

That leads to a second question: Why did states avoid war in this case? Did the bargaining model's mechanisms play a decisive role? We think not. The crisis admittedly lacks the mechanisms that the bargaining model predicts will lead to war; and yet, these same mechanisms produced low-level, militarized behavior – inefficiencies inconsistent with the model's logic. For the logic to fail at one level, but not another, seems an odd vindication of its working. More likely, the reasons for (de-)escalation lie elsewhere: an issue salient enough to encourage militarized force, but not salient enough to warrant a war.

2. Another lesson from this case is that **international law can be a source of or impediment to international conflict**. International law supplies one mechanism through which states decide disputed issues. It channels the management of disputes into an acceptable, nonviolent track – one that applies (usually, Western) legal principles to make decisions. International law, in turn, derives from either commonly accepted customs and practices or obligations codified in international agreements (e.g., treaties). Norms play a critical role in both cases, which suggests that norms reduce interstate conflict; that is, if norms supply the foundations of international law, and the application of international legal principles helps states manage disputes peacefully, then the probability of crisis escalation declines as norms strengthen. That logic only holds, however, when states widely agree on, and do not (subsequently) challenge, the norms that underlie international law.[23]

a. When states disagree about the norms used to manage a (salient) issue, the danger of crisis escalation increases. We introduced a version of this lesson during our analysis of the 1859–1860 Italian War of Independence (see Chapter 4). When that crisis began, the international system preferred to transfer (land) territory among states through dynastic marriage (or legal treaty among sovereigns). Italian nationalists, who could not access the system's preferred norm(s), advocated a competing norm through which to transfer territory: nationalism (i.e., self-determination). Each norm favored a different actor. Without agreement on the norm that applied, the actors involved in the crisis turned to alternative decision-making processes, including militarized conflict.

A similar dynamic plays out in the 1971–1973 Cod War. Britain favored the long-standing norm that coastal states held jurisdiction over

[23] This conclusion, of course, requires a second assumption as well: that the norms in question promote peace, rather than conflict.

only three miles of maritime space adjacent to their coastline.[24] That position derived, in part, from the desire to preserve British rights. Granting coastal states greater rights necessarily curtailed the rights of foreign powers in coastal areas (e.g., restricting fishing); beyond the coastal states' jurisdictional limits, however, lay the high seas, within which all states held equal rights. Restricting Icelandic jurisdiction enlarged the space defined as the high seas, thereby maximizing British rights. As international law developed, Britain incrementally ceded portions of the high seas to coastal states, but no more than was necessary at any given time.

Iceland, in contrast, used burgeoning international law to expand its maritime limits, moving with – and, perhaps, slightly ahead of – international legal developments (see Jónsson 1982). Once the Truman Proclamation opened debate about the precise maritime limits a coastal state could claim, the long-standing consensus about a three-mile maritime limit collapsed. States then advanced numerous proposals for a replacement norm (Nandan 1987), and these proposals competed to become the new consensus. The norm competition caused conflicts, including the 1971–1973 Cod War, and the system worked over many years to reach a new consensus – namely, from 1949 (when the UN first entertained maritime issues) until 1982 (when the Third Conference on the Law of the Sea produced the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea). After that new consensus emerged, Iceland neither extended its maritime limits further (i.e., beyond what the consensus allowed) nor fought militarily with other states over its limits. We observe, in other words, that unclear (i.e., competing or narrowly accepted) norms promote conflict, while widely accepted norms (i.e., consensus) reduce it.

b. The international system favors norm stability (i.e., the existing norm). The world changes constantly. States could therefore argue that "conditions have changed" and revisit old agreements; yet they often do not. After states settle their land border via an international treaty, for example, they *rarely* invoke the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* to revise it (Owsiak 2012). Moreover, the few states that try to do so face systemic resistance (Zacher 2001). As an illustration, Ecuador attempted to repudiate the 1942 protocol it signed with Peru after discovering an unknown river in the border region that the protocol settled. The four states that underwrote the agreement, however – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the US – refused to allow this. They held the protocol

[24] Kent (1954: 548) traces the three-mile maritime limit norm to a French proposal in 1761. This proposal merged two prior norms: the "canon-shot rule" and a four-mile maritime limit.

together for fifty years, before largely restoring the protocol in the aftermath of the (short) 1995 Cenepa War.

We observe similar behavior in the Cod Wars (see also Chapter 4). When a norm challenge arises, it threatens systemic stability. Most states respond with caution, preferring the certainty that existing norms provide to the uncertainty of the challenger norm. Consensus then either gathers behind the challenger norm or not, depending on whether the challenger norm can satisfactorily answer one key question: If the behavioral limits as set under the current norm change, what should they be instead? Some options will distinguish themselves qualitatively from the alternatives (Schelling 1960: 111). These "focal points" often emerge – and, if adopted, entrench themselves – because no obvious *single* alternative exists. States could, for example, set maritime limits anywhere. Any option seems equally defensible (e.g., 7, 23, or even 181 miles); yet once a broader consensus on the limits exists, states find it difficult to dislodge. The principle of *pacta sunt servanda* further buttresses that status quo bias. This partially explains British behavior in the 1971–1973 Cod War. There, the British tried to prevent Iceland from extending its maritime limits by holding Iceland to the 1961 agreement – not only because it served British interests generally, but also because no obvious alternative limits existed. If fisheries limits were *not* to be twelve miles, what *should* they be? Without a defendable alternative, the UK preferred the status quo.

Iceland challenged the British position along two fronts. Along the first front – namely, the legal counter-principle of *rebus sic stantibus* – Iceland argued that the conditions underlying the 1961 agreement (i.e., exchange of notes) *had* fundamentally changed, thereby dissolving any obligations under the agreement and allowing Iceland to extend its maritime limits yet again. Few supported this legal position (e.g., see International Court of Justice 1973a: 18–22). The second front involved consensus building around a new maritime limits norm. Many coastal states (e.g., in Latin America and Africa) favored maritime limits beyond twelve miles. As the number of these states climbed, the system eventually hit a tipping point, at which limits beyond twelve miles became broadly debated, accepted, and codified. The new limits then became the status quo, which stabilized against additional challenges – unless the full cycle repeated itself again (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

The Cod Wars occurred during the norm adjustment period. Because Iceland and the UK could not agree on either the substantive issues under dispute (i.e., the fisheries limits norm) or the means through which to address those issues (e.g., the application of legal principles or not), the probability of violence increased. Why the resulting violence did not escalate to war, however, requires additional lessons.

3. A third key lesson is that **the salience of disputed issues varies. Relatively more salient issues (e.g., territorial issues) will escalate to war more often than relatively less salient issues (e.g., maritime issues)**. If disputed norms increase the risk of escalation and underlie both the 1859–1860 Italian War of Independence and the 1971–1973 Cod War, then why does the former escalate to war, while the latter does not? The answer lies, in part, with the relative salience of the issue under dispute (see Theoretical Analysis). States find (land) territory salient for both tangible and intangible reasons (Hensel and Mitchell 2017). Cavour, for example, values the various Italian lands for the tangible resources they contain, but their intangible value dominates his decision-making (see Chapter 4). He wants to unite the Italian *irredenta* into a single Italian state. More broadly, humans often attach symbolic meaning to land. This inhibits policy-makers' ability to offer concessions. Citizens brand leaders who take such actions as traitors, perhaps even punishing them (e.g., removing them from office).

Maritime zones, in contrast, generally carry tangible – but not intangible – salience. They do not evoke images of identity, homeland, history, or ethnic kin. Instead, states value these zones for the resources they provide (e.g., oil, fish, a strategic choke point). That means disputes over maritime issues will – on average – be less salient than ones over land territory. This does not mean that states will never resort to force over maritime zones. Democratic states on occasion do so (see Mitchell and Prins 1999), primarily because these zones have significant tangible value. Nevertheless, that value is not sufficient to justify the cost of war – leaving states to perhaps contest the space militarily but stop themselves from escalating too much.

4. A fourth lesson is that **democracy does not offer a silver bullet for avoiding militarized conflict**. Policy-makers – particularly in the West – regularly promote democracy as a means through which to build greater international peace and security. Their position derives from the empirical regularity that two (consolidated, strong) democracies have never gone to war with one another. Generally speaking, two problems with such a policy position exist. On the one hand, although an empirical truth, the theoretical reason *why* democracies do not fight one another eludes scholarly consensus (see Theoretical Analysis). Thus, even if we *wanted* to foster peace through democracy promotion, we would not know exactly what democratic characteristics to build to achieve that goal.

On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, with rare exception pairs (i.e., dyads) of democratic states lack the most salient issues over which two states might contend: (land) territorial issues. If territorial

disagreements ever existed in these dyadic relationships, the involved states settled them before both of them became a democracy (e.g., see Latin America; Owsiak and Vasquez 2019). Such a finding hints that issue types, rather than regime characteristics, account for a significant portion of what we know as the "democratic peace." Gibler (2012) labels this the "territorial peace."

The evidence mounts when we consider three special cases. First, in the rare instances in which territorial settlement did *not* precede the emergence of democracy in both dyad members, democracy itself did not facilitate a territorial settlement (Gibler and Owsiak 2018). This implies not only that democratic dyads do *not* manage the most contentious (i.e., territorial) issues more peacefully than nondemocratic dyads, but also – even if we assume they do – that they handle territorial and non-territorial issues differently. Issue salience explains this difference. Second, when researchers examine the rare democratic dyads with territorial disagreements, they find that the likelihood of militarized, dyadic conflict rises alongside the salience of the disputed territory (Park and James 2015). Finally, maritime issues – although less salient than territorial issues – still possess greater salience than many other issues over which states contend. It is therefore not surprising that democratic dyads are as equally likely as nondemocratic dyads to contest maritime issues, both diplomatically and militarily (Mitchell and Prins 1999; Lee and Mitchell 2012). In short, issue type seems to have a greater effect on crisis dynamics than regime type.

5. Lastly, and somewhat unexpectedly, this case shows that **mediators – especially biased ones – encourage crisis de-escalation**. According to conventional wisdom, the archetypal mediator maintains impartiality; not only should mediators not take sides (i.e., favor one disputant over another), but a disputant also should search for (and only accept) a mediator that does not favor its opponent. Scholarship advances a contrary position. It argues that *partial* mediators succeed more often than impartial ones, primarily because disputants find their messages more credible. An impartial mediator has less familiarity with the disputants and an incentive to say (e.g., control information) or do (e.g., pressure) anything to achieve a settlement (or peace). A partial (or biased) mediator, in contrast, holds greater interest in the disputants, more knowledge about the issues involved, and – presumably – a smaller incentive to exaggerate or misrepresent information, or to pressure disputants into a settlement that would not be beneficial to them (Princen 1992; Kydd 2003).

The 1971–1973 Cod War illustrates the scholarly position's wisdom in practice. Numerous impartial third parties might have mediated – for

example, Switzerland or various extra-regional individuals, states, or organizations (e.g., the Organisation of African Unity). A biased mediator eventually did so, however – namely, the NATO secretary-general. Although both Iceland and the UK belonged to NATO, the organization aligned much closer with the British (via the US). In fact, Iceland did not want NATO mediation. It asked NATO to compel a British withdrawal from the disputed waters instead. NATO's effectiveness as a mediator therefore depended on its British-leaning bias, through which it successfully encouraged British concessions.

15 The Crimea Annexation and the Russia–Ukraine War

THE CRIMEA ANNEXATION

In November 2013, popular protests erupted when Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych refused to sign a European Union association agreement (EUAA). Ukrainian authorities responded to these protests with a mix of coercion and accommodation. As a result, the protesters' demands escalated, and what began as disagreement over a specific policy decision turned into anger against the perceived antidemocratic tendencies of the Ukrainian government. The protestors increasingly pressured the pro-Russian Yanukovych to resign.

Russia had a keen interest in these developments. Demands for Yanukovych's resignation threatened Russia's regional influence – and in a state that both immediately bordered it and historically belonged to the Soviet Union. Russia also viewed the EUAA as a trojan horse for Ukraine joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Should Ukraine obtain NATO membership, the Western alliance could theoretically deploy military assets to another edge of the Russian homeland. Finally, there were also concerns about Russia's strategic military assets at Sevastopol. These considerations motivated not only Russia's diplomatic involvement in the crisis but, ultimately, its annexation of Crimea in March 2014 as well.

At the center of the 2014 Crimea crisis lies Sevastopol, the base of the Russian Black Sea fleet and a warm water port for the Russian navy. Many see this as a bilateral crisis involving only Ukraine and Russia. We adopt a broader perspective. Since Ukraine's independence, its relations with Russia have waxed and waned inversely to its relations with the United States (US), intertwining the three countries. Moreover, through a series of agreements, the US, along with its NATO allies, suggested that it would defend Ukraine's territorial integrity against (Russian) incursion. This is therefore a crisis that places Russia and the US on opposing sides.

Background

For all practical purposes, the roots of this crisis lie in the dissolution of the Soviet Union.[1] From that moment onward, Ukraine's foreign policy walked a tightrope. The promise of European integration – including greater access to markets, financial investors, aid, and security against Russian interference – pulled Ukraine westward. At the same time, there were many ties that pulled Ukraine eastward. Ukraine would never be able to escape the geographic happenstance that made Russia its immediate neighbor, and because of this it depended on Russia for energy, security, and – often – regime stability. These considerations, along with cultural similarities (e.g., the Orthodox faith and a broadly used Russian language), common Slavic heritage, and Ukraine's long common history with Russia entwined the two. In the end, Ukraine pursued "a 'multivector' foreign policy," in which it promised much to both the East and the West, while not implementing any policy that would push it irrevocably into any one camp (D'Anieri 2019: 89).

Three main dimensions motivated Russia's interest in Ukraine. The first concerns Crimea – a strategically valuable piece of territory. Shortly after Ukraine declared an intention to secede from the Soviet Union in August 1991, the Russian president's spokesman "announced that if Ukraine [actually] seceded … Russia would reserve the right to revise its borders with Ukraine" (Plokhy 1994: 148). Toward that end, Russia initially sought Ukraine's southern and eastern oblasts (administrative regions), along with Crimea. When a Ukrainian referendum suggested popular support for independence within the desired oblasts, however, Russia narrowed its focus to Crimea alone. Practical as well as strategic considerations dictated such a shift. Ethnic Russians did not generally comprise a majority of the population in any Ukrainian region – except Crimea, although certain subregions had many Russian speakers. Relatedly, although a majority of those in Crimea supported Ukrainian independence, this support was weaker in Crimea than in any other Ukrainian region. These factors granted Russia a strong practical foothold in Crimea – one that strategic considerations encouraged it to pursue (Plokhy 1994; Sakwa 2015).

Since the late eighteenth century, Russia has housed its Black Sea fleet at Sevastopol. The 1853 Crimean War (see Chapter 3) made the base part of Russia's historic memory, giving it more than just its significant strategic value. Nevertheless, the need to traverse the Dardanelles and Bosphorus Straits to enter or leave the Black Sea was a military and

[1] For comprehensive background on this crisis, see Sakwa (2015) and D'Anieri (2019).

diplomatic encumbrance, so Russian leaders tried doggedly to establish another significant warm-water port, but those efforts repeatedly failed. In the modern period, Sevastopol consequently blossomed to include not only a naval base but also "an extensive network of airfields, radar stations and ship repair yards" (Sakwa 2015: 102). To Russian nationalists, this rendered Crimea "a special case" (Sakwa 2015, 101) of "ancient Russian territory" (Plokhy 1994: 148). Indeed, as early as April 1992, the Russian vice president advanced a direct claim to Crimea (Plokhy 1994: 148).[2] The Russian elite wanted Crimea back.

Two characteristics undermined the strength of Russia's territorial claim. First, consistent with the mythology's message, the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) officially transferred Crimea to Ukraine in 1954. That transfer is mired in controversy: proposed by Khrushchev but adopted by the Supreme Soviet without debate; decided upon without due diligence; and recognizing Sevastopol in the transfer as an "object of all-union significance," thereby creating ambiguity about whether its status differed from that of the larger Crimean region in some way (Sakwa 2015: 101; see also Plokhy 1994: 148–149). Second, Ukrainians have argued, on the basis of a Ukrainian-nationalist Cossack mythology, that Ukrainians – not Russians – historically dominated Crimea and therefore received credit for establishing the Black Sea fleet (Plokhy 1994). Crimea, in other words, was more Ukrainian than Russian, even the military component.

The controversy surrounding the transfer mattered little so long as the Soviet Union remained intact. Upon its dissolution, however, a difficulty emerged. Russia wanted Crimea, but under international law internal administrative boundaries become international boundaries when one state secedes from another (see the principle of *uti possedetis*). Moreover, states may alter international boundaries, once fixed, only via negotiation among the involved parties (Shaw 2021). Ukraine therefore inherited Crimea, and with unilateral action forestalled and Ukraine unwilling to transfer Crimea back to Russia, an interstate territorial disagreement emerged.[3] Russia could manage this disagreement peacefully if Ukraine leaned eastward – that is, maintained a pro-Russian government and permitted strong Russian influence. Any movement westward, though,

[2] The Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) project does not record this as a territorial claim under its conceptual definition (Frederick et al. 2017).

[3] Sakwa (2015: 101) argues that, given its special status under the 1954 transfer, Sevastopol should have reverted to Russian control after the Soviet Union collapsed, since Russia inherited the "all-union" assets. An intriguing counterfactual is whether Russia–Ukraine relations would have followed a different trajectory had that occurred.

threatened to wrest away control of Crimea, thereby creating military vulnerabilities that Russia found unacceptable.

Another dimension of Russian interest in Ukraine involves the eastern expansion of Western institutions – most notably, NATO and the European Union (EU). Of these, NATO constitutes the larger threat to Russia. Between 1991and 2013 NATO nearly doubled in size, adding twelve new member states. In 2004, its membership advanced eastward; it admitted three former Warsaw Pact members – Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia – and three *former Soviet republics* – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Importantly, the expansion did not end. NATO signaled repeatedly between 2006 and 2008 that Georgia and Ukraine would eventually join too.

Russia interpreted NATO's continued expansion as a direct, significant threat. Because NATO originally formed to contain Soviet aspirations in Europe and to protect members against a Soviet attack, Russia inherently viewed NATO as an anti-Russian organization. NATO's behavior after the end of the Cold War seemingly confirmed these concerns. The organization would admit former Soviet states to its membership, for example, but not Russia itself. Similarly, around the time of the Soviet Union's demise, Russia believed that NATO had, "in *spirit*," promised not to expand eastward – a perceived pledge that NATO subsequently violated (D'Anieri 2019: 61).[4] Finally, the end of the Cold War destroyed NATO's *raison d'être*; yet the organization continued to act as it searched for a consensus about the alliance's new purpose and main threats. Its members intervened militarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–2004), Kosovo (1999), Iraq (First Gulf War, 1998 Operation Desert Fox, Second Gulf War), and Libya (2011).

From Russia's perspective, the military operations in the Balkans, among others, lay well beyond the organization's traditional, self-defense purview. They also ran contrary to Russian interests. Slavic sympathies, the fact that the United Nations (UN) had not sanctioned the use of force, as well as policy disagreement about whether force should be used at all, led Russia to repeatedly criticize NATO action. To the Russians, it seemed as though NATO increasingly used pretext – often, the protection of ethnic minorities – to justify removing anti-Western leaders from power and to expand its sphere of influence. By 1999, Russian political leaders concluded that "[t]here is no doubt that the next target of NATO aggression will be Russia" (quoted in D'Anieri 2019: 99). Ukraine's turn

[4] Shifrinson (2016) argues that the US in fact provided assurances in 1990 that NATO would not expand, but that these were informal (see especially p. 42). See also the correspondence in Kramer and Shifrinson (2017).

westward would simply supply a more favorable position from which NATO could attack the Russian homeland.

This logic leads to a third dimension of Russian interest in Ukraine: the establishment of a buffer between the West and the Russian homeland. Russia had pursued this strategy consistently after the 2004 NATO expansion brought the alliance to its northern border. In 2008, two weeks after NATO promised that Georgia and Ukraine would eventually become members,[5] Russia "opened formal direct relations" between itself and Abkhazia and South Ossetia (in Georgia; Nygren 2019: 378). The Russia–Georgia relationship waxed and waned in the years prior to 2008, usually worsening when Georgia attempted to take control of these two breakaway republics. Yet the widely recognized independence of Kosovo (February 2008) and the threat of NATO's further eastern expansion served as catalysts for a more escalatory Russian response. In May 2008, Russia sent so-called peacekeepers to the two Georgian republics. That summer, it held its "Caucasus 2008" military exercises along the Georgian border. These exercises "simulated a situation where Russian forces would reinforce their peacekeeping units [in the breakaway republics], secure entry points for the main body of forces, and conduct a military operation" (Kofman 2018). When the exercises finished on August 2, the involved troops remained along the border (Nygren 2019). By August 8, the war had begun.

Russia's behavior had four effects. First, it slowed the NATO accession process for Georgia and Ukraine (Nygren 2019). Europe had no appetite to move quickly if a war with Russia might result. Second, by successfully supporting the breakaway republics against the Georgian military, Russia created a partial buffer between itself and Georgia – and gained valuable resources in the process (Felgenhauer 2009). Third, Russia tested a strategy that it would (partially) use later in its two crises with Ukraine (2014 and 2022). It claimed a need to protect a Russian-speaking minority abroad; conducted military exercises near the target state – to build-up forces for a war without provoking international condemnation; left those forces in place when the exercises concluded; sent forces into the desired buffer zone either under the guise of peacekeeping or secretly; claimed that no Russian forces had joined the conflict, which also minimizes condemnation; and left support behind for the separatists (see Batta 2021; Nygren 2019). Finally, it demonstrated that Russia would use force to defend what it considered to be its vital national interest.

