CHAPTER 1

The Fact of Democratic Peace

> We have no quarrel with the German people. . . . It was not upon their impulse that their government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of little groups of ambitious men who were accustomed to use their fellow men as pawns and tools. Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbor states with spies or set the course of intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which will give them an opportunity to strike and make conquest. . . . Cunningly contrived plans of deception or aggression, carried, it may be from generation to generation, can be worked out and kept from the light only within the privacy of courts or behind the carefully guarded confidences of a narrow and privileged class.
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> —Woodrow Wilson's war message to Congress, April 2, 1917

SCHOLARS and leaders now commonly say "Democracies almost never fight each other." What does that mean? Is it true? If so, what does it imply for the future of international politics? Would the continued advance of democracy introduce an era of relative world peace? Can policymakers act so as to make that kind of peaceful world more likely, and, if so, how? Does the post–Cold War era represent merely the passing of a particular adversarial relationship, or does it offer a chance for fundamentally changed relations among nations?

During the Cold War, Soviet-American hostility was overdetermined. The very different political systems of the two superpowers, with their built-in ideological conflict, ensured a deadly political and military rivalry. So too did the systemic stresses of two great powers, each leading a big alliance in a bipolar confrontation, which ensured that each would resist any enhancement of the other's strength as a threat to its own security. But the end of the Cold War destroyed both those sources of hostility. The ideological conflict dissolved with the end of communism, and the bipolar confrontation collapsed with that of the Soviet alliance system and of the Soviet Union itself. Given the revolutionary changes both in the global system and in the states that comprise it, the old bases for evaluating the character of international relations have also collapsed.

Constructivism

The end of ideological hostility matters doubly because it represents a surrender to the force of Western values of economic and especially political freedom. To the degree that countries once ruled by autocratic systems become democratic, a striking fact about the world comes to bear on any discussion of the future of international relations: in the modern international system, democracies have almost never fought each other. This statement represents a complex phenomenon: (a) Democracies rarely fight each other (an empirical statement) because (b) they have other means of resolving conflicts between them and therefore do not need to fight each other (a prudential statement), and (c) they perceive that democracies should not fight each other (a normative statement about principles of right behavior), which reinforces the empirical statement. By this reasoning, the more democracies there are in the world, the fewer potential adversaries we and other democracies will have and the wider the zone of peace. This book will document, explain, and speculate about the implications of the phenomenon of democratic peace.

The vision of a peace among democratically governed states has long been invoked as part of a larger structure of institutions and practices to promote peace among nation-states. Immanuel Kant (1970) spoke of perpetual peace based partially upon states sharing "republican constitutions." His meaning was compatible with basic contemporary understandings of democracy. As the elements of such a constitution he identified freedom (with legal equality of subjects), representative government, and separation of powers. The other key elements of his perpetual peace were "cosmopolitan law" embodying ties of international commerce and free trade, and a "pacific union" established by treaty in international law among republics.

Woodrow Wilson expressed the same vision for the twentieth century. This normative political basis of Wilson's vision of world order, evident as early as 1894, grew naturally from his progressive inclinations in domestic politics (Knock 1992, 9ff.); and his Fourteen Points sound almost as though Kant were guiding Wilson's writing hand. They included Kant's cosmopolitan law and pacific union. The third point demanded "the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance"; and the fourteenth point called for "a general association of nations . . . formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political dependence and territorial integrity to great and small states

alike." He did not so clearly invoke the need for universal democracy, since at that time not all of America's wartime allies were democracies. But the suggestion of this principle is clear enough if one thinks about the domestic political conditions necessary for his first point: "Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view." Moreover, his 1917 war message openly asserted that "a steadfast concert of peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations."

THE EMERGENCE OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE BEFORE WORLD WAR I

The strong norm that democracies should not fight each other seems to have developed only toward the end of the nineteenth century. That time period provides a number of examples in which stable democracies engaged in serious diplomatic disputes that took them to the brink of war, without ever actually going over the edge. In this restraint of action between democracies, and in the subsequent evaluations of the crises by the peoples and elites involved, we can discern some important differences between the expectations and norms operating among democracies and those that became operative when a democracy entered into an adversarial relationship with an authoritarian state.