[5] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Bucharest Summit Declaration" (April 3, 2008), www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm.

Historical Events, Crimea

In September 2013, the Ukrainian cabinet unanimously approved a draft EUAA.[6] In exchange for deeper economic and political integration with EU members, the EU asked Ukraine to commit to various reforms – most notably with respect to the rule of law. The EU and Ukraine planned to officially sign their EUAA at the Eastern Partnership Summit on November 28–29, 2013, in Vilnius, Lithuania. Yanukovych torpedoed this plan, however, when he unilaterally announced on November 21 that he no longer intended to sign the agreement. In response, journalist Mustafa Nayyem used social media to encourage protestors to gather on the Maidan, or Independence Square, in Kyiv. A few thousand protesters turned up that evening, and a confrontation between the police and protesters occurred, albeit with minimal violence.

The situation calmed in the ensuing days. Prime Minister Nikolai Azarov assured the country that negotiations with the EU had not, in fact, ceased. When the Vilnius summit ended with no further progress toward the EUAA, however, roughly ten thousand people protested in Kyiv. In the early morning hours of November 30, Ukraine's special police forces, the Berkut, attacked the protesters, thereby transforming and widening the protest movement. The protesters' grievances shifted from disappointment with the lack of European integration to anger at both police brutality and the incumbent government's corruption. Such a shift brought a diverse set of groups into the movement's fold: Europhiles, nationalists (including some extremists), and various opposition political parties. The movement's broadening membership necessarily expanded the protestors' demands. In addition to signing the EUAA, the protesters now also wanted to combat corruption, preserve democracy, secure a fair 2015 presidential election, and reinstate the 2004 Ukrainian constitution, which Yanukovych had illegally modified.

The protesters remained camped in place through January 2014, although their numbers dwindled over time. When they rioted (December 1) and removed a statue of Lenin (December 8), the Berkut attempted to "take back the Maidan" (December 10–11; Wood et al. 2016: xi). Nevertheless, calm generally prevailed. Amidst that calm, Russia sent a delegation of its secret service to Ukraine (December 13) and Yanukovych traveled to Moscow, securing a loan and lower gas prices from Putin on December 16–17.

The situation escalated again on January 16, 2014, when the Rada passed laws that clearly targeted the protesters; these laws, inter alia,

[6] This section primarily follows Sakwa (2015) and D'Anieri (2019).

outlawed certain protest actions (e.g., creating traffic logjams or blocking either residential or government buildings), permitted trials in absentia, and curbed support from foreign nongovernmental organizations – the latter to shut off protesters' funds. To add insult to injury, these "dictatorship laws" arose through irregular procedures in the Rada. Thousands of Ukrainians protested in response, beginning on January 19. The two-way violence between protestors and police that followed fortified each side's resolve. It also widened the movement's goals once again; in addition to the previous demands, the movement now also wanted the government to release and grant amnesty to any arrested protestors, reverse the "dictatorship laws," and – for a growing number – remove Yanukovych from power (D'Anieri 2019: 216).

Yanukovych was more pro-Russian than many of the alternative Ukrainian leaders available. Thus, calls for Yanukovych's resignation caused Russia great concern. Fearing that the protests would now bring a hard-line Ukrainian nationalist to power, Russian diplomatic activity intensified. Putin's advisor, Vladislav Surkov, met with Yanukovych on four different occasions between January 20 – the day after the fresh protest wave – and February 12. At the same time, pro-Russian – or, analogously, anti-protest – movements began, particularly in Crimea, with some political parties there establishing "self-defense" contingents to confront the original protesters. After another wave of protests on February 2, political parties in Crimea proposed approaching Russia for support. Putin himself met with Yanukovych on February 6.

Yanukovych meanwhile began a desperate attempt to remain in office, in close collaboration with Russia. Between January 19 and January 28, he negotiated with leaders of the Batkivshchyna political party – a move that itself suggested extreme desperation, since Yanukovych had imprisoned Tymoshenko, the Batkivshchyna party's leader, in 2011 and still refused to release her. To this same party, he now offered government posts (e.g., prime minister) and mild concessions (e.g., to "reconsider the 'dictatorship laws'"; D'Anieri 2019: 216). When this round of negotiations failed, Yanukovych fired the prime minister, Mykola Azarov, and pushed the Rada – still under his political control – to revoke some of the "dictatorship laws." Presumably, he intended the first decision to distance himself from the Rada's unpopular actions, and the latter to resolve the protesters' main grievances against him. More negotiations occurred in early February, but these too failed. The Batkivshchyna party, in exchange for accepting the post of prime minister, sought the restoration of Ukraine's 2004 constitution and the appointment of opposition leaders to the government. These negotiations failed as well. Finally, on February 14–16, the Ukrainian government released over

200 people that it had arrested over the prior two months. Tymoshenko, however, was not among those released.

With domestic diplomatic options bearing little fruit, Yanukovych naturally drew closer to Russia, which viewed the protests as an attempted "coup" and "advocated ending the protests forcibly" (D'Anieri 2019: 217). Ukraine obliged. On February 18, roughly 20,000 protesters – some armed – marched on the Rada, prompting Russian forces in both Russia and Sevastopol to go on alert. The Ukrainian government's response employed "live ammunition, rubber bullets, tear gas, and flash grenades" (D'Anieri 2019: 218). It also threatened the protesters with more: End the disturbance, or the government will use force. Indeed, the government attacked the protesters that evening, not only killing people on both sides but also causing each side to adopt a more hard-line approach toward the other. Against mounting force, each side increasingly believed it needed to use more force. Protestors seized government buildings, as well as local police stations and their weapons. On February 20, the protesters attacked a police line, and the police – with authorization from the interior ministry and support from the Berkut – used live ammunition in response. This violence, which produced nearly 70 deaths and 500 injuries, caused demands for Yanukovych's resignation to increase.

Germany and France blamed Yanukovych for the mounting violence, citing his unwillingness to compromise as an escalatory factor. On the evening of February 19, the French, German, and Polish foreign ministers traveled to Kyiv to negotiate with Yanukovych. The Western diplomats tried to find a middle ground. Instead of seeking his immediate resignation, they asked Yanukovych to agree to an early (i.e., irregular) presidential election. He refused, but so did the opposition, which sensed that Yanukovych would use any preelection period to manipulate the electoral process and outcome. The negotiations collapsed.

Shortly thereafter, on February 20–21 – after the police violence had escalated – Yanukovych finally reached an agreement with the opposition parties. The government would reinstate the 2004 constitution, incorporate opposition parties into the government, and accept an early presidential election, but only if the protesters went home. All the involved political parties signed the agreement, along with France, Germany, and Poland. A Russian human rights ombudsman attended this round of talks at Yanukovych's request, but Russia refused to sign the agreement. This might have ended the crisis, had the protesters not rejected the agreement.

As D'Anieri (2019: 220) notes, "the violence of February 20 had not frightened the protesters, but rather enraged them and steeled their will to finish the job." They demanded that Yanukovych resign; it was nonnegotiable. If he did not resign by the morning of February 22, the protesters would forcibly seize government buildings.

During the afternoon of February 21, the Rada convened to begin meeting the protesters' demands. Although members of Yanukovych's party (the Party of Regions) and the Communist party did not attend, the Rada took numerous steps in their absence. First, it moved to reinstate the 2004 constitution. Second, it fired the interior minister, who had authorized the February 20 attacks on protesters, and demanded that the armed forces not attack protesters. Third, it granted amnesty to those arrested during the protests. Finally, it essentially freed Tymoshenko.

On the evening of February 21, with the protesters' demand hanging in the air, Yanukovych left Kiev against Russian advice. As he fled, he faced at least four assassination attempts, so perhaps it was understandable that, in the moment, nobody knew where he went; yet this left the perception that he had abandoned his post. The Rada announced as much on February 22, after its speaker – a member of Yanukovych's own party – resigned. Other details that subsequently came to light support such a position. Yanukovych had been shipping his personal belongings and large sums of money to Russia before the violence of February 20. Moreover, although he supposedly traveled to a party conference in Kharkov, along the Russian border, he quickly moved on to Crimea, and then Rostov, Russia – the latter with Russian assistance.

After declaring that Yanukovych had abandoned his post, the Rada impeached him via irregular (i.e., nonconstitutional) means and elected a new acting president, Oleksandr Turchynov. Yanukovych complained about this irregular procedure and denied that he would or had resigned. In his eyes, the Rada conducted nothing less than a coup. Nevertheless, the Rada and the acting president proceeded in his absence. They established a new government and scheduled presidential elections for May 25.

In the days that followed, Russia's attention shifted to Crimea. On February 20, the speaker of the Crimean parliament mentioned the possibility of Crimea seceding from Ukraine. Russian forces, which went on alert on February 18, began a "peacekeeping operation" that same day. Escalation quickly followed. Protests and counterprotests occurred on February 26 in Sevastopol. The next day, an armed group sized the Crimean parliament and council of ministers buildings, raising the Russian flag at both locations. A session of parliament then quickly convened in secret; those in attendance voted to replace the Crimean prime minister with a more pro-Russian figure. Meanwhile, former members of the Berkut – presumably still pro-Russian – seized the crossings that connect the Crimea peninsula to Ukraine. By February 28, masked, unmarked soldiers appeared in Crimea. These forces – later identified as

members of the Russian military – seized two airfields, including the one at Sevastopol. On March 1, the new Crimean prime minister formally requested Russian assistance to restore peace in Crimea.

This request provided Putin with the political cover necessary to intervene overtly in Ukraine. He immediately asked the legislature for permission to use Russian forces "on the territory of Ukraine until the normalization of the socio-political situation in that country" (quoted in D'Anieri 2019: 227). The legislature approved this broad mandate unanimously. Within days, Russian forces seized Crimea amidst minimal resistance.

US president Barrack Obama spoke with Putin on March 1. The two states' positions on Ukraine remained far apart. To the West, Russian behavior constituted a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia, however, maintained that the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine faced a significant threat; "Putin stressed that in case of any further spread of violence to Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, Russia retains the right to protect its interests and the Russian-speaking population of those areas" (D'Anieri 2019, 230–231). Much as NATO had done in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Libya, Russia intended to protect an ethnic minority abroad from systematic human rights violations.[7]

On March 6, the Crimean parliament decided to accede to Russia and rescheduled a referendum on the question for March 16. During the ten days that followed, the international community protested, but achieved little of substance. The G7, for example, asked Russia to stop the referendum. Instead, Russia exercised its military near the Ukrainian border, and the referendum went forward as planned – albeit without international observers and with few journalists to report on events. According to the referendum results, 95.5 percent of the populace favored reunification with Russia. This perhaps overstates the support among the populace for reunification, though experts believe a majority favored that outcome (D'Anieri 2019: 228–229).

The day after the referendum, the Crimean parliament requested that Russia annex Crimea. On March 18, Russia and Crimea signed an accession treaty, which incorporated Crimea and Sevastopol into Russia as two distinct entities (D'Anieri 2019: 229). The Russian legislature ratified the treaty, and Putin immediately signed it into law. Crimea, in theory, transferred to Russia. Meanwhile, the conflict in the eastern oblasts continued.

[7] Evidence shows no such violations occurred. We address this further in the sections that follow. See Pifer and Thoburn 2014.

Text Box 15.1 Nutshell Summary: Annexation of Crimea

1. Ukrainian president Yanukovych reneges on signing the EUAA in late November 2013. Protests follow.
2. On January 16, 2014, the Ukrainian parliament passes the "dictatorship laws" through irregular parliamentary means. Protests continue, and the protestors now demand that Yanukovych leave office.
3. Amidst more violent protests, Yanukovych tries to bargain with Ukrainian opposition leaders. These efforts fail, and he flees to Russia (via Crimea) on February 21.
4. From February 20 through March 1, Crimean leaders raise the possibility of secession, Russian forces begin a "peacekeeping operation" in Crimea, pro-Russian protestors seize key government buildings, and the Crimean parliament replaces its leader with a more pro-Russian one. On March 1, the new Crimean prime minister formally requests Russian assistance to restore peace in Crimea. The Russian legislature approves this assistance.
5. On March 6, 2014, the Crimean parliament decides to accede to Russia and schedules a referendum. On March 17, the day after the referendum, the Crimean parliament requests Russian annexation. Russia and Crimea sign an annexation treaty on March 18, which incorporates Crimea and Sevastopol into Russia.

In May 2014 a snap presidential election brought Peter Poroshenko to office in Ukraine. A few months later, he launched an offensive against the separatists in eastern Ukraine. With Russia continuing its support of the separatists, however, the offensive failed, and conflict in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine continued in the years that followed. In addition to this offensive, Poroshenko moved back toward greater integration with the West. He not only ruled out any military cooperation with Russia but also signed an EUAA (2017), secured permission to establish a Ukrainian Orthodox Church (i.e., one free of Russian oversight), and expressed a desire to pursue NATO membership once again. Public opinion polls demonstrate that broad support for these policies existed. In early 2016, nearly 60 percent of Ukrainian respondents supported joining the EU; nearly half supported joining NATO (UNIAN Information Agency 2016). By June 2017, 69 percent of Ukrainian respondents expressed support for becoming a NATO member – an increase from 28 percent in 2012 (Polityuk and Zinets 2017). The public, in short, increasingly leaned away from Russia. All of this of course can be seen as a reaction to the annexation of Crimea.

Text Box 15.1 summarizes the major events in this crisis.

Key Variables

Most of the variables present in this case encourage escalation of the crisis (see Table 15.1). Of these, *alliances*, *domestic politics*, and *the issue* at stake prove decisive. All three go together and reinforce one another, creating a particularly dangerous cocktail. Post-Soviet Russia expected to be part of a multipolar security structure in Europe. Instead, the NATO alliance expanded eastward, while excluding Russia from its ranks. This gives Russia the impression, based on *previous history*, that NATO still views Russia as its primary threat. The *rivalry* and *hostility* between Russia and the US therefore continues, albeit at significantly lower levels than during the Cold War.

The prospect that Ukraine would join the NATO *alliance* is a major underlying escalatory force. It results, in part, from Ukrainian *domestic politics*. On the one hand, the Ukrainian people want greater integration with the West and press their elected leaders to pursue a formal relationship with the EU and NATO. Even pro-Russian leaders could not escape this pressure. Yanukovych, for example, negotiates and agrees to sign an EUAA; he balks at the last minute, though, which triggers the crisis. On the other hand, Russia permits Ukraine to court the West so long as the courtship remains informal and a pro-Russian leader sits at the helm. The EUAA threatens to formalize the courtship, but when Yanukovych relents, he resolves that threat. Yanukovych's behavior later threatens to bring a less pro-Russian leader to office. The Ukrainian government's

Table 15.1 *Variable summary for the Crimea annexation of 2014: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Nature of the issue	Major	X	
Alliances	Major	X	
Domestic politics	Major	X	
System structure	Moderate	X	
Proximity	Moderate	X	
Relative capabilities	Moderate	X	
Previous history	Minor	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Norms	Minor	X	
Bargaining strategy	Minor	X	
Arms races	None		
Democracy	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

confusing *bargaining strategy*, which mixes accommodation (e.g., striking deals with political leaders, or reversing the "dictatorship laws" late in the crisis) and force, encourages the protesters to adopt a more hard-line stance. They escalate their demands – eventually asserting that Yanukovych must resign. Because Yanukovych is pro-Russian, Russia finds this unacceptable. When Yanukovych flees to Russia, the Rada irregularly removes Yanukovych from office, creating the perception of a coup. Russian "peacekeepers" enter the Donbas region and Crimea amidst this domestic political chaos.

NATO's eastward expansion might seem benign to observers in the West, but Russia viewed the actions as aggressive. In 2004, NATO admits three former members of the Warsaw Pact (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland), as well as three former members of the Soviet Union itself (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia). This brings NATO more firmly into Russia's former sphere of influence. More importantly, it carries the alliance up to the northern border of Russia's homeland. In 2008, NATO then asserts that Georgia and Ukraine will eventually join the alliance too. Were this to happen, NATO could reach two additional distinct segments of Russia's southern border. Putin understood the security implications. NATO could perhaps deploy its weapons and forces to the edges of the Russian homeland and, if it chose, open a multifront war against the Russian homeland. *Previous history* makes such an outcome imaginable.

Territorial issues mattered to Russia in two other ways as well. First, Crimea contained the major naval base for its Black Sea fleet, making Crimea an essential piece of *militarily strategic territory*. Second, a considerable number of Russian speakers, albeit many associated with the naval base, called Crimea home. This provided a *nationalist* justification and motive for Russian claims to this territory – and potentially activated *norms* related to such justifications.

Once Putin opted for force, *relative capabilities* and *proximity* played a moderate, escalatory role. The capability disparity between Russia and Ukraine made it seem that Russia could impose its will, while its immediate land contiguity to Ukraine (*proximity*) facilitated the (easy) use of force.

The remaining variables play no discernible role. Neither a*rms races* nor *wishful thinking* are present. We also list *democracy* as having no significant role. Ukrainian elections could propel anti-Russian leaders to power, but that does not happen within this crisis. Leadership change instead comes about via irregular means. Protestors also initially object to national policy, but their real objection is to the government's efforts to repress the protests both legally and through violence – nondemocratic behaviors.

Theoretical Analysis

This crisis seems unusual for two reasons. On the one hand, militarized conflict erupted between Russia and Ukraine, with the other major states (like the US, as well as members of the EU) largely lingering in the background. It therefore first appears as though Western major powers had a limited (if any) role in the crisis. Yet, the 2014 Ukraine crisis is essentially between major states over the future of the European order. Sakwa (2015: 3), for example, notes that "the [2014] Ukraine crisis has escalated because of the multiplicity of power centers [in Europe; e.g., Brussels and Moscow], contested narratives and divergent understandings of the nature of the post-Cold War order … [T]he 'Ukraine' crisis is the sharpest manifestation of the instability of the post-Cold War international system."

Understanding the systemic origins of the crisis proves key to unlocking the reasons for escalation. Russia sees itself as a *European* state. When the Cold War ended, it therefore worked to become part of the strengthening European order, but the EU and NATO rebuffed its advances. Each sought deeper communication with Russia, but bridled at the thought of Russia participating in their policy decision-making process. So Russia pursued the idea of a "Greater Europe" instead (Sakwa 2015). Rather than conceiving of the European order as based in Brussels and supporting distinctly Western values (e.g., democracy and human rights), "Greater Europe" envisioned multiple power centers – including Moscow – and ideological pluralism. In this vision, Russia would be a regional leader, but without adopting Western values, joining Western institutions, or bending to Western political and military might (Sakwa 2015: 27).

The idea of a "Greater Europe" never came to fruition. Western military intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo, which occurred amidst Russian protests, undermined it, and the death knell's final toll likely arrived with the Libyan intervention in 2011. What then is the post-Cold War order that developed? Cambanis (2014) summarizes it as "one in which major powers only intervene militarily when they have an international consensus on their side, or failing that, when they're not crossing a rival power's red lines."

That begs the question: Where are the red lines? This question provokes extreme disagreement. Chomsky observes that "American red lines, in short, are firmly placed at Russia's borders. Therefore Russian ambitions 'in its own neighborhood' violate world order and create crises," in ways that other post-Cold War military operations did not (Chomsky 2014). Russia, in contrast, places its "red lines" further out

from the Russian homeland, and it has been strongly signaling such a position for years. As early as 1995, Russia expressed concern about NATO's eastward expansion. President Yeltsin, speaking during the NATO intervention in Bosnia, claimed that that intervention was "the first sign of what could happen when NATO comes right up to the Russian Federation's borders … The flame of war could burst out across the whole of Europe" (quoted in Mearsheimer 2014). Each time NATO expanded thereafter, Russia registered its discontent. By 2008 – after the Baltic states joined NATO – a Russian "red line" emerged. In April 2008, NATO welcomed "Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO" and agreed "today that these countries *will become members of NATO*" (emphasis added).[8] Within weeks, Russia had officially connected to the separatist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Within months, it was involved in a war with Georgia. To Sakwa (2015: 5), "the Georgian crisis should have made clear to everyone that Russia is not only ready to make its voice heard, but is also prepared to use force when its national interest is at stake."

A similar pattern played out in this crisis. Ukraine had negotiated an EUAA. As the signing date for that agreement approached, Russia worked intensively to dissuade Ukraine from further integration with the EU, believing that EU integration represented a "stalking horse for NATO expansion" (Mearsheimer 2014). Yanukovych acquiesced to this pressure, thereby triggering the protests that eventually led to the Maidan revolution in February 2014. Putin worked to keep Yanukovych in power in the lead-up to that revolution, but when Yanukovych fled Kyiv in late February, his options dwindled. A pro-Western government asserted control over Ukraine. With the threat of greater Western integration at hand, Putin acted militarily to defend Russia's security interests.

Finally, we observe the pattern again in 2022. The US presidency became more openly anti-Russian in January 2021. Within months, Putin amassed troops at the border with Ukraine and warned the US not to threaten Russian security. In response, the Biden administration sanctioned Russian leaders, NATO reissued its statement that "Ukraine will become a member of the alliance," and NATO and Ukraine exercised militarily together in the Black Sea.[9] Sensing Ukraine's more westward tilt, Russia responded militarily in the months that followed. It likely saved the invasion itself for the winter – to increase its odds of undermining

[8] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Bucharest Summit Declaration"(April 3, 2008), www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm.

[9] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Brussels Summit Communiqué" (June 14, 2021), www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm.

a coordinated response among NATO members, given their divergent dependence on Russian energy. Nevertheless, the troop buildup – along with other signals, such as military exercises with Belarus – occurred in the months following the NATO statement.

THE RUSSIA–UKRAINE WAR

Background

The immediate background to this war – indeed, a prelude to it – is the annexation of Crimea in 2014. At the time, that annexation did not seem like a full-blown war, primarily because it was quick, with few deaths.[10] With the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, however, a local war began – one for which certain other conflicts between Russia and former members of the Soviet Union served as important background events. In particular, three conflicts seem relevant and theoretically related to the Russia–Ukraine War.

The first is the Estonian conflict, which began in 1991 with the independence of Estonia from the Soviet Union. This conflict has nationalist roots. The new Estonian state did not recognize the considerable number of Russian speakers as true Estonians and attempted to strip them of voting rights. In the 1992 national elections, for instance, only Russians who were citizens before 1940 were permitted to vote, which meant that about 500,000 Russian residents were not allowed to vote (see Grofman, Mikkel, and Taagepera 1999 for this and other examples). The ethnic Russians objected, as did Russia itself, to these kinds of restrictions. In addition, the Estonian government claimed the old borders, before Stalin invaded just prior to the Second World War. This meant that Estonia was now claiming parts of Russia, although only about 2,000 square kilometers if it (Berg and Saima 2000; Maness and Valeriano 2012).

Both these controversies – especially the border issue, which was seen as potentially more serious – were resolved because the EU insisted, first, that to become a member Estonia had to resolve its existing border disputes – a requirement of all nations seeking EU membership – and, second, that Estonia must have a certain level of democracy, which it would not obtain if it stripped categories of people of the right to vote. In 1999 Estonia declared it accepted its current borders (Maness and Valeriano

[10] The MID data (nos. 4681, 4682, 4683) as of February 17, 2025, showed no battle fatalities, although Russian ramming of a Ukrainian boat resulted in four civilian sailors being killed. *The Guardian* reported one dead and one wounded Ukrainian soldier during the takeover, but these were caused by masked gunmen (i.e., not uniformed Russian troops); see Walker and Traynor 2014.

2012: 136). It also eventually complied with the voting requirements and was subsequently admitted to both the EU and NATO in 2004. In this way an international organization helped defuse a crisis with the new Russian Federation. Ironically, the EU helped keep the peace even though Russia regarded Estonia's joining both the EU and NATO as provocative. This resolved the main nationalist issue, although tensions have been high from time to time.

The second conflict involves the independence of Moldavia from the USSR in 1991 and Moldova's conflict with the subregion of Transdniestria, which is populated primarily by Russian speakers. Nationalist fears led Transdniestria to secede. By 1992, with a fear of invasion, Russian troops that were still in Transdniestria from the Cold War intervened to protect the Russian speakers, and Transdniestria became a de facto state.

The third conflict is the Russia–Georgia War of 2008, which was briefly discussed earlier in this chapter. Of the three conflicts this is the most similar to the Russia-Ukraine War. It involved the accession to power of an anti-Russian head of state, who wanted to join NATO (and the EU), as well as successionist provinces – Abkhazia and South Ossetia – populated primarily by Russian speakers. These were the two main conditions that brought about the war. However, the underlying condition was that the breakup of the USSR, with the creation of a host of new borders, created security concerns within Russia – namely, the new state might join NATO and be more tightly tied to the West (through membership in the EU), while simultaneously leaving Russian speakers who had complaints about their new state outside the borders of Russia.

Historical Events, Ukraine

The moves toward greater integration with the West that followed the annexation of Crimea provoked a Russian counterresponse. In 2019 Poroshenko was replaced by Zelenskyy, his bitter rival, who promised to bring the separatist Donbas back into Ukraine. In March/April 2021, Russia amassed more troops along the Ukrainian border than at any time since 2014 and issued a warning: If Western states threatened Russia's security interests, Russia would respond militarily (Bielieskov 2021). The Biden administration responded with sanctions, and, at its June 2021 summit in Brussels, NATO reiterated its 2008 pledge that "Ukraine will become a member of the alliance."[11] NATO and Ukraine completed joint military exercises in the Black Sea shortly thereafter.

[11] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Brussels Summit Communiqué" (June 14, 2021), www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm.

Russia diplomatically protested the NATO exercises. In September 2021, it also conducted its own, regular joint exercise with Belarus – named *Zapad*, or West (Dixon and Thebault 2021). These exercises raised concerns in the West, particularly because they looked similar to exercises that predated Russia's Georgia campaign in 2008, as well as its annexation of Crimea in 2014. Additional military exercises occurred among Russian and Belarusian forces in late November 2021 (Reuters 2021a).

By December 1, 2021, Russia accused Ukraine of amassing forces in the eastern region in order to launch another offensive against the separatists. At the same time, it announced that its "regular winter drills" would commence shortly along the Ukraine border (Reuters 2021b). Two days later, US intelligence agencies reported that Russia was preparing for an invasion of Ukraine by amassing troops along the border (Harris and Sonne 2021). Russia accompanied that buildup with a familiar refrain: It asked the US to guarantee that Ukraine would not become a NATO member and that NATO would not engage in military activities in or near Ukraine (e.g., see Isachenkov 2021).

On February 24, 2022, Putin announced "a special military operation" to demilitarize Ukraine and invaded (Osborn and Nikolskaya 2022). Kyiv was heavily bombed from the air and with artillery, causing considerable damage to buildings, as Russian troops took up positions around the perimeter. Women and children left the combat areas and men of fighting age were conscripted. By April 2022, after five weeks of intense fighting, Russian troops had failed to take Kyiv and withdrew.[12] This proved to be a turning point in the war. Putin gave up on dominating Ukraine and instead concentrated on the Donbas region in the east, establishing a land bridge from the Donbas to Crimea. He also recognized Donetsk and Luhansk as republics (D'Anieri 2023: 295).

Immediately after the invasion, the US, along with NATO and the G7, initiated economic sanctions against Russia, which intensified over the next year. These included restrictions on technology with military uses (e.g., semiconductors), price caps on oil and gas, and restrictions on international banking.[13] Simultaneously, the West provided military aid, including training for the Ukrainian armed forces, and specific weapons systems, which expanded by 2023 to include advanced tanks, Javelin missiles, Turkish Bayraktar drones, and ultimately F-16 jet fighters (D'Anieri 2023: 291).

[12] See D'Anieri (2023: 288) and Karatnycky (2024: 262–263) for details.

[13] See US Department of the Treasury press release "Fact Sheet: Disrupting and Degrading – One Year of U.S. Sanctions on Russia and Its Enablers" (February 24, 2023), https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1298.

European dependence on Russian energy was seen as a vulnerability despite the sanctions, and on September 26, 2022, the Nord Stream pipeline, which carries natural gas under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany, was blown up by unknown saboteurs thought to be Ukrainian. The *Washington Post* later reported, based on secret documents leaked on Discord, that three months before the saboteurs blew up the pipeline the Biden administration learned that it was being planned by a small team that reported directly to the commander in chief of the Ukrainian military (Harris and Mekhennet 2023).

Western aid and support encouraged Ukrainian forces to engage in direct attacks on Russia as well. These included the sinking of the *Moskva*, Russia's flagship in its Black Sea fleet, by an anti-ship cruise missile in April 2022; attacks on towns within Russia; and a drone attack on Moscow in May, which Russia claimed was an attempt to assassinate Putin. Such actions raised the possibility that Russia would expand the war – perhaps retaliating against NATO countries. Despite these risks, Western leaders provided strong verbal support for Zelenskyy, with Biden personally going to Kyiv in February 2023 on the one-year anniversary of the war.

Although seemingly unable to defeat Ukraine in a war of attrition, Russia has generally held the upper hand. Nonetheless, Ukraine has attempted to bring the war to Russian territory. In August 2024 it invaded and seized territory in Russia proper, in the Kursk oblask, north of Ukraine (Breteau 2024). Russia responded to the incursion by deploying North Korean troops to the area, bringing a new country into the war (Reuters 2025).

Through these and other actions, the war has produced fairly high battlefield deaths. Although such figures need to be independently checked once the war ends, by January 2025 the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated that Russian casualties were: a minimum of 172,000 Russian battle deaths and 611,000 wounded (Clavilier and Gjerstad 2025; see also the early estimates by Woodward 2024: 334). Ryan Maness and Brandon Valeriano estimate, from various sources, that as of January 2025 there have been 700,000 Russian casualties, with 175–200,000 dead, and 400,000 Ukrainian casualties, with 70–100,000 dead.[14]

In addition, according to the May 2022 report of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the conflict had forced 6.2 million people to flee Ukraine and internally displaced

[14] Personal email February 13, 2025. There figures are similar to those given by the *New York Times* on January 23, 2025, which reports 150,000 Russian battle deaths and 100,000 Ukrainian battle deaths (Kurmanaev and Méheut 2025).

Text Box 15.2 Nutshell Summary: Russia–Ukraine War

1. In March/April 2021, Russia amasses troops along the Ukrainian border and warns that if Western states threaten Russia's security interests, it will respond militarily.
2. In June 2021, NATO renews its 2008 pledge that Ukraine will become a member of the alliance. NATO and Ukraine then conduct joint military exercises in the Black Sea, which Russia protests.
3. In September 2021, Russia and Belarus conduct joint military exercises.
4. On December 1, 2021, Russia accuses Ukraine of amassing forces in the east in order to launch an offensive against the separatists.
5. Two days later, US intelligence agencies claim that Russia is preparing to invade Ukraine.
6. On February 24, 2022, Russia invades.
7. The West, led by the US, imposes stiff economic sanctions on Russia and begins to provide military, financial, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, which increases as the war drags on.
8. In the first week of April 2022, Russian withdraws its troops around Kyiv, and a war of attrition sets in. The West sends advanced weapons to Ukraine.
9. As the war enters its third year in 2025, Trump attempts to negotiate a settlement.

an additional 8 million people.[15] A UN report on December 31, 2024 stated that from February 2022 to December 2024 27,836 civilians in Ukraine had been injured while 12,340 civilians had been killed.[16]

As of the date this book went to press, the war continues, but US president Donald Trump has made efforts to bring it to an end through a negotiated settlement. Text Box 15.2 provides a nutshell summary of the historical events.

Key Variables

Table 15.2 shows that the key variables at the onset of the Russia-Ukraine War are similar to those that encouraged the Crimea annexation to escalate in 2014. This is not surprising; each involves similar

[15] OHCHR, "Situation of Human Rights in Ukraine in the Context of the Armed Attack by the Russian Federation" (June 29, 2022), https://tinyurl.com/vvn2x6hvf. D'Anieri (2023: 298) puts this figure at 6.6 million. See https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine for updates.

[16] OHCHR, "Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine: 1 September to 30 November 2024" (December 31, 2024), https://tinyurl.com/2zntexj4s.

Table 15.2 *Variable summary for the Russia–Ukraine War: effect on crisis outcome*

Variable	Role	Escalation	De-escalation
Nature of the issue	Major	X	
Alliances	Major	X	
Previous history	Major	X	
Domestic politics	Major	X	
Norms	Moderate	X	
System structure	Moderate	X	
Proximity	Moderate	X	
Relative capabilities	Moderate	X	
Rivalry	Minor	X	
Hostility	Minor	X	
Bargaining strategy	None	X	
Arms races	None		
Democracy	None		
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	None		

issues and relationships, and both occur in close temporal proximity. As in 2014, three key variables play a major role here. First, the *nature of the issue* is again territorial. Because Russia has already annexed Crimea, it does not seek territory in this crisis for the same strategic reasons it did in 2014. Instead, its territorial goals are broader, aimed initially at occupying the capital and toppling the anti-Russian regime and, when that fails, trying to separate the Donbas region and create a land bridge from it to Crimea. The *nationalist* aspirations of Russian speakers in the Donbas make the creation of such a zone possible (as does Russia's immediate *proximity* to the Donbas), and the nationalist concerns are somewhat more acute than in Crimea, thereby encouraging escalation.

Second, Ukraine again threatens to join what Russia considers a provocative *alliance* (and gain EU membership), an overture that NATO views favorably. Finally, the *domestic political* situation in Ukraine favors escalation. Russian influence wanes with a pro-Western Ukrainian government in power. To these three, we add one other major influence in this case: *previous history*. All involved leaders remember the annexation of Crimea. In that case, Russia faced few consequences for its military actions, while Ukraine lost a piece of its homeland territory. Each side – but particularly Ukraine, as well as the US – likely learn that a similar, future situation requires a more *hard-line* stance (Leng 1983).

The post-Cold War *system structure* remains in place and plays the same moderate role it did earlier. *Proximity* and *relevant capabilities* likewise facilitate the invasion once again. *Previous history* increases the *rivalry* and *hostility* between Russia and Ukraine, but each still plays

only a minor role here. Finally, as before, *bargaining*, *arms races*, *wishful thinking*, and *democracy* (with the same caveats as mentioned before) do not play a significant role.

Theoretical Analysis

Once Russia invaded Ukraine and a full-scale war broke out, with a sustained attack on Ukraine's capital, a different and broader set of theoretical questions emerged than those found in the Crimea annexation crisis. These questions deal more directly with the causes of interstate war. The most important analytical point to keep in mind about the Russia–Ukraine War is that *it is typical of the modal war fought in the international system* between 1816 and 1997. Vasquez and Valeriano (2010: 300) find that the modal war in this period is a two-party (dyadic) war between neighbors over territory. This situation covers 54.4 percent (forty-three) of the seventy-nine wars in this period. Identifying the Russia–Ukraine War as a modal war means that it fits a pattern common within international history, which is of immense help in identifying its causes.

What are the causes of territorial wars between neighbors, and do they fit the Russia–Ukraine War? The territorial explanation of peace and war provides some answers. Quite some time ago, Bremer (1992) found that contiguous states are more likely to fight each other than those separated by greater distance. Vasquez (2009: ch. 4) argued that this finding occurs because contiguous states have territorial (i.e., border) disputes, while noncontiguous states generally do not. Subsequent research showed this to be the case (see the discussion of proximity in Owsiak and Vasquez 2024).

What makes territorial disputes so war-prone compared to disputes over other issues? Vasquez (2009: ch. 4) developed a territorial explanation of war and of peace. He argues that *territoriality*, which is a biological trait common to several species, makes human collectivities, like states, want to establish borders within which they have exclusive control. In political science terms, states seek to protect their territorial integrity and political sovereignty (Morgenthau 1952: 973). This territoriality axiom, as Vasquez called it, implies that states are unusually sensitive to any threats to their borders and that human collectivities will often use aggressive displays and force, including violence, to establish boundaries. The same is true of new states that enter the system, which have to make a place for themselves in a neighborhood. The independence of India and of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent India–Pakistan and Arab–Israeli wars exemplify the process. Maoz (1989) showed that new states that are attempting to join the club of nations typically have

MIDs; states that enter the system through violent or revolutionary means, however, are more likely to have wars than states that enter the system through evolutionary means. From this territorial perspective, the breakup of the former Soviet Union, although evolutionary and not violent, set the stage for the possibility that the new states replacing the USSR might have problems with their "new" borders under certain conditions.[17]

Two conditions raised border problems when the Soviet Union broke up: nationalism and strategic concerns. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1990, there have been three wars and several conflicts over boundaries. The first was Nagorno-Karabakh, which involved several armed clashes in 1991–1993 and 2020 between the "new states" of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the first being a full-scale war (Sarkees and Wayman 2010: 178–180, 457–458). That war can be said to go back to 1988 and predates the breakup of the Soviet Union, but the independence of the two states aggravated the situation because an international border was now at issue; the conflict continues to date.

Underlying the border question is a nationalist issue. Nagorno-Karabakh is mostly inhabited by ethnic Armenians, but geographically within Azerbaijan. The dispute has been characterized by forced expulsions on both sides and the creation of the breakaway Republic of Artsakh, which has de facto control over part of Nagorno-Karabakh. What is important about this case for our purposes is that it does not involve Putin or Russia, but does involve successor states that are trying to establish a new international border. This implies that there are larger underlying causes in these wars (such as Nagorno-Karabakh and the 2009 Russia–Georgia War) than just Putin.

The second case is the Russia-Georgia War of 2008, where Russia supported the autonomy and then independence of two Russian speaking areas of Georgia within the old borders of that federated state: Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both areas were separatist states and in early 2008 sought recognition from Russia. By August, Russia and Georgia were at war, which ended with a Russian military victory and Russia recognizing the independence of the two states. Russia then

[17] Remarkably, Alexander Hamilton, in Federalist Paper No. 7 (1787), anticipated much of this territorial explanation of war. He states: "[W]hat inducements could the States have, if disunited, to make war upon each other? … Territorial disputes have at all times been found one of the most fertile sources of hostility among nations. Perhaps the greatest proportions of war that have desolated the earth have sprung from this origin. This cause would exist among us in full force [if we were to remain disunited]" (Hamiliton, Madison, and Jay 1961). Our thanks to Konstantinos Travlos for bringing this quote to our attention.

signed a bilateral military agreement with the two separatist states and left some troops there.

Nationalism was a key issue in this case, but the strategic location of Abkhazia on the Black Sea played a role for Russia. In 2004, during the "Rose Revolution" in Georgia, President Eduard Shevardnadze, a former Soviet foreign minister under Gorbachev, was replaced by President Mikheil Saakashvilli, who wanted to join NATO. The situation was aggravated in April 2008 when George W. Bush advocated that NATO admit Georgia and Ukraine. Then NATO considered a path to membership for Georgia, overcoming objections by France and Germany. Georgia's admission to NATO was anathema to Putin, who in the same month warned that such an action would be taken as a direct threat to Russia's security. As the crisis came closer to armed conflict, Saakashvilli mistakenly thought that the US would come to his assistance if war broke out, and this seemed to embolden him. The prospect of Georgia's admission in this sense helped bring both sides to war. The main underlying cause, however, was that the immediate change in borders – resulting from the breakup of the Soviet federation – created a new border for Georgia, which raised nationalist concerns for two internal states and for Russia itself.

The third case is the Crimea annexation of 2014. Here, strategic concerns that a hostile Ukraine (and one that was seeking admission to NATO and the EU) would jeopardize the major and historic Russian naval base in the Black Sea were paramount. The fact that most inhabitants of Crimea were Russian speakers and that the Crimean economy was mostly associated with either the base or Russian tourism added a veneer of legitimacy to the claim that Crimea was historically and currently "Russian"; it had only become part of Ukraine because of what was later seen as an ill-advised 1954 agreement made by Khrushchev. Putin was willing to let the matter rest so long as he could control the domestic situation within Ukraine by keeping a pro-Russian government in power. Once President Viktor Yanukovych was pushed out by the Rada and eventually replaced by anti-Russian leaders, however, Putin became concerned about Crimea and in due course turned Russian occupation of the Crimea into a permanent acquisition. Each of these wars involves not only Putin but also new states that are contesting the borders they inherited at the breakup of the federated USSR. These contests arise because of ethnic-nationalist and/or strategic territorial concerns, with the latter sometimes related to security concerns that one side might join the alliance of an adversary and former rival.

The current Russia-Ukraine War follows the pattern of the three cases just discussed. Setting aside the question of Crimea, it involves

the issue of nationalism. The concentration of Russian speakers in the Donbas region (Donetsk and Luhansk) rebelled in March 2014 at the beginning of Putin's annexation of Crimea. The rebels were initially supported by Putin covertly, and they eventually declared their separation from Ukraine. In April of the same year Ukraine counterattacked. In addition to this nationalist issue, Russia's dispute with Ukraine also involved a strategic issue. Once again, the desire to join NATO and the EU - and the willingness, if not eagerness, of those two actors to admit Ukraine - raised security concerns for Putin and the Russian state.

What are those security concerns? The chief one is that making states adjacent to Russia part of a military alliance that was the main hostile rival of the Soviet Union is considered a provocative act. It moves advanced forces capable of invading right up to the border with Russia and inside the old border of the USSR. It also adds to the notion that the US and the West triumphed in the Cold War – by not only making all of the Warsaw Pact members part of NATO but also now trying to do the same with former USSR members. Russia saw this as an additional humiliation. NATO expansion into the Baltic states was bad enough, but accepted after certain considerations. The presence of Kaliningrad as part of Russia and as a naval base was important in this regard, even though the territory was separated from Russia by Lithuania and Poland, both of which became NATO members. Georgia and Ukraine, however, are larger geographical spaces and to a certain extent involve more of the heartland of the former Soviet Union; Ukraine was Russia's breadbasket and Georgia the birthplace of Stalin. In addition, admission to the EU makes these areas economically integrated into the West. Finally, Russian leaders felt that the administration of H. W. Bush had promised (verbally) in 1990 that NATO would not seek to expand eastward after Germany was unified. This agreement has been disputed by NATO officials and is a subject of controversy.

Nonetheless, Western analysts and scholars – both realist and non-realists – recognized the provocative nature of NATO expansion. For instance, early on Mearsheimer (2014), who had previously argued for Ukraine to keep its nuclear weapons (1993), saw the expansion and Western foreign policy on Ukraine as confrontational. Based on statistical findings that the formation of new alliances increases threats and the probability of war, Maness and Valeriano (2012), who are non-realists, argued that NATO expansion raised the risk of conflict. The implication was that more distance, if not even a spheres-of-influence policy, should be maintained as a way to keep the post-Cold War peace. Putin, of course, was not above exploiting these views as a way to justify his Ukrainian policy. For example, on February 28, 2022, a few days after

the invasion, the Russian foreign ministry posted Mearsheimer's (2014) article on its website via Twitter.[18]

The Russia–Ukraine War therefore fits a pattern: War often occurs between neighbors over their borders. The same pattern appears in the three wars that immediately follow the breakup of the Soviet Union. In the first instance, the breakup of the Soviet Union created a large set of new states, which had to find their geographical place within their neighborhoods. Since the creation of these new states was evolutionary and not violent or revolutionary, the preceding borders had the advantage of precedent and historical legitimacy. However, in a few instances two conditions undercut this. The first condition was the norm of nationalism and self-determination, which maintains that nations (people sharing a common identity) have the right of self-rule. In the cases of Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea, and Donbas, certain ethnic groups found themselves under the rule of someone else and rebelled. This eventually led to war, with the norm of nationalism being used as a justification for transferring territory between states. Likewise, the presence of Russian speakers who found themselves "behind the lines" after the breakup of the Soviet Union became a pressing concern, as the new "non-Russian" states in which they now resided were seen as hostile or outright oppressive.