During the 1890s Britain was engaged in a dispute with Venezuela over the boundary between that country and British Guiana. Grover Cleveland, the American president, grew exasperated by British unwillingness to submit the matter to arbitration and, invoking the Monroe Doctrine, threatened war. The British in turn took four months to reply—and then rejected the United States' position. Cleveland sought and obtained a congressional appropriation of funds for a boundary commission—in effect, enforced arbitration by the United States. In subsequent discussion, however, the United States offered to exclude from arbitration areas settled by British subjects for at least two generations, or sixty years. Charles Campbell (1974, 185) says this "unexpected reversal virtually ensured an early termination of the controversy." With it the British in turn backed down, and agreed to arbitration that ultimately decided the issue by a compromise that generally favored Venezuela. In doing so, "Great Britain made almost all the concessions, and all the important ones" (A. E. Campbell 1960, 27); and the United States then pressured the Venezuelans to accept the decision.

Clearly the British prime minister, Lord Salisbury, misjudged the American government's determination, and he was not willing to fight a war. Of Cleveland's intention we cannot be certain, but his actions look more like that of a poker player who expected his bluff to work, and not to be called. Both sides "blinked" in some degree—especially the British, at a time when their relations with Germany were deteriorating and they did not need another enemy.

Although important in preventing an Anglo-American war over this bagatelle, British strategic interests do not deserve all the credit for avoiding war. Stephen Rock, who has examined this and other international relationships during this time, has some illuminating comments on the public and official discourse. Describing the milieu of the Anglo-American relations—both during the crisis and over the next few years as the participants stepped back from the brink and considered what they might have done—he explains that "The reform bills of 1867 and 1884, which extended the franchise in England, had largely dissolved" the American image of England as feudal and aristocratic. "Anglo-Saxonism emerged as a major force" in relations between two nations toward the end of the nineteenth century, and burst forth in the war crisis. Feelings of Anglo-Saxon kinship contained strong elements of racialism and social Darwinism, but they held a serious political component as well. Richard Olney, Cleveland's secretary of state during the Venezuelan crisis, declared in 1896, "If there is anything they [Americans] are attached to, it is to ideals and principles which are distinctly English in their origin and development. . . . Nothing would more gratify the mass of the American people than to stand . . . shoulder to shoulder with England" (all from Rock 1989, 49–56). Consider how different these sentiments were from what Americans were saying about Spain in 1898.

From the other side, British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain had already praised the "common laws and common standards of right and wrong" of the two countries. Later he declared that Americans' "laws, their literature, their standpoint on every question are the same as ours; their feeling, their interest, in the cause of humanity and the peaceful development of the world, are identical with ours." Arthur Balfour claimed that America's "laws, its language, its literature, and its religion, to say nothing of its constitution are essentially the same as those of English-speaking peoples elsewhere, [and] ought surely to produce a fundamental harmony—a permanent sympathy." According to Rock, this feeling of homogeneity of societal attributes

> lay behind the initial outpouring of pacifist sentiment during the Venezuelan boundary controversy and was a central element in popular and official desires for the settlement of that and other issues. . . . First, it colored the perceptions of both Englishmen and Americans, causing them to underestimate the importance of the conflict of geopolitical and economic interests between the two countries and to discount the significance of the concessions necessary to achieve an understanding. Second, it led many persons to conclude that the benefits of avoiding a fratricidal war with "racial" kin outweighed the costs of the sacrifices required for this to be accomplished. (All from Rock 1989, 49–56)

In effect, an Anglo-American security community was becoming established; "the last serious threat of war between the two powers passed" (Russett 1963, 5). Allen (1955, 540) concludes that "the British public never looked like accepting war, the American public after the first fine careless rapture drew back from the prospect of making it." In the Spanish-American war shortly thereafter, British sympathies were overwhelmingly with the United States (C. S. Campbell 1957, chap. 2).

Meanwhile and subsequently, British and then American relations with Germany deteriorated, and ended ultimately in war. Kennedy (1980, esp. 399) contrasts Britain's attitudes toward Germany with its new "special relationship" with the United States. Rock (1989, 56) declares, "These effects were devastatingly absent—or reversed—in the Anglo-German and German-American cases."

> While turn-of-the-century Britain was an industrial-capitalist, liberal, parliamentary democracy, imperial Germany was an autocratic, bureaucratic, authoritarian state. . . . These differences were appreciated, and even exaggerated, on both sides of the North Sea, and they colored the attitudes and perceptions of important segments of popular opinion as well as governmental leaders themselves. Englishmen, who could agree on practically nothing else, were in fact almost unanimous in their distate for the German political system, its ideology, and its methods. . . . Both of these nations [Germany and the United States] were rising imperial powers with growing navies. Both threatened British interests in various regions of the globe. Yet Britons, while they detested and feared Germany, almost universally admired the United States and felt minimal apprehension at her ambitions. Part of this was geographic. . . . But a large portion was ideological and cultural as well. Imbued as they were with a sense of Anglo-Saxon solidarity, the vast majority of Englishmen simply did not believe that Americans could wish or do them serious harm." (Rock 1989, 86–87)