The second condition had to do with the strategic value of the territory. For Azerbaijan, the secession of Nagorno-Karabakh and/or its absorption by Armenia – its enemy and rival – would create a hole within its own state. For Russia, Crimea was a key naval base of current and historical value that could not be lost to a hostile power that was potentially aligned with a former adversary.

It needs to be emphasized that since the Russia-Ukraine war fits the pattern of a modal war, its underlying causes cannot be solely idiosyncratic to an individual leader, like Putin. While Putin or any individual leader may be the catalyst, the common pattern suggests that there are deeper underlying causes at play.

The general pattern of new states entering the system and having border problems is also illustrated by two conflicts that did not escalate to war: the conflict with Estonia and the secession of Transdniestria from Romania. The independence of Estonia resulted in two Estonian actions that produced a conflict with Russia. The first (as discussed in more detail in the Background section) was that the newly independent Estonia did not consider Russian speakers as citizens and stripped them of their right to vote. This raised objections from Russia about maltreatment.

[18] See https://tinyurl.com/28c8mcbd.

The conflict was defused by intervention from the EU, which complained that Estonian actions were undemocratic and could not persist if Estonia was to be a member of the EU. Although the nationalist issue was resolved, it was raised because Estonia became independent and sought complete control over the people within its borders. The second issue was that the new Estonia sought to restore its borders to what they were before Stalin invaded prior to the Second World War. Russia ignored this issue. Given these outcomes, no armed conflict resulted from the creation of Estonia after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

A similar example is the conflict involving the secession of Transdniestria from Moldova. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Moldavia became its own state, but there was some talk of it unifying with Romania because of the close ethnic ties between the two peoples. This discussion led a number of ethnic Russians, who were concentrated near the Dniester River, to become concerned about their status and rights. Although numbering only 400,000–500,000, by 1990 their concerns led them to secede. Russian troops, who were still there from the Cold War, intervened to protect them, and a ceasefire was arranged in July 1992. The situation has been frozen since, with Russian troops still there and Transdniestria a de facto state. Again, the emergence of a new state – in this case, Moldova with its Russian minority – led to a conflict, in which Russian troops, previously deployed in the context of the Cold War, intervened to help establish a state within a state. This was not unlike Abkhazia and South Ossetia, except that in this case Moldova has not sought a war to restore the separatist state, partly because of its miliary weakness.

Although what caused the Russia–Ukraine War is the key theoretical issue raised by this case, there are two other questions of importance. The first has to do with attempts by both sides to prevent the local war from expanding into a major-state war that would lead to direct fighting between the US/NATO and Russia. The Cold War experience between the USSR and the US over Vietnam and Afghanistan have provided precedents and an unwritten norm about how to keep the current war limited. That norm was that whoever placed troops first "owned" the war and the other side could do anything it wanted except send or deploy a significant number of troops. Thus, in the first Afghanistan war, where the Soviet Union invaded, the US supported and armed the Mujahedeen, but the US never intervened with troops. In the second Afghanistan war, the roles were reversed. Not sending troops or intervening by air prevented these wars from expanding.

The unwritten rule seems to have worked up to this point to prevent the local war from expanding into a major war. The West has not sent

troops to Ukraine even in a noncombat role. However, certain actions have come close to crossing this unwritten "red line." It has been widely suspected, if not known, for example that the US is not simply aiding and training Ukrainian troops but giving strategic advice, including selecting targets. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov publicly accused the US of as much in response to the two drones that attempted to bomb the Kremlin. He said the US was "undoubtedly" behind the incident and, without stating evidence, added that Washington often selected both the targets for Ukraine to attack and the means to attack them. "This is also often dictated from across the ocean … In Washington they must clearly understand that we know this," Peskov is reported as saying (Trevelyan 2023). If Russia were convinced that Ukraine was successfully attacking key targets within Russia proper (including the Black Sea navy), it might retaliate by expanding its targets outside of Ukraine because it sees the West as having crossed a red line.

This raises the question of why the US is involved other than for the obvious ideological reasons of protecting a democracy and a weaker country from being attacked by a stronger one. One motive is that some see the war as a way of to degrade Russia's military capability so much that it will be some time before Russia will ever be able to threaten its neighbors (see Woodward 2024: 139, quoting comments by Lloyd Austen, secretary of defense).[19] So long as the Ukrainians are willing to fight on, this secondary motive gives the US an additional incentive to stay involved, if the costs remain within bounds.

At the prospect of losing, Russia also might resort to the use of tactical nuclear weapons, which Putin has mentioned more than once (for example, to prevent the loss of Kherson; see Woodward 2024: 151). Any such escalation would put immense pressure on the West to respond, thereby increasing the probability of a major-state war. Whether such actions will occur remain to be seen.

It must also be mentioned that each side has pursued strategies that have backfired. Invasions produce long-term hostility between states, especially on the side that is being invaded. Once Russia failed to topple the Zelenskyy regime, it became clear that the Ukrainian public, including even the Russian speakers in Odessa, would never become friendly with Russia. This means that in the long-term these two states would be in a hostile relationship and the kind of pro-Russian leaders that

[19] See also Woodward (2024: 305) and Senator Tim Scott's comments on the US interest in the Russia–Ukraine War in the third Republican presidential primary debate on November 8, 2023 (https://ballotpedia.org/Republican_presidential_primary_debate_(November_8,_2023).

had come to power in Ukraine before would not come to power again democratically. An unsuccessful invasion burns bridges that will not be rebuilt for long periods of time. Although such a consequence could be anticipated in the face of failure, other consequences that backfired could not. This was the case with the question of NATO membership. One of the reasons Russia went to war in Ukraine and in Georgia was to prevent NATO enlargement, but when Ukraine was invaded two of Russia's bordering states that had been neutral during the Cold War – Finland and Sweden – sought to enter NATO (see Woodward 2024: 134–135). While these two states' becoming members is not as much of as a threat to Russia as Ukraine's becoming a member, they are "greater prizes" for NATO. Thus, Russia's strategy at least in part backfired.

On the Western side, some economic sanctions backfired. While some of this was feared in terms of energy dependence, what was not anticipated was that the placement of economic sanctions, which was intended to exclude Russia from using the international banking system, would lead to attempts to undermine the status of the US dollar as the world's reserve currency and US dominance in international trade (as exemplified by the actions of China and the other BRIC nations – Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa). The sanctions therefore backfired, causing unanticipated damage to the West itself.

Lessons of the Crimea Annexation and the Russia–Ukraine War

1. A key lesson for the future is that **when new states enter the system** (as happened with the breakup of the Soviet Union), **borders may become unstable and conflicts result**. This is the root cause of the Russia–Ukraine War. Several border changes concurrent with the breakup of the Soviet Union led to conflict and sometimes war, as in Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgia. Although it has been shown statistically that when new states enter the system this can increase the probability of war, we know from this case and recent conflict associated with the breakup of the Soviet Union that the dissolution of a federation, even if peaceful and unaccompanied by civil war, can upset existing understandings about borders and lead to instability – including conflict and war under certain conditions. These conditions, as suggested by this case, are the introduction of nationalist concerns, the loss of strategic territory, and security concerns posed when neighboring states attempt to join an alliance of a former rival.

2. Both cases demonstrate that **the stability of the current international order depends on keeping territorial issues off states'**

foreign policy agendas. The two cases in this chapter provide support for this lesson by providing negative examples – namely, by raising salient territorial disputes, they show that putting new territorial issues on the agenda can disrupt the peace and result in local wars that might even expand into major-major wars.

3. A third lesson is that **norms or principles that can (potentially) override territorial integrity, like nationalism, must be carefully managed at the system level. If this is not done, then the prospect of interstate peace declines precipitously**. Historically, states have considered both their own and others' sovereignty sacrosanct, but, beginning in the mid nineteenth century, the norm of nationalism has contradicted this norm. Today, part of the challenge posed by nationalist concerns can be seen in the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) adopted by the UN in 2005. According to it, "[e]ach individual state has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity." If that does not or cannot occur, the international community commits itself to take collective action to supply that protection, including through the use of force (as a last resort).[20] Debate about whether RtoP officially constitutes an international norm continues (see Bellamy 2015); nevertheless, the norm has a critical, *intended* effect: Under certain conditions, states no longer view one another's sovereignty as inviolable.

When RtoP conflicts with state sovereignty, RtoP seemingly takes precedence. Moreover, a growing number of cases suggest that RtoP can interfere specifically with territorial integrity as well. If a state cannot protect a minority group against genocide or ethnic cleansing, must the group remain within that state? Can the group form a new state instead (e.g., Bosnia or Kosovo)? In lieu of that, can the group elect to join another existing state (such as Crimea's requesting reincorporation into Russia)? These actions perhaps protect a group's rights, but also threaten to revise the territorial status quo. Those seeking such revisions might consequently employ the strategies we saw in earlier crises – for example, fomenting rebellion, provoking state violence against substate groups, or raising claims of human rights violations – to justify a military intervention and an accompanying change to the map.

Russia appears to be doing this in in its immediate neighborhood. It claims that various states (e.g., Georgia or Ukraine) are committing genocide against the Russian-speaking populations in those states. The international community seriously doubts the veracity of these claims,

[20] UN General Assembly Resolution 60/1 (September 16, 2005), https://tinyurl.com/33d3tnpw.

but those debates do not matter here.[21] Instead, we note that Russia recognized that RtoP trumps territorial integrity; the RtoP norm offers an acceptable pathway for a state to achieve a territorial revision under the current rules of the international system. Indeed, Russia watched Western states repeatedly use the norm for exactly this purpose – to alter the map and topple other regimes (e.g., in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Libya). If it is dangerous to reintroduce territorial issues into foreign policy agendas, then the system must manage norms that (potentially) override territorial integrity very carefully if it wishes peace to prevail. Such norms may bring less violence in some contexts (e.g., the protection of groups against genocide) but promise more violence in others (e.g., interstate wars, which result in human rights violations of their own).

4. Lastly, a key lesson of the Russia-Ukraine War is that in the post-Cold War era, **major–minor wars must be managed in the system if they are not to expand into major–major wars**. As Wallensteen (1984) pointed out, a key to system-wide peace is that major states must construct rules of the game to guide their behavior. This is especially true regarding rules that manage armed intervention in ongoing major–minor wars. During the Cold War, other than in the Korean War, adversaries avoided war by following the unwritten rule that whoever sent troops to a conflict first would own the local war, and other major states could do whatever they wanted except send troops to help the minor state. This unwritten rule seems to have guided the US and its NATO allies in the Russia-Ukraine War, thereby preventing it from becoming a major–major war. In part, this was the case because Obama in 2014, and especially Trump in 2025, did not regard Ukraine's wars as such a vital interest that it was worth going to war with the only nuclear power capable of destroying it. This also seems to apply to Biden, although Russian actions and battlefield conditions made him continuously remove various restraints as the war wore on. A crucial question is whether this unwritten rule can survive if one of the major states – namely, the US – sees a local war as in its vital interest. The test case is apt to be a serious Chinese attempt to conquer Taiwan.

[21] See UN OHCHR, "Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine" (April 15, 2014), https://tinyurl.com/2kazj9ve.

Part V

Conclusion

Lessons for World Politics

Part V provides a set of conclusions to our study. In the next two chapters, we make comparisons across our various cases to draw some broader inferences about crisis diplomacy. Chapter 16 examines the possible patterns suggested by the role of our key variables in each crisis. Chapter 17 derives some general lessons for diplomacy and for international relations theory that are raised by the crises analyzed in this book.

16 Patterns

This chapter reviews all the cases in the book, focusing on the role of the key variables that we examined in each crisis. The goal is to see what patterns associated with these variables (if any) might differentiate the crises that escalated to war from those that did not. We suspect that such patterns exist, particularly among the seven wars. If we identify any common factors that make war more (or less) likely, future researchers will need to conduct a more systematic examination to determine whether our patterns hold for a larger sample of interstate crises.

At the study's outset, we identified fourteen key variables. Within each case, we then assessed whether a given key variable played a major, a moderate, a minor, or no role in whether the crisis at hand ended in either war or no war. We now synthesize this information on the presence and relative potency of the key variables across our various cases – first for the crises that escalated to war and then for those that did not.

Cases That Go to War

Table 16.1 summarizes the key variables in the crises that end in war. These data suggest that four variables often plan a *major* role in bringing about a war: the nature of the issue (i.e., territory; four cases); the domestic political situation (four cases); alliances (four cases); and – to a lesser extent – bargaining strategy (two cases). The first of these – *the nature of the issue* at stake – facilitates war in four cases. More specifically, a territorial disagreement makes war more likely in the 1859–1860 Italian War of Independence (hereinafter, the Italian War), July 1914, Pearl Harbor, and the Danzig–Poland crisis. The counterfactual underscores the potency of territorial issues in these various cases; without the territorial element, none of these crises would likely have escalated to war.

The *domestic political situation* also plays a major, escalatory role in four cases – namely, the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, the Russo-Japanese War, and Pearl Harbor. Domestic hard-liners in each case

Table 16.1 *Summary of key variables in the cases that go to war*

Variable	Number of cases			
	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	4 CW, FP, RJ, PH	1 Ju	0	2 It, Da
System structure	1 Ju	2 CW, It,	0	4 FP, RJ, Da, PH
Nature of issue	4 It, Ju, PH, Da	0	3 CW, FP, RJ	0
Rivalry	0	4 CW, FP, Ju, PH	3 It, RJ, Da	0
Previous history	1 Da	4 CW, It, Ju, PH	2 FP,RJ	0
Alliances	4 CW, It, Ju, Da	2 RJ, PH	1 FP	0
Bargaining strategy	2 Ju, Da	3 FP, RJ, PH	2 CW, It	0
Norms	1 It	0	0	6 CW, FP, RJ, Ju, Da, PH
Arms races	0	1 Ju	5 It, FP, RJ, Da, PH	1 CW
Proximity	0	1 Ju	4 It, FP, RJ, Da	2 CW, PH
Democracy	0	2 CW, FP	0	5 It, RJ, Ju, Da, PH
Relative capabilities	0	0	4 FP, RJ, Ju, PH	3 CW, It, Da
Hostility	0	0	7 CW, It, FP, RJ, Ju, Da, PH	0
Wishful thinking/ overconfidence	0	1 FP	1 PH	5 CW, It, RJ, Ju, Da

CW = Crimean War; It = Italian War of Independence; FP = Franco-Prussian War; RJ = Russo-Japanese War; Ju = July 1914; Da = Danzig–Poland crisis; PH = Pearl Harbor.

are primarily responsible for encouraging the war. Notably, the role of hard-liners in the Crimean, Franco-Prussian, and Russo-Japanese cases produces an unnecessary war; there existed solutions that could have satisfied the interests of all the major states, but the hard-liners pushed these solutions aside. Their influence, moreover, is generally more important than *system structure*, which plays a major role in only one case (July 1914). The inference that domestic politics is an important factor that shapes whether or not crises escalate to war is an important – albeit tentative – conclusion of our study. This is a main hypothesis for future research to explore further.[1]

A third variable, *alliances*, also plays a major role in four crises that go to war: the Crimean War, Italian War, July 1914, and Danzig–Poland. Alliances embolden actors in the first three cases. In the Danzig–Poland crisis, in contrast, Britain and France form an alliance and issue an ultimatum to Germany – in a desperate and failed attempt at deterrence. We observe the potency of alliances further in two other cases, within which alliances play a moderate escalatory role: the Russo-Japanese War and Pearl Harbor.

Two other, often interrelated, variables exert a moderate escalatory influence as well – *rivalry* and *previous history*. Rivalry features prominently in the onset of the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, July 1914, and Pearl Harbor. Although we estimate that rivalry contributed moderately to the actual escalation of these crises, it admittedly served as a background context that primed the major states to go to war. Previous history plays a similar role in three of these same crises – the Crimean War, July 1914, and Pearl Harbor – in addition to the (1859) Italian War (via the earlier 1848 Italian War).

These five variables – the nature of the issue, domestic politics, alliances, rivalry, and previous history – are the most important factors that push decision-makers toward war. To these, we might also add *bargaining strategy*. It has a major impact in two cases: July 1914 and Danzig–Poland. Both of these crises involve the onset of a world war, as does Pearl Harbor, within which bargaining strategy has a more moderate effect. In sum, bargaining strategy plays some central role in five of the seven cases that go to war – a fact that underlines its importance.

Relative capabilities play some role in four of the war cases as well; yet this role is minor in (the Franco-Prussian War, the Russo-Japanese War, July 1914, and Pearl Harbor). Perhaps surprisingly, in the two wars that involve Japan a seemingly weaker state initiates war against

[1] For a statistical analysis of the role of United States (US) hard-line advisers during the Cold War, see Jost et al. (2024).

a stronger state. Explicit concerns about the "balance of power" affect decisions to escalate only in the case of the Franco-Prussian War.

A second major conclusion emerges from Table 16.1. Several variables exert little to no influence on the decision to go to war in the majority of the cases. These include *system structure* (no role in four cases), *norms* (no role in six cases), *arms races* (minor or no role in six cases); *proximity* (minor or no role in six cases), *democracy* (no role in five cases), *hostility* (a minor role in seven cases), and *wishful thinking/overconfidence* (minor or no role in six cases). Two features of these patterns, among others, defy conventional wisdom and merit further study. First, in the two cases where democracy plays a moderate role, it escalates the crisis and produces an unnecessary war (Crimean and Franco-Prussian Wars). Second, system structure unexpectedly plays a major or moderate escalatory role in three crises as well. In the Crimean War, the system – specifically, the Concert of Europe – worked as anticipated. The major states conferenced with one another and created peace proposals that should have satisfied all the major states; yet they did not avoid war. In July 1914, the system again provided a peace proposal. The resulting Halt-in-Belgrade plan (or Grey's variation of it) should have avoided a major-state war, but hard-liners in Britain subverted the proposal, after which mobilization and the fear of being overrun preempted all negotiation. In the Italian War the Concert is rigged against Italian nationalists, which has a moderate escalatory effect.

Paths to War

In recent years scholars have advanced the theoretical notion that war does not result from a single causal process; rather, there exist distinct "paths to war" (Vasquez 2011; Levy 2012). In this section we build on the above analysis to identify six paths to war. These paths feature the variables that exert the most important escalatory influence on major-state crisis. We hasten to note, however, that we necessarily derive our paths from the crises in our sample. Future research will need to evaluate the merits of each path within a larger sample of interstate crises.

A first path to war occurs through domestic politics, when **hard-liners overrule or outwit accommodationists**. The Crimean and Russo-Japanese Wars illustrate this path, although a variant of it appears in other cases as well. In the Franco-Prussian War and Pearl Harbor, for example, hard-liners dominate decision-making from the start, advocating for and deciding to go to war. Similarly, in the Italian War nationalists control decision-making in Italy without any opposition. Finally, in the Danzig–Poland crisis, Hitler is a hard-liner going back to at least

1938 (if not before), and his actions in Prague encourage Chamberlain and Daladier to adopt a hard-line approach.

A second path to war comes through territorial issues that defy a peaceful resolution. Several wars exhibit this path: the Italian War, the Russo-Japanese War, July 1914, Danzig–Poland, Pearl Harbor, and the Franco-Prussian War – albeit the latter only indirectly, as Bismarck uses the war to unify the smaller German states under Prussia. Only the Crimean War lacks an intractable territorial dispute, but even there the crisis escalates in Constantinople after Russia occupies Moldavia and Wallachia. Each of these wars – except the two that involve Japan – also features nationalism, a common factor in territorial disputes.

With the exception of the Russo-Japanese War, these cases reflect **a territorial path to war, in which a revisionist state seeks large changes in the territorial status quo** (often in a premeditated fashion). The proposed changes go against the prevailing norms, causing the other major states to form an opposing coalition. This path to war commonly appears in realist explanations of war under a different name, which obscures the centrality of taking territory as the cause of the war.[2] Italian nationalists taking Austrian territory to create a unified Italy is a classic case of this path to war, as is Hitler's *Lebensraum* policy that leads to the invasion of the Soviet Union. Jack Snyder (1991), for example, emphasizes that the emergence of a countervailing coalition against territorial expansion often makes war more likely.[3] Liberalists hold a similar conceptualization but view peace-loving democracies as resisting an aggressor state.

A third path to war comes through alliances. Although scholars often discuss alliances as instruments of peace (e.g., through deterrence), alliances can also create a path to war. The most well-known path involves an offensive alliance that forms specifically to plan a war, such as the 1859 alliance between Cavour and Napoleon III; yet even defensive alliances can lead to war. The formation of a defensive alliance often creates a path to war by increasing threat perception in the alliance's target. The latter might then try to break up the alliance by "testing" it. Kaiser Wilhelm II does exactly this in both the First and Second

[2] Some realists then add that war results from uncertainty about relative power (Blainey 1988; Fearon 1995) or from hegemonic transitions (Dehlio 1962; Gilpin 1981). See also power transition theory (Organski and Kugler 1980; Kugler and Organski 1989) and the long cycle of global leadership struggles (Modelski and Thompson 1989).

[3] Snyder (1991) sees this as part of a balance of power theory; disrupting the balance often (automatically) fosters a rebalancing effort. In our view, (re)balancing of power does not occur. Countervailing coalitions form in response to armed attacks on states rather than shifts in capability. In other words, states respond to violent acts and war, not to ability (see Schroeder 1994a).

Moroccan Crises. More frequently, however, alliance formation leads to a counter-alliance. The formation of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente in the years leading up to July 1914 illustrate this tendency. Such parity and balancing is frequently associated with rivalry and hostility and can be part of an alliance path to war.

Alliances are associated with war in a less obvious way as well – namely, having an ally can embolden a weaker actor. Once emboldened, the weaker state then pulls the major state into a war. This path has received less attention, but we observe it in the Crimean War, the Italian War, and (to a lesser extent) the Russo-Japanese War.[4] The Ottoman Empire in the Crimean War classically exhibits this phenomenon. In the Russo-Japanese War, in contrast, the alliance merely gives a "green light," making it more of a permissive cause.

Process tracing illuminates additional ways that alliances can bring about war. In the Pearl Harbor crisis, for example, allies veto the only peace proposal, thereby raising the probability of war. In July 1914 and Danzig–Poland, alliances provide a basis for using coercive diplomacy and issuing an ultimatum, which ultimately results in failed deterrence.

Rivalry constitutes a fourth path to war. Rivals contest one or more issues. Their inability to resolve these issues peacefully leads to two interrelated outcomes. First, rivals view one another as threats, enemies, and competitors (Colaresi et al. 2007). Second, they experience recurrent disputes, each of which moves them along a path to war. These characteristics suggest that rivalry is closely related to both previous history (i.e., past disputes) and hostility.

Why and how would dispute repetition lead to war? Two cases shed some light on this question. The first is July 1914. The 1908–1909 Bosnia Crisis set the stage for escalation in 1914.[5] In this crisis, Germany successfully used coercion against Russia. The kaiser and other German leaders learned that the tsar would back down if they remained firm. The tsar, meanwhile, learned that he had not been firm enough with Germany. Thus, leaders in both states inferred a lesson about their opponent, which they carried into the next crisis in July 1914 – namely,

[4] Other examples of emboldening a weaker ally include US support of Chiang Kai-shek in the Formosa Straits crisis of 1954–1955 and of 1958. A recent example of miscalculation related to the prospect of support from an outside ally is the 2008 crisis between Georgia and Russia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia thought the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would support his belligerent actions, so he was emboldened, although in this case the prospect of NATO membership played a role in Putin's invasion.

[5] Repeated crises from 1890 onward influenced the onset of the First World War I. See MacMillan (2013).

that the opponent will back down in the face of firm, coercive threats. Unfortunately, the expectations were erroneous, and war occurred.

Danzig–Poland offers a second case. Prior to this crisis, the Allies faced Hitler in Munich (1938) and Prague (1939). The latter played a crucial, turning-point role. In the Prague crisis, the Allies became convinced that Hitler deceived them at Munich, would not abide by his word, and held territorial ambitions that extended beyond the transfer of territory that the nationalist norm covered. They consequently vowed not to back down again, for they learned that they must stand firm. Hitler, meanwhile, learned at both Munich and Prague that the Allies would back down if he stood firm. When the Danzig–Polish crisis emerged, both sides chose coercion – Hitler because coercion had worked in the past, and Chamberlain and Daladier because non-coercion had failed. This made escalation in the Danzig–Poland crisis more likely. From these cases a common pattern emerges. Through repeated crises leaders *learn* that force – and only force – is the best way to deal with their underlying disagreement.

Two other cases – the Franco-Prussian and Russo-Japanese Wars – also feature rivalry, but suggest a second possible path from rivalry to war. In these cases, rivalry is more of a latent variable that affects decision-makers indirectly. It creates a hostile climate that primes decision-makers for war. The decision-makers do not, however, seem to learn consciously from previous crises that force is the best means through which to achieve their goals.

A fifth path to war occurs because the actors **fail to reach a bargain after one has been proposed**. Bargaining failures are associated with several of our wars. The Russo-Japanese War offers a quintessential illustration; yet we see similar behavior in July 1914, Pearl Harbor, the Franco-Prussian War (i.e., France attained the concession it requested and then expanded its demands), and Danzig–Poland (which some thought could have been settled like the Sudetenland, but which proved impossible after the invasion of Prague).

The sixth and final path to war is **the democratic path**. This path occurs when the public or legislature in a democracy are subject to war hysteria, thereby permitting or encouraging hard-liners to take escalatory actions that result in war. Two cases in our sample highlight this path: the Crimean and Franco-Prussian Wars. The 1839–1841 Eastern Crisis would likely have resulted in war from this path as well if the accommodationist French king had not reined in the hard-line prime minister (and indirectly, the legislature).

In the end, our analysis suggests that **there are at least six paths to war: the hard-liner path, the territorial path, the alliance path,**

the rivalry path, the bargaining failure path, and the democratic path. Delineating these paths perhaps offers insight into not only why certain crises go to war, but also why others do not. If, for example, actors are traveling a path to war that is somehow blocked, they might avoid war.

The paths to war should be seen as more of a research agenda than a set of findings. This is because while the paths purport to provide an empirical description of how war comes about by delineating the specific actions decision-makers or their states take and the sequence in which they take them, the causal impact each action has in bringing about war remains unclear. Also paths often interact. Thus, the alliance path can interact with the rivalry path to war and both can interact with the territorial path. Which path is causally more important? Or must they act together to bring about war? Such questions need to be further researched, but documenting the paths to war in specific cases that go to war is an important first step in that research.

Cases That Do Not Go to War

Table 16.2 reviews the key variables associated with the cases that do not go to war. Although eight cases in our study do not escalate to major-state war, some of these nonwar cases consist of two distinct incidents – namely, Morocco (i.e., the First and Second Moroccan Crises), Berlin (i.e., the blockade and the wall), and Russia–Ukraine (i.e., the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the subsequent war). Because we gather information on our key variables for each of these incidents, Table 16.2 contains eleven nonwar cases.

Table 16.2 *Summary of key variables in the cases that do not go to war*

Variable	Number of Cases			
	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	6 Es, M1, M2, Cr, Mu, Ur	2 Bo, Co	3 B48, B61, Cu	0
System structure	2 B61, Cu	4 M1, Co, Cr, Ur	1 Es	4 M2, Bo, Mu, B48
Nature of issue	6 Bo, Mu, Cu, Co, Cr, Ur	3 Es, B48, B61	2 M1, M2	0

Table 16.2 (*cont.*)

Variable	Number of Cases			
	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Rivalry	2 B48, B61	1 Cu	5 Es, M1, M2, Cr, Ur	3 Bo, Co, Mu
Previous history	2 B48, Ur	6 Es, M2, Bo, B61, Cu, Co	2 Cr, Mu	1 M1
Alliances	4 Mu, Co, Cr, Ur	0	6 Bo, M1, M2, B48, B61, Cu	1 Es
Bargaining strategy	4 M2, B48, B61, Cu	2 Es, Mu	4 M1, Bo, Co, Cr	1 Ur
Norms	2 M2, Mu	2 Co, Ur	1 Cr	6 Es, M1, Bo, B48, B61, Cu
Arms races	0	2 B61, Cu	5 Es, Bo, M1,M2, Mu	4 Co, Cr, B48, Ur
Proximity	2 B61, Cu	4 Es, Cr, B48, Ur	1 Mu	4 M1, M2, Bo, Co
Democracy	0	2 Es, Co	1 Mu	8 M1, M2, Bo, B48, B61, Cu, Cr, Ur
Relative capabilities	3 Bo, B61, Cu	3 Mu, Cr, Ur	1 Es	4 M1, M2, B48, Co
Hostility	0	2 B48, B61	4 Bo, Cu, Cr, Ur	5 Es, M1, M2, Co, Mu
Wishful thinking/ overconfidence	0	0	0	11 Es, M1, M2, Bo, Mu, B48, B61, Cu, Co, Cr, Ur

Es = Eastern Crisis; M1 = First Moroccan Crisis; M2 = Second Moroccan Crisis; Bo = Bosnian Crisis; Mu = Munich; B48 = Berlin blockade; B61 = Berlin 1961; Cu = Cuban Missile Crisis; Co = Cod Wars; Cr = Crimea annexation; Ur = Russia–Ukraine War.

If the same variables are present in the cases that go to war as in the cases that do not, then one might assume – at first glance – that the effect of these variables is random. This, however, is not a valid assumption, as the value of the variables differs. Consider the role of *domestic politics*, which is a major factor in four of the cases that go to war (44 percent) and six of the cases that avoid war (55 percent). In the nonwar cases, major states ultimately avoid the escalatory pressure of domestic politics when an accommodationist reins in a hard-liner (e.g., in the Eastern and Second Moroccan Crises). Accommodationists, in other words, block the hard-liner path to war that we observe in the Crimean, Franco-Prussian, and Russo-Japanese Wars, as well as Pearl Harbor. *This is an important, novel inference that derives from our study, even though it is based on a limited sample*.[6] Nonetheless, it is important to note that in two of the cases that do not escalate to a major-state war – the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 Russia–Ukraine War – changes in the domestic political situation brought a perceived hard-liner to power, resulting in an invasion and a local war.

The *nature of the issue* plays a significant role in 82 percent of crises that do not go to war (i.e., exerts a major influence in six cases and a moderate influence in three others). With the exception of the Cod War, which involves a maritime issue, all the cases concern a territorial dispute at some level. This demonstrates that although territorial disputes are more likely to escalate to war than disputes over any other issue, they need not always do so. What distinguishes the territorial disputes that escalate to war from those that do not?

Although not all of our cases contain unambiguous insights, some of them shed light on how and why certain territorial issues do not go to war, which is one contribution of our study. In particular, we observe two general patterns. First, with three exceptions (i.e., the Cuban Missile Crisis, the 2014 annexation of Crimea, and the Russia–Ukraine War), the territorial disputes that do not escalate to war do not involve (threats to) a major state's homeland territory.[7] Second, agreed-upon *norms* can help resolve territorial disputes. In the Second Moroccan Crisis, for instance, the norm of compensation provides a focal point and a set of criteria for making a binding decision that avoids war. In a comparable vein, the

[6] To a certain extent, the hard-liner path to war is also blocked in two other crises – Munich and the 2014 annexation of Crimea. In these cases, the blockage occurs not internally but rather externally via alliances. In Munich, external allies impose a solution on the weaker ally, while in Crimea external allies mediate negotiations to avoid expanding the war.

[7] Munich does not involve the homeland territory of France or Britain, and they – rather than Czechoslovakia – avoid war.

Munich crisis settles without a major-state war because the nationalist/self-determination norm provides France and Britain with an acceptable way to transfer territory to Germany, even though that transfer involves the homeland territory of a minor power (Czechoslovakia).

Alliances also play a different role in the cases that do not go to war than in the cases that do. In the war cases, alliances often embolden actors. Britain and France, for example, contributed to the escalation of the Crimean War by offering a weaker state the prospect of a supporting alignment. In contrast, in the nonwar cases alliances generally restrain actors and induce settlement. At Munich, for instance, Britain and France pressured their weaker ally to accept a settlement. Similarly, Khrushchev restrained his Cuban ally when Castro suggested the possibility of a preemptive nuclear war. Finally, to a lesser extent, allies played a de-escalatory role in the Cod War as well. The US was allied to both Iceland and Britain via NATO. It pressured both sides, but especially the stronger British, to settle.[8]

The alliance path to war is also blocked in the two Moroccan Crises. In each of these crises, the Entente Cordiale provokes Germany, which then tries to break the alliance. Other variables, however – especially the kaiser reining in hard-liners – superseded to mitigate the risk of war. In the end, the alliance path to war is blocked in five nonwar cases – Munich, Cuba, the Cod War, and the two Moroccan Crises. We would note, however, that the prospect of another state making an alliance with a former rival can be provocative, as in the Crimea annexation and Russia–Ukraine War cases. This behavior can lead to a local war (see also the 2008 Russia–Georgia War).

System structure generally works to prevent escalation to war when some form of governing system exists among the major states. This, too, helps differentiate the crises that go to war (e.g., the Crimean War or July 1914) from those that do not (e.g., the First Moroccan Crisis or the Cod War). In the war cases actors – usually hard-liners – undercut any system proposals for peace, while in the nonwar cases hard-liners are unable to interfere in whatever system attempts at peace occur. The effect of system structure during the nuclear era is most dramatic because mutual assured destruction (MAD) makes major-state war irrational. This explains why Khrushchev and Kennedy are extremely cautious in both the 1961 Berlin and Cuban Missile Crises.

As we noted earlier, system structure is not as important as domestic politics in the cases that go to war; domestic politics is a major factor in

[8] On the role a common ally can play, see the actions of NATO and the US during the various Greece–Turkey conflicts between 1952 and 1989 (Brenner 2012).

57 percent of these cases, while system structure is a major factor in only 14 percent of these cases. A similar pattern unfolds among our nonwar cases. Domestic politics is a major factor in 55 percent of the nonwar cases, but system structure is a major factor in only two (or 18 percent of the) nonwar cases, both of which occur in the nuclear era. Nuclear weapons and MAD have increased the impact of the system by raising the provocation threshold. It must be pointed out, however, that one of the reasons the system becomes important in the nuclear era is that MAD creates accommodationists.

Prior to 1945, domestic politics and keeping hard-liners under control were more important in avoiding decisions to go to war than was the system. This is seen most dramatically in the Eastern Crisis. A disagreement in the Concert makes Thiers threaten war, but he is prevented from following up on this threat when King Louis-Philippe reins him in. The flip side of this case is the Crimean War, where war occurs, despite the existence of an acceptable Concert solution, because the solution is thwarted by hard-liners in Britain who want and get war with Russia. A comparison of these two crises provides suggestive evidence for the relative importance of domestic politics over system structure.

Whereas domestic politics, the nature of the issue, and alliances block prominent paths to war, *norms* provide a way for states to actually settle the issue under dispute. After states come to the table to bargain, they still need to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. Norms assist them with this task; indeed, they played such a role in both the Second Moroccan Crisis and Munich. If norms facilitate agreement, then the absence of explicit, agreed-upon norms – or contests over competing norms – may help explain some cases in which leaders failed to reach a bargain. The quid pro quo during the buildup to the Russo-Japanese War, for example, should have ended the crisis, but hard-liners ultimately brought about a war. More explicit norms might have short-circuited this escalation – with perhaps one exception. Our study suggests that the nationalist norm tends to promote conflict, even though it can provide a way of transferring territory in some instances and thereby avoid war, as in Munich.

Other variables play a lesser role in our nonwar cases. Less *proximity* (i.e., greater distance) generally attenuates escalation or the desire for war (e.g., the Eastern Crisis or Munich), while nearness promotes escalation (e.g., Cuba, the Crimea annexation, or the Russia–Ukraine War). *Bargaining* almost always promotes a settlement (i.e., in 91 percent of the nonwar cases, although it has only a minor effect in four of these cases). It played a major role in the Second Moroccan Crisis, both Berlin crises, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. *Arms races* are ongoing in

seven (or 63 percent) of our nonwar crises (i.e., Berlin 1961, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Eastern Crisis, Bosnia, the two Moroccan Crises, and Munich); nevertheless, they generally play a minor role. Of these, Munich is perhaps the most interesting theoretically; here, an arms race promotes a settlement by creating a sense among decision-makers on each side that they might benefit from more time because the ongoing arms race will better prepare them for war.

Rivalry, as we noted earlier, tends to promote war. It is present in 100 percent of the cases that end in war; yet it is also present in 73 percent of the cases (eight out of eleven) that do not go to war. At first glance, this may seem contradictory, but the pattern is accounted for by two things. First, in the nuclear era Cold War rivals (including after the Cold War) do not go to war, presumably because of nuclear weapons. This accounts for five of the cases in Table 16.2. Second, the pattern provides some limited case evidence for what scholars know statistically about rivalry – namely, that in the presence of rivalry crises repeat themselves, and even though one or two of these crises may not escalate to war, *eventually* one will. In Table 16.2 rivalry is associated with crises repeating in the three non-nuclear cases listed. Scholars often interpret this as a system effect (see Hinsley 1995: 4; Thompson 2003, 2007). In reality, however, it is *also likely a dyadic effect* of the underlying relationship between the two involved states. Except in the nuclear era – where it plays a major role in bringing about the two Berlin crises and a moderate role in the Cuban Missile Crisis – rivalry tends to play either a minor (five cases) or no role (three cases) in the nonwar cases. It features far more prominently in the war cases. Indeed, serious ongoing rivalries exist at the outset of all seven such cases.[9]

Summary

Four variables feature prominently throughout both our war and nonwar crisis cases. The first of these variables is *domestic politics*. In the nonwar cases, accommodationists rein in hard-liners to prevent escalation to war, while in the war cases the hard-liners outmaneuver the accommodationists or the latter never appear. A second variable – the *nature of the issue* – suggests that issues affect the escalatory potential of major-power crises. The disputed issue in many of our cases typically concerns territory. In the cases that do not go to war, the territory under

[9] Serious rivalries also exist in the cases that do not go to war, such as the Eastern Crisis and the two Moroccan Crises. Note, however, that five (or 45 percent) of the eleven nonwar cases include the US–Russia rivalry during the nuclear era.

dispute tends to be more distant from the major powers – usually, either colonial possessions or land belonging to a minor power – rather than a major power's homeland territory. In contrast, in the cases that go to war the territory often involves nationalist questions in areas that border the major states (e.g., the Italian War, July 1914, or Danzig–Poland) or empire building (Pearl Harbor). A third variable – *alliances* – encourages crisis escalation in all the cases that end in war. The nonwar cases, however, suggest that, if used differently, alliances could be a means through which to restrain actors, instead of emboldening them. Finally, a fourth variable – *rivalry* – functions as a background condition that fosters the onset of crises and their escalation to war. It often, for example, encourages hard-liners to emerge and increases their influence. Encouragingly, our fifteen crises suggest consistent patterns in these four variables; one set of values for the variables leads to war, while the opposite set of values leads to peace.

Other variables seem less important, even when they are present. *Previous history* has a major influence on one case that goes to war (Danzig) and two cases that do not (Berlin 1948 and the Russia-Ukraine War); otherwise, it mostly exerts a moderate effect, which becomes important primarily through the rivalry context. This is even more true of *hostility*. With the exception of the two Berlin crises, hostility never plays more than a minor role in our fifteen cases. *Relative capabilities* play only a minor (or no) role in the cases that go to war. They are, however, a more important factor in the nonwar cases. In Bosnia, Berlin 1961, and Cuba relative capabilities play a major role, while in Munich, the Crimea annexation, and the Russia-Ukraine War they play a moderate role (six of eleven cases, or 55 percent).[10]

Table 16.3 combines information on both our war and nonwar cases – to provide a sense of the overall impact of our key variables.[11] For each variable, the table notes the number of cases in which the variable exerts a major, moderate, minor, or no influence on crisis outcomes. Each cell of the table consists of three numbers: the war cases (n = 7; see Table 16.1), the nonwar cases (n = 11; see Table 16.2), and the total number of cases (n = 18). We focus our attention on the cells that contain seven or more total cases (bolded).

[10] A number of key variables are not present in five or more of the cases that do not go to war, including wishful thinking (all eleven nonwar cases), democracy (eight cases), norms (six cases) and hostility (five cases). This could mean that their omission has a de-escalatory effect.

[11] Initially, we had hoped to use qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), but the complexity of our measurement (e.g., major, moderate, minor, none, and other nuances) does not fit within a (fuzzy) set theory framework. See Ragin (2009).

Table 16.3 *Summary of impact (major to none) of key variables*

Variable	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Nature of issue	**4 + 6 = 10**	0 + 3 = 3	3 + 2 = 5	0
Domestic politics (hard-liners/ accommodationists)	**4 + 6 = 10**	1 + 2 = 3	0 + 3 = 3	2 + 0 = 2
Bargaining strategy	2 + 4 = 6	3 + 2 = 5	2 + 4 = 6	0 + 1 = 1
Alliances	**4 + 4 = 8**	2 + 0 = 2	**1 + 6 = 7**	0 + 1 = 1
System structure	1 + 2 = 3	2 + 4 = 6	0 + 1 = 1	**4 + 4 = 8**
Relative capabilities	0 + 3 = 3	0 + 3 = 3	4 + 1 = 5	**3 + 4 = 7**
Norms	1 + 2 = 3	0 + 2 = 2	0 + 1 = 1	**6 + 6 = 12**
Previous history	1 + 2 = 3	**4 + 6 = 10**	2 + 2 = 4	0 + 1 = 1
Proximity	0 + 2 = 2	1 + 4 = 5	4 + 1 = 5	2 + 4 = 6
Rivalry	0 + 2 = 2	4 + 1 = 5	**3 + 5 = 8**	0 + 3 = 3
Arms races	0	1 + 2 = 3	**5 + 5 = 10**	1 + 4 = 5
Democracy	0	2 + 2 = 4	0 + 1 = 1	**5 + 8 = 13**
Hostility	0	0 + 2 = 2	**7 + 4 = 11**	0 + 5 = 5
Wishful thinking/overconfidence	0	1 + 0 = 1	1 + 0 = 1	**5 + 11 = 16**

Figures stand for numbers of cases (war + nonwar = total cases). Bold highlights seven or more total cases.