The Fashoda crisis of 1898, however, which pitted Britain against France, poses a harder case. British and French interests had been advancing toward the Sudan, with Britain increasingly determined to control the area as protection for its major stake in Egypt. But French forces occupied the small fortress of Fashoda before the British could get there. When a much larger British force arrived, government leaders had to decide what to do. The French were in no position to fight. Their forces at Fashoda were far weaker, they had their hands full on the Continent with Germany, and Britain held unquestioned naval superiority. The premier, Théophile Delcassé, admitted that "the problem is how to combine the demands of honor with the necessity of avoiding a naval war which we are absolutely incapable of carrying through" (quoted in Sanderson 1965, 359). Thus he offered compromise in several forms, ultimately offering to quit the area in return for commercial concessions. The British, however, would have none of it. They refused to negotiate so long as French forces were in the area, and the British prime minister, Lord Salisbury, seemed ready to go to war if the French would not concede totally. Ultimately they did.

The most recent scholarly work on the crisis (Bates 1984, 153) concludes that "there is really no evidence in the archives in London and Paris that either government seriously considered going to war over Fashoda." The French gave in because of their military weakness and the need to avoid isolation in their far graver quarrel with Germany. In addition, their hand was weakened by governmental instability resulting from the Dreyfus affair (Albrecht-Carrié 1970). Salisbury wanted good relations with France to counter the growing threat he felt from Germany, and generally preferred diplomacy to force. In this crisis Salisbury was the poker player. He had to play a "two-level game" (Putnam 1988) with imperialist hawks in domestic politics as well as with the French. While he might have been willing to fight if he had to, he did not want war and knew how weak the French really were.

Considerations of any norm that these two nations should not fight each other were well in the background on both sides; war was avoided primarily for other reasons. Nevertheless, sober reflection on the crisis brought the norms forward: "Both Britain and France possessed a commitment to liberalism and representative government and were opposed to autocracy and absolutism. During the period of reconciliation, numerous references were made to this effect, and to the role of this similarity in drawing the two countries together." A Liberal party leader, H. C. G. Matthew, said: "Most Liberals regarded the Entente with France as the natural result of common democratic impulses." Though they played little role in settling the crisis itself, these feelings were catalyzed by Fashoda and fed directly into the emerging Anglo-French entente (Rock 1989, 117–18).

Thus the feeling of common liberal and democratic values played its part in moderating power conflicts between the United States and Britain, and Britain and France. Between the United States and Germany, on the other hand, the feelings were very different. The German and American political-economic systems involved "two essentially different conceptions of the state: that of the economically liberal laissez-faire state, in which one from the German side saw only disorder, egoism, and corruption, and the half-absolutist, neofeudalistic, bureaucratic state, which in American eyes destroyed the freedom of the individual and lacked democratic legitimation through the 'voice of the people'" (Christof 1975, quoted in Rock 1989, 141). For Americans, an earlier vision of Germany became "replaced by the picture of an increasingly repressive, militaristic, authoritarian, and autocratic society" (Rock 1989, 143). Such views were strengthened by the subsequent German war with Britain. Relationships based on type of political system reinforced strategic considerations. The ground was prepared for Wilson's vision of a world that could be at peace if and only if it were democratic.

The Spread of Democratic Peace

At the time of Kant, and even of Wilson, the hope for a world of democratic nation states was merely that: a hope, a theory perhaps, but without much empirical referent. Certainly in Kant's time, Europe was hardly an area in which republics flourished. By the time of Wilson's Fourteen Points there were more, in the New World as well as the Old, but the dozen or so democracies of that time still were substantially in a minority.

Wilsonian "idealism" was widely regarded as discredited by the outbreak of World War II. True, the principles of collective security, as embodied in the League of Nations, failed to contain aggression by the Axis powers. In that sense, the element of international law in the Kantian and Wilsonian vision failed. But the elements of trade and democracy were never given a fair chance. International trade was damaged first by the imposition of war reparations on defeated Germany—with some of the effects forecast by Keynes (1919)—and then by the round of "beggar my neighbor" trade restraints imposed with the collapse of the world economy in the Great Depression (Kindleberger 1973). Not coincidentally, democracy also was lost in many countries; first in Russia, then Italy, Germany, Central Europe, Japan, and elsewhere. Thus the Kantian prescription once again had little basis on which to work.