The data in Table 16.3 underscore the conclusions we discuss throughout this chapter. Three variables have a major impact on the cases that go to war and those that do not: the nature of the issue, domestic politics, and alliances. Territorial issues are often associated with the cases that go to war, including the Italian War, July 1914, Pearl Harbor, and Danzig–Poland. In many of the cases that do not go to war, territory is generally not a central issue. In the Eastern Crisis, for example, civil war is the main issue (although when Thiers raises the territorial issue of the Rhineland, the probability of war rises). Similarly, the Cod War features a maritime rather than a territorial issue. In other nonwar cases, however, the major states resolve the territorial issue through a norm (e.g., Munich) or coercion (e.g., Bosnia and the Cuban Missile Crisis), or they merely stand aside (e.g., the Crimea annexation and the Russia-Ukraine War).

Domestic politics exerts a significant influence as well. In the war cases, hard-liners prevail over accommodationists. In the nonwar cases, the accommodationists rein in the hard-liners. Although the Eastern Crisis offers a classic illustration of this behavior, it appears in other cases too (e.g., Munich and the two Moroccan Crises). Alliances often bring about war in two situations. First, they can embolden a weaker ally, as in the Crimean and Italian Wars. Second, actors may attempt to balance through an alliance, but the alliance ultimately fails to deter aggression,

as occurred in July 1914 and Danzig–Poland. In contrast, alliances help avoid war when they rein in or pressure a weaker ally. Munich, the Cod War, the Crimea annexation, and the Russia-Ukraine War illustrate such behavior.

Previous history has a moderate effect in ten cases – four that go to war and six that do not. Of those that go to war, the previous repetition of crises (often associated with rivalry) helps propel the current crisis to war (the Crimean War, Italian War, July 1914, and Pearl Harbor). This dynamic is short-circuited by other variables in cases that do not go to war. Nuclear weapons (Berlin 1961 and Cuba), a strong leader (the Eastern Crisis), a strong leader combined with an agreed-upon norm (Second Moroccan Crisis), and a superior power (Bosnia) all play such a role.

A number of the variables that we examined frequently play no role in whether a crisis goes to or avoids war. In descending order of the number of cases involved, these variables include wishful thinking (sixteen cases), democracy (thirteen cases), norms (twelve cases), system structure (eight cases), and relative capabilities (seven cases). As discussed earlier, many of these variables had a significant influence on whether war occurred in an individual case (e.g., the Franco-Prussian, Crimean, and Italian Wars, as well as both Moroccan crises, Berlin 1961, and Cuba). Their effect across all the cases, however, remains more limited.

Our study also suggests that nuclear weapons do not alone guarantee that major states will avoid war. Many see nuclear weapons as a significant factor in the long peace of the Cold War (see Gaddis 1986). True, Berlin 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis each pitted the nuclear superpower rivals against one another during the Cold War, and each crisis avoided war. In both cases, however, nuclear weapons and deterrence did not work alone to prevent a (nuclear) war; rather, they operated in conjunction with many other factors, such as tolerance of the status quo (due to the absence of territorial disputes), the creation of "rules of the game," crisis management, and arms control (see Vasquez 1991: 220). In addition, the hierarchical structure of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact made it less likely that crises would escalate because of emboldened minor allies acting on their own (Vasquez and Kang 2013). Without this constraint, both Berlin and Cuba would have been more difficult to manage. Finally, nuclear weapons, as well as the MAD logic that accompanies them, have raised the provocation threshold. This often creates more accommodationists, who can then rein in hard-liners. If these accommodationists do not appear or cannot block the path to war, then nuclear crises might have ended differently.

In the end, the analysis of key variables across our various cases has revealed important patterns, particularly with regard to domestic politics, territory, alliances, and rivalry. It also suggests some important insights about the role of system structure and democracy. Future research will need to explore the robustness of these patterns. For now, we turn to some practical lessons that our cases can suggest – on the basis of the patterns we have identified.

17 General Lessons

This chapter derives general lessons from the cases analyzed in this book, in the hope that these might provide useful guidance for future practice. First we look at lessons for diplomacy and then at lessons about international relations (IR) theory.

Lessons for Diplomacy

1. The key lesson that can be derived from this study in terms of **what separates crises that go to war from those that do not is that in the latter a strong leader reins in hard-liners who advocate going to war**. Direct evidence for this proposition appears in the cases that do not go to war, and confirming indirect evidence is provided in those that do, in terms of the failure of a leader to rein in hard-liners. We have successful and explicit attempts to rein in hard-liners in the following cases: Louis-Philippe in the Eastern Crisis 1839–1841; Kaiser Wilhelm II in the Second Moroccan Crisis (and to a lesser extent in the First Moroccan Crisis); Chamberlain and Daladier reining in Benes (a foreign leader) in the Munich crisis; and Kennedy reining in Curtis LeMay and the rest of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as well as Khrushchev presumably reining in his hard-liners and Castro.

For cases that do escalate to war we see that either an accommodationist who does not want war fails to rein in hard-liners, or there are no accommodationists. The clearest instance of this is the Crimean War, where Aberdeen cannot control his hard-liners or the hard-line press, which together overwhelm him. Equally explicit is the Russo-Japanese War, where the hard-liner Alekseiev gets the tsar to veto Rosen's accommodationist proposal. This means that domestic politics is a key variable in bringing about war, as opposed to the structure of the system. We see this especially in the Eastern Crisis 1839–1841; war is prevented not by the Concert of Europe but by the actions of King Louis-Philippe.

2. The second lesson is that **individuals make a difference**. In several crises we analyzed, we saw individuals shaping events either to prevent war or to bring it about to serve their policy ends. Accommodationists, like King Louis-Philippe and Kaiser Wilhelm II, single-handedly prevent war by reining in hard-liners whose policies were taking the country down a road to war. If Louis-Philippe had not stood for peace, the National Assembly – led by Prime Minister Thiers – would have brought France into a major war, which it would have likely lost. Similarly, the kaiser intervened in 1911 to make it clear to Kiderlen that Morocco was not worth a war, let alone the French Congo. Likewise, Truman indicated that he would not permit World War III to be fought over Berlin in 1948. Truman and Stalin had just gone through the Second World War and they were not going to let any hard-line underling or action get them involved in another major war. Perhaps most illustrative of the importance of individuals is the role John F. Kennedy played in reining in hard-liners like General Curtis LeMay, who wanted to invade Cuba and use nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union. Robert F. Kennedy's November 1962 memorandum about the Cuban Missile Crisis, quoted in Chapter 13, bears repeating: "The 10 or 12 people who had participated in all these discussions were … bright and energetic people. We had perhaps amongst the most able in the country and if any one of half a dozen of them were President the world would have been very likely plunged into catastrophic war" (quoted in Schlesinger 1999: 14–15).

Even here, a situation in which many scholars believe that the structure of nuclear deterrence under mutual assured destruction (MAD) makes war less likely, RFK thought nuclear war could have come about if any number of other individuals on the Ex Comm were in charge. This is a chilling thought given the catastrophic results of an all-out nuclear war. Nuclear crises, because of the high risk they entail, put a premium on the avoidance of bad decisions. As the two nuclear crises of the early 1960s demonstrate, individuals matter when it comes to decisions of war and peace.

Individuals make a difference, of course, not only for the pursuit of peace but also for bringing about war. Hard-liners have brought about war even when others, including their superiors, have sought to avoid it. Bismarck, during the 1870 Franco-Prussian crisis, offers the classic example; he had his own long-term plans about the destiny of his country, seized a situation, and, in doing so, made a significant difference.

Palmerston likewise altered the course of events. Peace was in hand and he, along with Stratford, was able to turn things around to fight a war that the prime minister did not want to fight. Hard-liners in the Russo-Japanese War also tilted the outcome toward war. Rosen's *ad referendum*

exchange policy could have settled the crisis on the basis of a mutually acceptable negotiated bargain, but it did not. Alekseiev recommended that the tsar reject this agreement and the tsar accepted his recommendation. A less hard-line decision-maker might have been more open to the bargain. Instead, Alekseiev's views carried the day and Rosen's agreement was rejected. Finally, individuals were also important in the Italian War of 1859–1860. Cavour secured the ally Piedmont needed, and Napoleon III helped plan the war. Without Garibaldi, moreover, the boot would not have been united, and this was accomplished even though Napoleon III did not want it.

Lastly, we close discussion of this lesson with a case in which two absolute rulers tried to prevent war, but failed. These individuals were the kaiser and the tsar in July 1914. Their efforts appear in their Willy–Nicky telegrams. Any scholar of war must take pause when the two most absolute rulers in a crisis seek to avoid war and fail.[1] What are the theoretical implications of that failure?

When such situations occur and the leader is firmly in charge, as both the kaiser and the tsar were, something other than the idiosyncratic or individual characteristics of the decision-makers must be at play. July 1914 ended in war because the external situation facing the military of each side, coupled with time pressure, created a mobilization crisis; a security trap then made each side try to preempt the other. Individual leaders were overwhelmed by the threatening situation they were facing – a function of the proximity of the land armies involved and the quick conquest they threatened. Individuals therefore cannot always make a difference, although this is not always because the structure of the international system overwhelms them.

3. A third lesson for diplomacy is that ***contingency*** **can play a more important role than system structure in determining whether a crisis escalates to war or is managed**. Contingency is defined as something that occurs because of idiographic factors that could easily not have been present and, in their absence, another outcome would have emerged. By definition, individuals cannot matter if the outcome of crises is determined by external structure. However, even when individuals are not critical, as in July 1914, there are events that make a difference. The mobilization crisis overwhelmed the kaiser and the tsar, resulting in a war that both sought to prevent. Events led to behavior that shaped the outcome.

[1] The case study in this book takes the position that the kaiser sincerely wanted to avoid war.

Thus, **history is contingent**, which means that behavior is not predetermined by the structure of the system. This is demonstrated time and again in the cases. Certainly, all the cases of "unnecessary wars" in this book did not have to be fought; they were contingent on the actions of decision-makers, typically the domestic struggle between hard-liners and accommodationists. Counterfactual reasoning supports this claim. If Ambassador Rosen had been in charge of foreign policy rather than Alekseiev in 1904, war might have been avoided. If the tsar had been aware of the Japanese willingness and ability to go to war, his negotiating stance might have been different. If Aberdeen had had a more loyal ambassador or a solid majority in Parliament instead of a coalition cabinet, he would have been able to prevail. Similar counterfactual claims can be made about the French leadership in 1870. As T. V. Paul says, structure is what states make of it.[2]

Contingency is at the heart of many other cases as well. This is why we can ask, when a case does not go to war, how might it have done so. When the answer is clear, the case was contingent and not the product of system structure. If Benes had refused to bend to the demands of Chamberlain and Daladier, for example, Hitler would have likely attacked, and at minimum a two-party war would have resulted. Similarly, when a crisis ends in war, we ask how war could have been avoided. If the answer is plausible, then contingency is at play. Even in July 1914, which many analysts say is an overdetermined case for war, we argue that the Halt-in-Belgrade plan could have avoided war.

4. Nonetheless, despite contingency, it still remains the case that **someone must stand for peace** – a lesson suggested by several crises in this book. Peace does not just happen. In a crisis, particularly those between major states, war is often on the agenda and hard-liners are ready to favor that option. In the 1839–1841 Eastern Crisis peace would not have resulted if Louis-Philippe had not stood up to his prime minister and the legislature. Likewise, in the two Moroccan Crises peace would not have occurred if the kaiser had not been firm in his opposition to war, as was Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. Even in a democracy, as the Crimean War and 1839 France demonstrate, war can be popular with the press and the legislature. In situations of war hysteria there is a momentum for war and it is easy to go with the prevailing sentiment. It takes strength to resist that tide. Aberdeen in 1854 could not; neither

[2] Comment at McGill University CEPSI–CIPSS (Le Centre d'études sur la paix et la sécurité internationale–The Center for International Peace and Security Studies) roundtable on *Crisis Diplomacy and War: Lessons for World Politics*," September 16, 2022, https://tinyurl.com/y24p4y34.

could McKinley in 1898. Louis-Philippe did in 1841, as did Kaiser Wilhelm II in Agadir.

In short, peace occurs when strong accommodationist leaders stand up to hard-liners and domestic war hysteria. If they succumb to pressure, like Aberdeen did in the Crimean War crisis, hard-liners will dominate. This can lead to imprudent decisions and disastrous outcomes, as it did for Napoleon III in 1870–1871 and Franz Josef in 1914. But can there be more structural solutions to peace? Our fifth lesson suggests that there can.

5. **The secret to preventing war structurally is to find a functional equivalent to war**. To do this, we need to know the function that war serves in the system. Presumably, if this function is satisfied by something else, the "need" for war would be eliminated. We know from modern political science that war's main function is to make binding decisions under a system of anarchy (Vasquez 2009: 31, 304). Since there is no overarching government that can impose decisions on sovereign states, states seek to impose their preferences by force. Clausewitz (1832) said this over two hundred years ago; in his view, war is a mere continuation of policy (politics) by other means. War, then, is an institution that states have come to accept for making binding decisions. When all else fails, they accept this procedure for determining how to settle their disagreement: Whoever wins the war wins the disagreement. They could have chosen some other procedure – for example, by flipping a coin. Instead, over time, the institution of war has become the mechanism for resolving serious disputes when no other mechanism works.

Realists believe that government could settle disagreements. Although it operates within states, it does not exist at the global level. Moreover, realists like Waltz (1979: 114–116) deny that there is anything between anarchy and world government. They do not see that there can be degrees of order, which might provide mechanisms that could make binding decisions for certain kinds of disagreements. The English School (see Bull 1977) has been in the forefront in delineating the elements of order within the international system. From international law to international organization, as well as the establishment of norms and common rules of the game, there have been instances of order that have provided states with procedures that can be used to make binding decisions. These procedures can be issue-specific, like the Law of the Sea treaty, or more wide-ranging, like the attempts to establish governance without government (see Rosenau and Czempiel 1992) best exemplified by the Concert of Europe. When institutions like the Concert have been able to produce a binding decision, they have successfully avoided war. The problem is that they have not always been able to do that, as exemplified in the

Crimean War. Of course, the difference between the institution of war and these other institutions is that an opponent can be dragged into war against its will, whereas with the other procedures both sides must agree to use them.[3]

A common hypothesis in peace research is that when states accept certain rules of the game and certain norms, they are more likely to be at peace. Wallensteen (1984) provides some evidence of this; he finds that during periods when norms and rules are accepted by the major states no wars occur among them. Similarly, Kegley and Raymond (1982) find that when certain norms like *pacta sunt servanda* are accepted, wars and crises decrease.

Our study finds that acceptance of a norm – for example, on how to transfer territory – can facilitate an agreement, thereby avoiding war. The nationalist/self-determination norm, for example, successfully resolved the Munich crisis, while the compensation norm guided successful negotiations in the Second Moroccan Crisis. In contrast, contradictory norms increase the probability of war. We see this in the Italian Wars of Independence. Because the Concert accepted only the dynastic monarchical norm as a reason for holding and transferring territory, it considered the nationalist claims of Mazzini and Garibaldi to be illegitimate.

The key instance of governance without government in our study is the Concert of Europe. In the two cases that relate directly to the Concert – the Eastern Crisis and the Crimean War – the Concert did not work as intended, although at other times, like in the 1830 Belgian crisis, it did. It also worked in other instances, such as the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885; the major states came together to manage their rivalries over territory – in the Balkans and the scramble for sub-Saharan Africa respectively.

If we look at the nineteenth century after the Congress of Vienna, can we draw any conclusions about the relative weight of structure (in particular governing systems) vs. domestic politics from our cases? In the Eastern Crisis and the Crimean War cases we suggest that domestic politics is a critical influence. The Concert worked as it should, but its solutions where overturned by domestic hard-liners. In addition, even when the Concert worked to prevent war, it often worked in conjunction with major states that were engaging in power politics and exchanging threats against each other.[4] Theoretically, this means that the impact of

[3] Although sometimes opponents will be dragged into court against their will if they have signed a treaty – e.g., World Trade Organization (WTO) or Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – within which they have accepted the jurisdiction of such an institution.

[4] For example, in the 1830 Belgian crisis, where Britain got France to back down from a threat to war.

structure was limited not only by domestic politics but, more often than not, also by the *dyadic interactions* of the major states. All this suggests that war is associated with the breakdown of rules, and that such systems of rules can only do so much to deal with deeper structural forces that make actors seek to change the status quo in the first place. This implies that deeper forces, in addition to domestic politics, limit the ability of governing systems to keep the peace.

What to conclude? Rules can work, but they do not work all the time. They failed to deal with the forces of nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. We know, however, they failed here because the dominant norm for transferring territory was dynastic succession, which contradicted the nationalist norm. Once that nationalist norm was accepted as a basis for transferring territory, then the system could deal with such territorial disputes, as occurred in Munich 1938. Rules and norms then are but one key – albeit an important one – for making governing systems work, although they do not always supersede the impact of domestic politics. Likewise, the Concert always provided a setting for the interactions of the major states. These interactions had their own determinants and it was these dyadic interactions that shaped the impact of the Concert structure on the global events of the day. Structure, in other words, did not work alone but with both domestic politics and dyadic interactions.

The complexity of the evidence from the nineteenth century means that one cannot resolve the agent–structure debate (see Wendt 1987) on the basis of that period. We know, of course, that structural factors are sometimes paramount, while at other times they have a strong interactive role. Our cases suggest certain things that can make this conclusion more nuanced: (i) Domestic politics can work to prevent war when the Concert does not. (ii) At the same time, domestic politics can undermine acceptable peaceful solutions that the Concert puts forth. (iii) The dyadic interactions of the major states determine whether and how Concert decisions will be implemented. (iv) When the governing structure breaks down, war among major states is more likely. (v) A key problem posed by change involves the resolution of territorial disputes, and the acceptance of a common norm for the transfer of territory in the system can help prevent war.[5]

[5] Henehan and Vasquez (2006: 289, 294) suggest that in the first ten years of the League of Nations system this norm helped prevent war among major states by keeping territorial issues off the agenda. Once revisionist major states placed non-nationalist territory claims on the agenda in the 1930s, the League was unable to resolve them.

6. A related lesson is that even in the absence of systems of governance, **norms and rules are important for maintaining peace and avoiding war**. The best example of this is the norm of **compensation**, as exemplified in the Second Moroccan Crisis. Once that practice is established, it provides a **focal point** and a procedure for reaching a mutually satisfactory decision. Other practices like **quid pro quo** provide a similar function. They provide a decision game (with its own rules and expectations) that is an alternative to the use of force.

Practices like compensation and quid pro quo demonstrate that **peace is not just something that happens, but something that is constructed** through the making of new informal institutions (sets of rules that guide behavior and establish new ways of behaving toward each other). War is easier to avoid when there are many ways of resolving disagreements and reaching binding decisions. When such options are limited or do not exist, then force becomes a way to achieve one's goals. If the principle of compensation had not existed, for example, it would have been more difficult to reach a settlement of the Second Moroccan Crisis. Likewise, without the idea of a quid pro quo, the exchange policy in the Russo-Japanese crisis of 1903–1904 would have been difficult to formulate, even though it ultimately failed to prevent war.

7. Lastly, a key lesson from our crises is that **war can be avoided; it is not inevitable**. This may seem somewhat obvious. War is rare and there are many more cases of crises that do not go to war than those that do. Nonetheless, this is not a trivial point, because, of the cases we have looked at that did not go to war, all could have gone to war. Moreover, some of the wars that we have examined need not have gone to war – the three unnecessary wars being the most predominant examples. Diplomacy can therefore make a difference, although some crises are admittedly easier to manage than others.

Lessons for IR Theory

1. Our first lesson for IR theory is **that anthropomorphizing countries and using proper nouns, like England or Germany, to refer to them obscures the nature of decision-making within collectivities**. Countries are not persons and do not have a single mind. Once the black box of the state is opened, as we have done in the case studies herein, it is clear that state governments, let alone societies or "nations," are typically not unitary actors. In July 1914, there was no "Germany," but rather only Kaiser Wilhelm II, Bethmann Hollweg, and Moltke struggling with each other to control foreign policy (Vasquez 2018: 85). Similarly, there was no England in 1853–1854, but rather Aberdeen,

Palmerston, Clarendon, and Stratford jockeying to control foreign policy while Queen Victoria looked on aghast.

Rational choice approaches cannot just use "as if" assumptions to create models about entities that may not exist. They must apply those models to historical individual decision-makers and then investigate how those individual decision-makers interact to come to a collective decision. This in turn must be done within the structural context of governments, which shapes how those decision-makers can interact. Even democracies are not all the same. Parliamentary democracies and cabinet governments do not make foreign policy the way presidential systems do. Likewise, monarchies are not all alike. Absolute monarchies, like tsarist Russia, are different from liberal monarchies, like 1830 France or the Second Empire of Napoleon III, or current monarchies such as those in the Middle East. All of these are quite dissimilar to the twentieth-century "dictatorships" of Hitler and Stalin, which are based on mass politics that have distinct underlying ideologies and class interests.

More broadly, decision-making in collectivities is fundamentally different from decision-making by a single individual and must be recognized as such. The habit of using shorthand names – a habit that is difficult to abandon, as evinced by our own case studies[6] – needs to be replaced by more complex frameworks, such as those first suggested by Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (1954); otherwise, our concepts will obscure, rather than highlight, the factors that affect how foreign policy decisions in crises are made.

2. The **national interest** is the central concept in the realist explanation of foreign policy (Morgenthau 1960: 5). For Morgenthau (1951), the national interest, rather than morality, should guide nation-states. If it does not, states risk failure and even disaster – a realist position that traces back to Machiavelli. For this reason, Morgenthau criticizes American foreign policy, and the foreign policy of democracies generally, for their failure to put the national interest at the forefront of their policymaking.

For Morgenthau (1951) and other realists, the national interest is obvious and writ large – it is the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of states along with everything that is compatible with that goal. What emerges in some of our case studies, however, is that **the national interest of a state is not always clear. Moreover, sometimes there exist sharp divisions over not only what policies (means)**

[6] The difficulty in getting rid of shorthand labels is that many scholars who use them recognize the complexities involved but cannot simply spell out each of the decision-makers' names time and again.

best protect the national interest but, more fundamentally, what state goals embody the national interest. This is seen especially in Britain in the crisis before the Crimean War, as well as in the earlier Eastern Crisis of 1839–1841. It is also the case in Germany during the two Moroccan Crises. Indeed, divisions over the meaning of the national interest often, as in these two cases, differ between accommodationists and hard-liners. This, of course, is not always the case; sometimes there is a clear consensus, as on the appeasement policy in Britain and France in the early 1930s or on Italian nationalism in 1859. Nonetheless, if pursuing the national interest is the "law" Morgenthau claims it to be, then these anomalous cases raise serious concerns.

3. After the national interest, the concept of the **balance of power**, and the related prescription to balance power, plays the largest role in realist thinking. Scholarly thinking about this concept varies. Traditionally, states are seen as trying to balance power in order to prevent one major state from gaining hegemony over all the other major states and/or to preserve the independence of states (Gulick 1955; M. Kaplan 1957). Waltz (1979: 117–119) believes this behavior to be a "law" that automatically occurs and can be explained as a consequence of interstate anarchy, but he eschews the idea that it produces peace. Morgenthau (1960: 14), in contrast, sees the balance of power as a policy that is not easily implemented, rather than as something that occurs regularly and automatically. In fact, even though he is the premier realist in the post-1945 era, Morgenthau finds many problems with the concept; he argues that, as a guiding principle, the balance of power is uncertain, inaccurate (states strive for superiority, not balance), and inadequate (Morgenthau 1960: 205). Other non-realists, like Haas (1953), have found the concept deficient and used inconsistently because of its ambiguity, which stems from the fact that it has numerous empirical referents. Schroeder (1989), a major diplomatic historian, sees the concept as one based more on a political equilibrium than a power balance per se; he argues that it lacks much of the regularity that neorealists maintain it has, even in its so-called heyday of the seventeenth and eighteen centuries (see Schroeder 1994a). These concerns about the empirical role of the balance of power became an important element of the paradigm wars within the field in the 1980s and 1990s (Vasquez 1997; Waltz 1997).

In our study, the case most relevant to balance of power theory is the Franco-Prussian War. The logic of balance of power theory requires that states balance power with respect to capability, not just immediate threat. This is why it is considered a rational theory. If all history is a struggle for power and one state can gobble up another, then states must pit their power against other states in order to survive. If they are too

weak to do that, they must make allies, which can include the formation of a balancing coalition that prevents one state from gaining systemic hegemony. Anticipation and foresight are the key here – the advantage that realist theory provides to foreign policymaking. It is in this sense that Britain and Russia fail to balance in 1870. They should have foreseen that the unification of Germany would threaten them, as Prussia would greatly increase in power. After the fact, this threat would become clear; twice in the twentieth century this united Germany would make war on Britain and Russia, even invading and conquering large parts of Russia in 1917 and 1941.

Keeping Germany fragmented, as in the German Confederation supported by the Vienna peace system in 1815, would be a rational realist position for Britain and Russia to maintain. Instead, in 1870 both countries abandoned this long-term interest and succumbed to the short-term interest of supporting Bismarck's move; Russia even thought that a united Germany would be a bulwark against France (see Gall 1986: 360). Realist theory should have prevented these errors, and the logic of the theory should have made decision-makers aware of the potential problem that the aggregation of power would in fact bring about less than fifty years later. That it did not, shows how difficult it is to apply balance of power thinking and use it as a strategy in foreign policy, even when one can deduce the policy that it theoretically prescribes.

The failure to prevent a unified Germany in 1870–1871 also raises questions about the theory's ability to guide the design of grand strategy to deal with the rise of potential hegemonic threats. In 1870, the five major states of the Concert of Europe were in a political equilibrium, which also incorporated a balance of power that prevented anyone from gaining hegemony. The vision provided by realist theory and any thinking about grand strategy should have made Britain and France, two of the most powerful states in the Concert, cognizant of the problem that would arise if they allowed Prussia to become Germany. It did not, thereby illustrating how difficult it is to make grand strategy even when considering future hegemonic threats – a major realist concern.

Two other cases in this book are relevant to balance of power theory. These occur in the lead-up to the Second World War: Munich and the 1939 Polish–Danzig crisis. Both cases illustrate the difficulty of how to apply balance of power thinking in specific instances, and both support the notion that attempts to balance power are not always a regularly occurring major-state behavior, even when it is most expected by realist thought. In Munich, Chamberlain and Daladier did not balance against Hitler, but sought to appease him instead. Realists, like Churchill, complained about this at the time. Nevertheless, such behaviors

demonstrate that major states can deal with shifts in power and threats in a variety of ways – not just by balancing, which supports Schroeder's (1994a) critique.

By 1939, because both Chamberlain and Daladier recognized that appeasement did not work, they sought to prevent further German expansion by directly balancing against Hitler and threatening war. Many others, including Churchill, likewise favored balancing against Hitler; they saw Hitler's foreign policy as a drive for hegemony that was best opposed by a balancing coalition. A proper balance, however, should have included Stalin, who was willing to join such a coalition. This, however, did not happen, partly because Poland objected, as did certain conservative elements in Britain. These events illustrate that even when leaders accept balance of power solutions, external circumstances may impede their implementation. Normally, we think domestic politics intrudes in the making of effective policy, but here external politics stood in the way. To make matters worse, Hitler adroitly manipulated the situation to woo Stalin away from any balancing coalition with a bargain that made him an ally and cobelligerent. The failure to create a balance, in other words, not only failed to prevent war but led to a situation in which the target could effectively counterbalance. In various ways these points underline the fact that balance of power theory is not as parsimonious as realists think.

While the period leading up to the Second World War saw a failure to balance effectively, a different dynamic played out before the First World War. The Triple Alliance and Triple Entente formed as states attempted to balance against one another. However, as in 1939, the resulting balance did not prevent war from occurring. Both twentieth-century world wars demonstrate that relative power parity will not prevent war.

Moreover, the world wars highlight how **alliances do not necessarily prevent war through the aggregation of power**. Indeed, these wars are major anomalies for those who think that a balance of power will lead to peace, although it must be noted that leading realists, like Waltz (1979), do not adhere to this claim. They also illustrate the more general statistical finding that parity is associated with war onset (Bremer 1992). However, this well-accepted finding (see Morey and Kadera 2021) obscures the true relationship, which is that neither power parity nor a preponderance of power are associated with peace. Each is associated with different types of war (see Vasquez 2009: ch. 2) – preponderance with asymmetric and imperial wars (major–minor wars) and parity with major–major and minor–minor wars.

4. A fourth lesson for IR theory is that, as Schroeder (1976, 1994a) discusses, **alliances can result in peace when they are used to**

manage relations rather than just for balancing power. Certain types of alliances – *pacta de contrahendo* – seek to restrain states not by directly opposing them but by grouping them into a larger alliance that constrains their behavior. Schroeder (1976) gives several examples of this type of alliance, including the Holy Alliance of 1815 and the defense league associated with the formation of the German Confederation of 1815. More recent examples, provided by Pressman (2008: ch. 2), include alliances between the United States (US) and various minor states (e.g., South Korea or Taiwan).

This same principle is used on a much larger scale when **alliances bring together major states to create a new world order after a major world war**. The Quadruple Alliance does this in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna. It there creates the Concert of Europe, which eventually incorporates the newly restored Bourbon France in the alliance as its fifth member and gives the alliance a *pactum de contrahendo* function. The Concert seeks to rule by using conference diplomacy to decide questions on the basis of the collective interest of all the major states and by following certain norms and rules of the game. In this way the involved states hope to resolve conflicts of interest and avoid major wars. Schroeder therefore (1994b) sees the Concert as transforming international politics. It is often credited with avoiding war among major states until its breakdown before the Crimean War (see Wallensteen 1984; Albrecht-Carrie 1958). Nonetheless, our study of the Eastern Crisis of 1839–1841, which occurs during the heyday of the Concert system, raises certain questions about whether the Concert or domestic politics prevented war in this case.

While the period of peace from 1815 through 1853 occurs under the Concert, and for this reason is seen as the most successful attempt in modern history at using alliances to construct a form of governance without government, it is not the only example when an alliance of victors has built a new world order. At Versailles the victors created a League of Nations, which worked for about ten years, and after the Second World War the victors, whose alliance was called the "united nations," created an international organization of the same name. The UN broke down quickly with the emergence of the US–Soviet rivalry starting in 1947.

5. Lastly, if individuals matter and contingency is important, then **the agency–structure debate** in IR theory (Wendt 1987) is best resolved by seeing system structure as a product of decision-making that in turn affects decision-making. In our cases, one could see decision-making as operating within the prevailing structure of the international system. Certainly, no one would deny Waltz's (1979) claim that anarchy in the system fundamentally affects behavior; the only question is whether

the system is always as anarchic as he claims (see Bull 1977). Likewise, Schroeder (1994b) maintains that the Concert of Europe transformed international politics and provided a structure within which the major states could engage in conference diplomacy. This concert ruled the system in their collective interest and, in so doing, could and – often did – preserve the peace. **Structure can make the environment in which decision-makers operate more or less primed for war** (see Van Evera 1984). Whether war actually occurs, however, is affected by the actions of decision-makers and the domestic politics that constrain them. As Levy and Vasquez (2014: 5) argue, **war is best analyzed as an interaction among structure, decision-making, and domestic politics**.

Such a framework helps answer the issue Otte (2015: 104), who is a proponent of contingency, raises – namely, that "it is easier to assert the significance of *les forces profondes* than it is to demonstrate any causal nexus between them and specific policy decisions" (see also Otte 2014: xi). Otte's claim is an important critique of structural analyses. Our framework does not refute this claim but rather gives contingency a predominant role without ignoring the importance of environments that are primed for war. Marx ([1852] 1963: 15) said it best: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."[7] Marx believed that individuals could shape history. He even thought that revolutions could be stolen, but in the end class structure and the economic stages of history limit what individuals can do.

Conclusion

Our ultimate purpose in distinguishing the crises that go war from those that do not is to gain some insights into how war can be avoided. On the basis of our case studies, we offer the following theoretically informed conclusions for policymakers and others who want to promote peace.

1. The domestic political situation is more important than system structure in distinguishing which crises go to war during the prenuclear era.

[7] Otte (2014: xi) also refers to Marx's reference but we were, of course, aware of the quote before reading Otte. Our use of the quote tends to favor more Marx's emphasis on structure.

2. Crises that do not escalate to war are those in which accommodationists rein in hard-liners. Crises go to war when hard-liners outmaneuver accommodationists, or accommodationists simply do not exist in the decision-making group.
3. Certain territorial issues are more prone to war than others. Disputes over homeland territory or territory infused with nationalist concerns are more likely to escalate to war than those over colonial territory, distant territory, or territory involving other intangible values.
4. System structure – when there is some governing system among the major states, even if it is a loose one – generally promotes peaceful solutions whether in the crises that avoid war or those that end in war. What distinguishes the two is not something about the system structure but rather the domestic political situation or the presence of norms. With the advent of nuclear weapons, the system structure, which embodies MAD, makes war less likely as a way to resolve issues, because its catastrophic effect means no one can win it.
5. Norms, if they exist, help make a bargain possible and negotiations fruitful. These, however, work only if hard-liners are restrained.

6a. Alliances often promote escalation to war. They do this through two causal mechanisms. First, they can embolden weaker allies, who then reject peace proposals. When alliances embolden a weaker ally, they are apt to draw the major ally into a war. Second, attempts to balance power can lead to a polarized structure between competing alliances that encourage resolve and confrontation. This, in turn, leads to deterrence failure rather than successful coercion.

6b. Sometimes, however, alliances can promote a peaceful resolution to a crisis. This happens in two different ways. First, alliances that pressure a weaker ally to accept a peace proposal are apt to avoid war. Whether major-state allies embolden or restrain minor-state allies depends on the balance of hard-liners/accommodationists in the major-state ally. Second, multilateral alliances often restrain their members from going to war with each other by mediating the conflict.

7. One of the best ways to avoid war during a crisis is to make a bargain, the terms of which typically involve some quid pro quo or trade. Bargains are more probable if the issue is less salient, norms are present, and distance is involved.
8. Institutions within democratic states (their legislature, public, press) generally are prone to war hysteria in crises, and not to peaceful sentiments. When these democracies avoid war, it is typically because of a strong accommodationist in the executive –not the irenic sentiments in the legislature or the public.

We end this book with a few suggestions for how to encourage international peace in the immediate future. Given the predominance of wars between neighboring states over territory, a key strategy for peace involves dealing with territorial disputes. Managing territorial disputes, if it can be successfully implemented, is likely to have great payoffs. We know from research on the territorial peace (Gibler 2007, 2012; Gibler and Owsiak 2018; Owsiak 2012, 2013; Rider and Owsiak 2021; Owsiak and Vasquez 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023) that once states, including rivals, settle their borders they can be at peace for long periods of time (see Vasquez 2009: 160). The post-1945 West European peace associated with the EEC illustrates this dynamic. Settling borders in one dyad, moreover, may encourage the settlement of other borders in the same neighborhood, thereby making zones of peace. Those interested in peace might invest in resolving disputed borders between neighbors on a case-by-case basis before crises erupt. Failing that, they could help accommodationists on each side block some of the paths to war that we have identified in this study.

The collapse of the Soviet Union makes Russia a new state, and it may have be compelled to change its borders, as Putin's behavior suggests. When local wars over these borders arise, there must be strategies in place to prevent them from expanding into major-state wars. The Cold War did this repeatedly –from Korea to Vietnam and to Afghanistan – by establishing certain unwritten rules of the game. These cases provide a precedent for future interactions between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The ongoing Russia–Ukraine War and the actions of the West will be a critical precedent for how such rules can be established and at what costs. Whatever precedent this brings is immediately pertinent to China's claims to adjacent and former territory (e.g., Taiwan), territorial tensions in the South China Sea and on the Korean peninsula, and ongoing rivalries – including many in the Middle East and between India and Pakistan. In short, the danger for war posed by territory will be tested severely in the coming years, and alliances (or the prospect of alignment) will play a role in whether these territorial crises escalate or local wars expand. Our territorial and alliance paths to war, as well as how to block them, will therefore be highly relevant.

There will still be many nonterritorial wars in the system, especially among major states. As we have seen in our study and as statistical research has documented, wars among rivals are frequent. Another peace strategy that could deal with these is by creating norms and rules of the game to manage rivalries. This seems workable, especially for rivalries that lack territorial disputes. The Cold War, again, is an important

precedent since territory was not the major contested issue between the US and USSR. A key danger in these rivalries, however, is that alliance commitments might draw the major states into a minor state's territorial disputes, as in Korea or Czechoslovakia (1938).

Lastly, our study suggests that one should be wary of relying on the democratic peace – particularly a policy of spreading democracy – to produce a twenty-first-century peace. Such a strategy is much more expensive than one based on the territorial peace. It also may not work, for, as our study has shown, democracy has its own path to war – one that exposes the inaccuracies of the institutional explanation of the democratic peace, even though it leaves the normative explanation intact.

These suggestions do not provide all, or the only, answers for peace in the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, they illustrate that in-depth case studies, when matched with existing findings in peace science research, can provide insights into – if not guidance for – diplomacy.

Methodolocial Appendix

In this appendix we give a more detailed treatment to some of the technical issues that are of greater interest to scholars than either undergraduate students or the general reader. We begin by specifying the questions (and variables) that guide our case analyses. We heed the advice of qualitative methodologists, like Goertz (2017), to stipulate *ex ante* the questions we will ask in each case to determine whether a factor (and the causal process it implies) significantly affects the occurrence or avoidance of war. Next, we analyze the problem of generalizing from a small case study sample to the population. Third, we examine whether we can derive lessons from our cases. And lastly, we outline our approach to writing up the "historical events" of each case and our attempts to control bias.

The Questions (and Variables) That Guide Case Analyses

To identify the key variables of interest, we organize the questions we ask by level of analysis – that is, we ask questions about how the system structure, the dyad, the state, or the individual might affect decision-making and/or how the crisis unfolds.

We begin at the *system structure* level. This level focuses on the amount of order within the international system during the historical period in which the crisis occurs. To determine this, we divide the post-Napoleonic era into discrete historical periods using Wallensteen's (1984) periodization:[1]

- 1816–1848 (Concert of Europe)
- 1849–1870
- 1871–1895 (Bismarckian order)
- 1896–1918

[1] We use Wallensteen's (1984) historical eras, rather than J. Richardson's (1994), because Wallensteen has findings that few wars among major states occur during what he calls "universalist" periods. The periods with "names" like League of Nations are universalist periods, with at least some rules of the game present.

- 1919–1932 (League of Nations)
- 1933–1944
- 1945–1962
- 1963–1991 (detente and end of the Cold War)[2]

To get at the key variables at the system structure level we ask specific questions of each case, such as whether a system of governance exists (e.g., the Concert of Europe), and whether there are any recognized rules of the game. The complete list of questions we use – for this and the other levels we discuss in this section – appears in Owsiak and Vasquez (2024), along with a more detailed literature review for each of the key variables.

Below the system structure level is the *dyadic* level. Here, the success of peace science research in producing statistically significant findings permits us to draw on a wealth of material and several mid-range explanations for interpreting our cases (see Bremer 1992). We first consider *the nature of the issue* (and stakes) under contention in the specific crisis. Over what stakes did the crisis participants contend? Was territory a key issue under dispute? The territorial explanation of war posits that, of all the issues over which states contend, territorial issues are the most war-prone (Vasquez 2009: ch. 4). A considerable amount of statistical evidence supports this conclusion (see Hensel 1996; Senese 1996; Vasquez and Henehan 2001; Senese and Vasquez 2008). While we seek to delineate the territorial causal path to war, our casework also provides an opportunity to see when and why territorial disputes do *not* escalate to war.

Closely related to territory is *proximity*. Bremer (1992; 2000) found that whether a dyad's members were *contiguous* or more distant from one another was the most important factor for predicting war. We assess the role of proximity in our cases by asking whether the crisis participants were contiguous by land or sea, and if so, whether this pressured leaders to make decisions faster.

In any interstate crisis, the involved actors exchange proposals that attempt to settle the issue under dispute – that is, adopt a *bargaining strategy*. The terms of these proposals affect whether a crisis escalates to war. It is important to note that by bargaining we mean actions as well as words. We ask what kind of bargaining strategy – for example, bulling or firm but flexible (see Leng 1983; Danilovic and Clare 2021) – participants employ and whether and how they managed the crisis.

[2] Wallensteen's (1984) study ends in 1976, but Henehan and Vasquez (2006) update his data analysis through 1992. In doing so, they extend the universalist period that begins in 1963 to 1991 – that is, until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Scholars initially studied individual militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) to understand why only some MIDs escalate to war. As research advanced, however, they noticed that many dyads experienced war only after a series of MIDs (see Leng 1983). The *repetition of disputes*, in other words, increased the probability of war. As a result, we cannot examine crises in isolation, but must consider them as part of sequence (taking into account the crises that precede and follow the current one, as well as how decision-makers learn from successive crises). Our *previous history* variable is meant to capture this process. How many previous crises have occurred? And what pattern, if any, exists in the participants' previous interactions? For example, did the level of *hostility* progressively increase as disputes repeated themselves.

The repetition of disputes hints at another important contribution of dyadic analysis – namely, that the *underlying relationship* between dyad members plays a crucial role in determining whether a dyad goes to war, particularly if states are involved in a *rivalry* (Diehl and Goertz 2000; Thompson 2001; Valeriano 2013). On the basis of the research on interstate rivalries, we ask: Are crisis participants rivals, according to the main measures used in the discipline? For how long has this been the case? And have they ever gone to war with each other? Since we believe that rivalry is a key variable in shaping conflict, this means – once again – that we should not look at crises in isolation, but rather as part of a sequence.

Crises are often associated with security dilemmas, so we also examine whether *alliances* and *arms races* occur, and if so, what role they play. Have crisis participants previously formed alliances to aid them in their interactions? If so, do alliances affect participants' decision-making? Did crisis participants decide to build up their armaments, and when – that is, before, during, or after the crisis? Finally, in what relative order do alliance formation and arms races occur?

Many scholars stress the role of major states' *relative capabilities*. States often form alliances and build up their armaments to gain a capability advantage over their opponent(s). To identify the role of capabilities in our cases we ask: What are the relative capabilities of participants in the crisis? Are these changing or stable in the period preceding the crisis?

The democratic peace constitutes one of the strongest empirical findings in the field, and it has renewed emphasis on the idea that regime type is a key variable that explains foreign policy. What is the regime type of each actor involved in the crisis? If democracies are present, do they behave more peacefully in the crisis?

The third level of our framework – the *state level* – considers the *domestic political situation*. It contains elements similar to those found at the dyadic and the individual levels (e.g., hard-liner/accommodationist

orientation), but focuses on additional substate entities that influence policy. Prominent among these is "*the public*." Particularly in democratic states, how does the public perceive the adversary or constrain the decisions that leaders can make? In the 1839 Eastern Crisis, for example, the French public increasingly clamored for war.

We recognize, of course, that the public is rarely undifferentiated, but consists of various groups with different views; hence, public opinion is often contested, and leaders seek to manipulate public opinion to bolster their preferred policy. All of this suggests the need for in-depth case work to trace whether and how domestic actors, including the public, influence the propensity for crisis escalation.

A second group of collectivities involved in foreign policy are *bureaucratic entities*. As Allison and Halperin (1972: 73) note, individuals make foreign policy decisions, but "where they stand [on the best policy option to adopt] depends on where they sit." Each key decision-maker represents organizational interests, in addition to any national interest or personal interest, and seeks greater influence and resources for their organization. The exact options proposed also often stem from the organization's "standard operating procedures" (SOPs), which fit new situations into existing organizational procedures. We try to be aware of any bureaucratic politics or SOPs – to determine and how these might affect decision-making.

More generally, analysts often divide individual decision-makers into two groups (Vasquez 2009: 220) – hard-liners and accommodationists. *Hard-liners* hold a personal belief that force is an efficacious instrument by which to gain difficult ends; this gives them a predisposition toward seeking all their goals rather than compromising. Such a stance often makes hard-liners more willing to risk war in pursuit of their goals. *Accommodationists*, in contrast, hold an alternative set of beliefs, which predispose them to view the use of force (especially war) as repugnant. They seek to minimize the risk of war, which encourages them to pursue a foreign policy based on negotiation, compromise, and the creation of rules to resolve conflicts via nonviolent means.

Two further features of these collectivities merit mention. First, although one might expect the hard-liner/accommodationist distinction to map neatly onto bureaucratic organizations, it does not. One might, for example, expect hard-liners to predominate in the ministry of defense, while accommodationists represent the foreign ministry. Nevertheless, history yields several counterexamples, as when the military opposes a war (in the Munich crisis). Second, what matters most is the relative influence of these two collectivities on crisis decisions. During a crisis, hard-liners and accommodationists debate the foreign policy a state

should adopt. As the influence (and the number) of hard-liners grows, the likelihood of crisis escalation necessarily rises. To assess the role of the domestic political situation we ask: What was the role of hard-liners and accommodationists? Did the hard-liners or the accommodationists dominate the main decisions? Is there a shift in the balance between hard-liners and accommodationists? Do differences exist between the preferred policy of the executive, legislature, foreign ministry, military, and the public?

The fourth and final component of our analytical framework addresses the *individual* level of analysis. There are two broad sets of characteristics that we track in each crisis. The first has to do with political beliefs about the efficacy of using threats and force, including an individual's concern for their *reputation* (Mercer 1996), or the need to demonstrate *resolve* (see Lupon 2020). Do any key decision-makers or influencers argue that coercion will work and/or that power and force is the only thing their counterparts will understand? Are key decision-makers and influencers concerned about their reputation? Do key decision-makers and influencers feel it is important to show resolve?

Research suggests that certain psychological characteristics influence an individual's *risk propensity*, as analyzed in prospect theory (Levy 1992). The literature also discusses the role of *motivated bias*, which can make decision-makers overestimate their preferred outcome's relative benefits and underestimate its costs (Renshon and Renshon 2008: 512; see also Lebow and Stein 1994: 506n26). We encounter a challenge, however, when examining these factors in historical international crises – namely, that it is very difficult to establish an individual's motivated bias *ex ante*. The challenge is less acute with risk propensity (especially after the fact), but risk propensity is not always as easily discernable as one would want it to be. The same can be said of related psychological tendencies, including *wishful thinking* and *military overconfidence* (Levy 1983).

The role of emotions has received attention in international relations, particularly the importance of *hostility* (see Zinnes 1968; Zinnes et al. 1972), and it is closely related to *threat perception* – a defining feature of crises. *Anger* may also significantly shape foreign policy decisions (Hall 2017). Emotions are difficult to measure,[3] so scholars typically discuss psychological and emotional factors with reference to the rational decision-making model. Analysts can observe the rational process more easily than psychological and emotional factors, which makes it appeal-

[3] This may improve as work on the biological foundations of politics progresses (see Hatemi and McDermott 2011).

ing; yet, in some cases, decision-makers appear to deviate from it (see Mintz et al. 2022). Psychological and emotional factors at the individual level may shed light on why. Our analytical framework therefore asks: Do decisions to go to or avoid war result from a cost–benefit analysis? If not, what other elements entered into the calculus? Do crisis participants realistically assess their own capabilities, as well as those of their counterparts? Do they engage in any wishful thinking, become overconfident in their military, or explicitly discuss "risks"? Does anyone express hostility, anger, fear, or the desire for revenge?

Generalizability

Justifying a Small Sample

Whether a sample can say anything about the population has mostly been a subject of discussion within the field of survey research. There, the common answer is that it can if it is a *random* sample. International relations studies that adopt a case study approach, however, typically do not select their cases on the basis of a random sample. A variety of reasons exist for deciding not to do so, but chief among them is that the minimum number of cases required for a random sample usually exceeds the ability of the researcher. This is less of a problem in our study for the crises that go to war than for the nonwar crises, since we focus on interstate wars between major states, which are rarer. That said, studying only eight "no war" crises does not approach the minimal number needed for a random sample.

An alternative approach relies instead on a *representative* sample – one that replicates characteristics of the population one wants to study. In survey research, for example, opinion is believed to vary by income, geographical location, sex, and so forth, so a sample can be constructed to ensure that the number of cases is sufficient to capture the variation in these variables, thereby allowing the researcher to draw inferences about each variable. Nonetheless, achieving the minimal number of cases for each variable is still a problem in case study research. In addition, a barrier to selecting cases in this manner exists; it is not clear what characteristics or variables in international relations are equivalent to age, sex, etc. – and, as such, which variables to use to determine whether one has a representative sample. Indeed, to apply this approach to our study, we would need a list of "types" of crises and some idea of their frequency in the population. We attempt to develop such a list to see what might be missing in our study, but we still have a limit on the number of crises we can include.

Questions of Generalizability

Like James Richardson, to conduct our analysis we select a comparable number of cases that go to war and that avoid war. The main problem with this approach is that there are considerably more cases that do not go to war than do. How might what is not studied affect generalizations, especially since we have neither a random nor a representative sample? Even though we base our study on the logic of discovery, and not on the logic of confirmation, it is worth asking whether we have omitted any critically important crisis cases that would alter the study's main findings.

We address this question in two short companion analyses, both of which are reported in Owsiak and Vasquez (2024). In the first companion analysis we look at the dyads most likely to go to war – interstate rivals – to see if the crises they have that are not included in our study cause us to omit key cases that would tell us something different about when rivals go to war or do not. More specifically, since 1815, have we omitted any crises in which it seems that the crisis escalates to war for reasons we have *not* considered in the included cases? To answer this, we systematically review the MIDs that occur within rival dyads with a focus on six core major-state rivalries – France–Germany, Britain–Germany, Britain–Russia, Britain–France, US–Britain, US–USSR – and one non-rivalry (US–France).

Our systematic review of these dyads suggests that the factors we examine in this study (see Table 1.2) supply a plausible understanding of why MIDs among rivals escalate to war. *Adding any omitted MID (crises) to the study would not alter its conclusions*. Our confidence in this conclusion rests on the belief that current peace science statistical findings tell us why each of the major-state rivals went to war and the fact that our cases of war already include these factors; thus, *adding new cases would only add more examples and not uncover new patterns*. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that almost all rivals go to war at some point; we do not know whether there are omitted cases in which rivals avoid a war, even though at some other point they go to war. That would give us new knowledge.

We grant that scholars more conclusively understand why rivals go to war with one another than (i) the conditions under which rivalries end peacefully or (ii) why non-rival dyads go to war. Still, we think that our review of nonwar crises among major states gives us important insights into how and why, in a particular instance, rivals avoided war. Our case chapters show fairly clearly that, except on rare occasions (e.g., the 1859 Italian War of Independence and the Second World War), war is not an inevitable outcome and that decision-making could have altered the

escalatory trajectory of the crisis. This is even true of the First World War, which many see as overdetermined, although we do not (Vasquez 2018). In these ways, we have gained some insight about the dynamics of war avoidance.

In the second companion analysis, we try to determine whether we have omitted any critically important crises that would alter the study's main findings through another strategy – namely, by trying to get an idea of the population of crises among major states. To do this, we generate a list of all wars and all crises among major states during the period 1816–2022. We then compare these two lists with our sample.

The Omitted Major-State Wars Owsiak and Vasquez (2024: table 2) compare the list of all major-state wars with our war cases. Within the Correlates of War data there are only ten interstate wars with major states on each side. Our sample has six of these wars, or 60 percent of the cases.[4] We think that this high number bodes well in terms of making generalizations to the entire population. To see if this is true, Owsiak and Vasquez (2024) discuss each of the missing war cases as well as some general methodological issues. In the end, there are really only two historically significant cases that are not included in this book – the Seven Weeks' War, which we do discuss briefly in the background section of the Franco-Prussian War, since it is one of the wars of German unification, and the Korean War. We do think that these omissions could affect the conclusions we make herein, but future research on these wars does not have many obstacles so the field will be able to answer that question. The same cannot be said for the crises that do not escalate to war.

The Omitted Crises that Do Not Go to War To identify the population of crises that do not go to war, we first must have a list of all interstate crises. We can draw this information from two existing datasets: the Correlates of War project's MID data (Palmer et al. 2022; Maoz et al. 2019; see also Gibler 2018) and the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997).[5] We use both, but each has certain limitations, as discussed in Owsiak and Vasquez (2024).

We begin with the population of MIDs that do not escalate to war, using the MID5.0 dataset (Palmer et al. 2022; and taking account of the

[4] Note that the Correlates of War data do not separate the Second World War into the European and Asian phases, so our seven war cases are included in the six wars in their list.

[5] The data appear at https://correlatesofwar.org/ and https://sites.duke.edu/icbdata/ respectively.

Gibler et al. 2017 and Gibler and Little 2017 emendations).[6] We find that of the 2,330 MIDs only 207 are between major states (see Owsiak and Vasquez 2024: tables 3 and 4). This is a considerably larger number than the eight cases we examine, which represent only 3.86 percent of the MID population. A similar analysis of the ICB data from 1919 onward is a little more sanguine; there are 81 ICB crises between major states that our study misses (21.15 percent of the 383 total ICB crises).[7]

Does this disparity in sample size compared to the estimated population imply that our inferences are biased? The second companion analysis went through these 207 cases to see which might be irrelevant to our study, because either they were trivial or their "type" was already adequately represented. We reviewed three diplomatic histories – Albrecht-Carrie (1958), Bridge and Bullen (1980), and Rich (1992, 2003) – to determine which of the 207 nonwar crises historians consider important. Our review of these diplomatic histories found that our study omitted 96 important major-state crises that did not go to war (see Owsiak and Vasquez 2024: tables 7–10 for the list).[8] We then used the diplomatic histories to classify these important crises into types – that is, to get at the international relations equivalent of age, sex, or income – so that we could see if our cases at least had elements of a representative sample. This somewhat inductive exercise produced a classification of crisis types based on the conventional substantive problems that major states faced in the crisis (e.g., how to deal with a civil war or revolution), or common contexts (e.g., colonial rivalry vs. major state rivalry), or a common severity (e.g., a war scare, but no war). This generated sixteen types. Table A.1 lists these types along with illustrations of each.

Our study includes roughly half of all crisis types we find in the diplomatic histories: aftershock of preceding wars, colonial rivalry, major-state rivalry, maritime disputes, nationalism, neighborhood aggrandizement, new state entry into the international system (e.g., Italy, Ukraine 1991), and nuclear deterrence. However, our study lacks certain crisis types that do not escalate to war – namely, those involving civil war,[9] conferences

[6] Most of the cases that Gibler et al. eliminate from the MID data do not include major-state–major-state confrontations at a high level of hostility. The debate between Gibler et al. and Palmer et al. does not affect our analysis. We identify the most important major-state crises that do not escalate to war via a review of diplomatic histories rather than through the MID dataset.

[7] Our thanks to Jinwon Lee, a doctoral student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, for her research assistance on this question.

[8] The number of omitted crises by period are: 1816–1899 – thirteen; 1900–1945 – eighteen; 1946–1990 – forty-six; 1990–2022 – nineteen.

[9] By civil war we mean a civil war occurring within a state, and not an internal war within an empire like that involving Muhammed Ali in the Eastern Crisis.

Table A.1 *Types of crises, 1815–present*

Crisis type	Example
Aftershock	Berlin blockade
Civil war*	Spanish Civil War
Colonial rivalry	First and Second Moroccan Crises
Diminution of war outcomes*	1895 conference on Sino-Japanese War
Empire building*	Manchuria 1931
Major-state rivalry	Franco-Prussian War
Maritime	Cod War 1973
Nationalism	1859–1860 Italian War of Independence
Neighborhood aggrandizement	Munich 1938
New state entry	First Kashmir War, Crimea annexation 2014
Nuclear deterrence	Cuban Missile Crisis
Nuclear proliferation*	Iran nuclear deal
Regional hegemony*	Hungary 1956
Revolution*	1830 Belgian independence
Terrorism*	ISIS in Syria
War scare*	Dogger Bank

Note: Asterisked types do not appear in this study.

that diminish war outcomes, empire building, nuclear proliferation, regional hegemony, revolution, terrorism, and war scares. To make our study more complete, these types would need to be added. Ultimately, the question of possible bias in our nonwar sample is an empirical question that can be answered by future case research.

To facilitate future research, Owsiak and Vasquez (2024: table 12) present a list of the most important crises that emerge from our review of diplomatic histories and that we think might best be studied as an initial way of supplementing this study. Whether these new studies will undercut our main conclusions remains to be seen. Overall, we think our sample provides a good first step, since it includes representative crises of several types. We have most confidence in the types that have multiple cases, which means that our inferences about crises that consist of major-state rivalry, colonial rivalry, nationalism, and nuclear deterrence should be the most reliable. We think that future research will confirm that expectation.

In the end, no single study can analyze so many cases that it provides a representative sample of the crises that do not go to war. However, the study of crisis diplomacy is a collective effort. Just as we build on the ICB project's case study work (see Brecher 1993), as well as Snyder and Diesing's (1977), others will build on ours. We see our study as a good "first cut" at the research question that interests us here, especially given

the variety of nonwar crisis types it includes. At the same time, we must exercise some caution. Given the wide disparity between the number of nonwar cases we cover and those that we do not, as well as the omission of certain crisis types, our study's nonwar crises must be treated as a heuristic exercise.

Why even bother including so few nonwar cases at all, then? We have four main motivations. First, to avoid the error of selecting on the dependent variable (i.e., war), we must compare the crises that escalate to war with at least some that do not. One cannot infer anything about the factors that lead to war by studying only those crises that go to war. Second, although our eight nonwar crises are far from a random sample, and not even a representative sample in any technical sense, we conclude from our second companion analysis (see Owsiak and Vasquez 2024) that they are among the most important nonwar crises studied by diplomatic historians.

Third, the logic of discovery philosophically justifies our study's goals and, consequently, our selection of nonwar (and war) crises. Researchers employing the logic of discovery examine individual cases to see why events unfolded as they did (and not differently) and whether the cases suggest any hypotheses about the underlying causal patterns that might account for any disparate outcomes (Clarke and Primo 2012). It is, as we have already said, a hypothesis-generating exercise rather than a hypothesis-testing one. Before the field accepts any hypotheses we develop, future research will need to test the hypotheses on the entire population of crises (or a truly representative sample of it) using the logic of confirmation (Freyberg-Inan et al. 2016).

Finally, our study has an additional goal – namely, to derive lessons of diplomacy from an examination of the decisions that crisis leaders took. Analyzing more (or different) crises may provide additional lessons, or even introduce nuance into the lessons we derive in this study, but that does not inevitably mean that our lessons are without value. Of course, it raises a key question: Can we derive such lessons? We turn now to that question.

Can We Derive Lessons?

Since the time of Thucydides, Western practitioners and scholars have derived lessons about world politics. We do the same. How does one derive such lessons? And what methodological concerns might arise in the process? In this section, we examine the logic of formulating possible lessons about history.

Before we proceed, we should point out that foreign policy decision-makers often derive lessons from individual crises and apply past lessons

to current crises. Indeed, as the application of cognitive psychology to the study of foreign policy shows, lessons derived previously can play an important role in decision-making (Jervis 1976). Policymakers often rely on analogical reasoning and precedents when analyzing a crisis situation and making choices about what to do (see Khong 1992). Jervis (1976), among others, therefore warns about the misuse of lessons, as well as the danger of drawing incorrect lessons from past situations.

Notwithstanding these warnings, one can justify some kinds of lessons more easily than others because of the inferences on which they rest. At one end of the continuum sit widely generalizable lessons. These can be evaluated according to the criteria one might use when assessing the generalizability of any conclusions derived from a particular case. At the other end of the continuum are more casual lessons that simply give advice based on a particular experience, often a traumatic one. These are best seen as "cautionary warnings" that decision-makers might keep in mind during a crisis. Such lessons are hardly generalizations; yet they are useful precisely because they are unusual. "Remember the Alamo," "Never Again," "Pearl Harbor," and "the danger of appeasement" are lessons of this sort, which are employed to avoid disaster. Each derives from one case and is not validated by criteria used to assess generalizable lessons.

Between generalizations and cautionary tales there exist various kinds of lessons, which vary in terms of the evidence used to support them. Throughout this study, we will pursue four kinds of lessons:

- **Generalizations**. Generalizable lessons are derived when the case uncovers or discovers a causal process related to the onset or avoidance of war. In our concluding chapters we compare our cases systematically to determine whether they suggest any such broad patterns. When we think those patterns reflect reasonable potential hypotheses, we elaborate some "general" lessons from these patterns (see Chapter 17), keeping in mind that ultimately their underlying potential hypotheses will need to be tested.
- **Anomalies from assumed statistical patterns**. Closely related to generalizations are anomalies revealed by particular cases. When events in a case seem to deviate from assumed statistical patterns, we note this. If possible, we want to know why such anomalies occur and what they tell us about the alleged statistical patterns.
- **Cases that suggest the inadequacy of conceptual formulations**. While analyzing our crisis cases, we sometimes find that important concepts in international relations theory – such as the national interest or the balance of power – do not shed light on (or are unhelpful in

explaining) the behavior of crisis participants. In these instances, we derive lessons about what the behavior we observe in the case tells us about the adequacy of the concept.

- **Cautionary tales**. Finally, if a case results in disastrous consequences, we explore why that happened and, if possible, give advice about how to avoid such outcomes.

It is important to emphasize that when deriving lessons we have kept an open mind as to what any case might suggest as a lesson. We have endeavored to let each case speak for itself rather than search each case for possible lessons that were previously derived from a theoretical framework. As we move away from generalizations and toward cautionary tales, our lessons rest on less firm ground because they depend on fewer cases. For example, if we find an anomaly, whether it is important depends on how many other cases it affects. Similarly, when we note a case in which a concept (e.g., national interest) does not seem to provide decision-makers with clear guidance, that does not mean that the concept will prove inadequate in other cases. At best, the lessons derived from one case alert us to possible deficiencies. Whether they suggest persistent problems depends on whether such deficiencies appear in other cases. Our lessons, then, are tied to the particular cases we study, and only future research will determine how generalizable they are.

Recounting Historical Events

Our approach to the past is somewhat "old school." We follow the advice of Leopold von Ranke, who saw his purpose as to "simply find out how things actually occurred" (quoted in Robert Graves (1929 [1981]: 17), his grandnephew). Today, many – particularly postmodernists and constructivists – would regard this epistemological stance as naïve and quaint. We beg to differ and think it is an important guide to analyzing the past, especially in an era when many believe that there is no truth, but only constructions.

The initial constructivist critique was that the writing of history had at minimum inherent biases that influenced the retelling of the past, so much so that history must be seen as constructed narratives (that often served a purpose) rather than an accurate account of events. The latter in fact was not really possible. The purpose of scholars, some constructivists argued, was to uncover (unmask) these biases. No one can argue with this recommendation, but some have taken this critique to mean that we should abandon the goal of objectivity. So-called spin doctors were the first to do this. They create "narratives," whose purpose is to interpret

events in a way that serves some political and/or self-interested purpose. We now live in a world of multiple and competing "narratives," rather than one in which people seek objective accountings of what actually happened. Even though objectivity is difficult and subject to bias, we think its principles of inquiry are a good guide to follow when trying to recount and analyze the past.

In our case studies, in particular in the Historical Events section of each case chapter, we strive to be objective and try to reconstruct the events as they actually happened. We think this is possible because most of our cases, including those from the Cold War era, are now at least a quarter of a century past. Multiple historians have investigated these cases' events using primary sources, and we can use their secondary accounts to reconstruct a series of events that rest on a scholarly consensus of what occurred. In addition, we can identify controversial events as reported by historians.

We can also identify possible biases and be aware of them. We often tell our students in the United States, that our course in crisis diplomacy is primarily a course in European history. It is easier for our students to be objective because they "do not have a horse in this race" and should not fall into a normative bias by looking for who was right or who was wrong.

Another form of bias we discuss is theoretical bias. Such a bias arises when the observer has a preexisting theory of how the world works and then sees past history through the lens of that perspective. The question is whether this bias is so entrenched that there can be no separation between theory and data, so that it is impossible to test or investigate causal hypotheses (see Hawkesworth 1992: 16–17). In our book, we outline our theoretical perspective in Chapter 1 and try to keep it separate from our reporting of historical events. To construct each crisis's timeline of events, we use histories written by historians who were unaware of the theoretical perspective we outline, and we make special efforts to ensure that our theoretical analyses and lessons are derived from the historical events we review and not the other way around. At any rate, such an effort is, in principle, replicable by other scholars, who can repeat the case study and see if they get discrepant results or something similar.

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