Largely unnoticed, however, was the empirical fact that democracies had rarely if ever gone to war with each other during this period. Since there were few democracies, often at a distance from each other, it is hardly surprising that their failure to fight each other was little noticed. States need both an opportunity and a willingness (Most and Starr 1989) to go to war with each other. Noncontiguous democracies, unless one or both were great powers, had little opportunity to fight each other. States cannot fight unless they can exert substantial military power against each others' vital territory. Most states, if not great powers with "global reach" (large navies in this era; Modelski and Thompson 1988) could exert such power only against contiguous states or at least near neighbors. Furthermore, the willingness of states to fight depends in large part on issues over which they have conflicts of interest. Territorial disputes (over borders, or rights of ethnic groups whose presence is common to both) are rare in the absence of proximity (Diehl and Goertz 1992). Since relatively few of the democracies bordered each other in the 1920s and 1930s, it is not surprising that they generally avoided war with each other. Thus the empirical fact of little or no war between democracies up to this time could be obscured by the predominance of authoritarian states in the international system, and the frequent wars involving one or more such authoritarian states. One could still see the international system as not only anarchic, but in principle threatening the "war of all against all."

Following World War II the situation changed, again, ironically, with a vision of war prevention geared primarily to the last war. The post–World War II era began with the founding of the United Nations, dedicated—as was the League—to the general principle of collective security as carried out by Franklin Roosevelt's "four (ultimately five) policemen" with the power of permanent representatives on the Security Council. But with the Cold War and Soviet-American deadlock in the Security Council arising almost immediately, attention shifted to the more traditional means of collective security through alliance. Despite rhetorical statements like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fact that most—but not all—members of the newly formed North Atlantic Treaty Organization were democracies, democracy was seen more as a binding principle of the Cold War coalition against communism than as a force actively promoting peace among democracies themselves. Moreover, many members of the wider Western alliance system (in Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia) certainly were not democratic.

But by the 1970s, with the increasing numbers of democracies in the international system, the empirical fact of peace among democracies became harder to ignore. There were at one time by various counts thirty-five or so democratic states, and more of them were proximate to one another. Still there was little war, or even serious threats of war, to be found in relationships among those democracies. And more clearly than before, the phenomenon of democratic peace extended beyond the North Atlantic area, and beyond merely the rich industrialized countries belonging to the OECD. The phenomenon began then to be more widely recognized, and by the end of the 1980s it had been widely accepted in the international relations literature, though not so easily explained. This research result is extremely robust, in that by various criteria of war and militarized diplomatic disputes, and various measures of democracy, the relative rarity of violent conflict between democracies still holds up.[1] By early 1992 it even had passed into popular political rhetoric, with the international zone of "democratic peace" invoked in speeches by then

Secretary of State James Baker and President George Bush, and by Bill Clinton during his presidential campaign.[2]

Wide recognition is not, however, synonymous with universal acceptance. It became confused with a claim that democracies are *in general*, in dealing with all kinds of states, more peaceful than are authoritarian or other nondemocratically constituted states. This is a much more controversial proposition than "merely" that democracies are peaceful in their dealings with each other, and one for which there is little systematic evidence.[3] Especially in the Vietnam era of U.S. "imperial overreach," it was a politically charged and widely disbelieved proposition. In that light, both academic observers and policymakers refused to accept even the statement that democracies are peaceful toward each other as a meaningful empirical generalization without some kind of theoretical explanation indicating that it was not merely a coincidence or accident.

Furthermore, some variants of the proposition took the form of statements like "democracies never go to war with each other," or even "democracies never fight each other." The latter statement, applied to relatively low-level lethal violence, is demonstrably wrong as a law-like "never" statement even for the modern international system. The former, limiting the statement to the large-scale and typically sustained form of organized international violence commonly designated as war, nonetheless tempts the historically minded reader to come up with counterexamples. And, especially with the key terms still largely undefined, it is not hard to identify candidate counterexamples.

DEMOCRACY, WAR, AND OTHER AMBIGUOUS TERMS

This book will establish the following: First, democratically organized political systems in general operate under restraints that make them more peaceful in their relations with other democracies. Democracies are not necessarily peaceful, however, in their relations with other kinds of political systems. Second, in the modern international system, democracies are less likely to use lethal violence toward other democracies than toward autocratically governed states or than autocratically governed states are toward each other. Furthermore, there are no clearcut cases of sovereign stable democracies waging war with each other in the modern international system. Third, the relationship of relative peace among democracies is importantly a result of some features of democracy, rather than being caused exclusively by economic or geopolitical characteristics correlated with democracy. Exactly what those features are is a matter of theoretical debate, which we shall explore.

At the risk of boring the reader, further discussion requires some conceptual precision. Without it everyone can—and often does—endlessly debate counter-examples while by-passing the phenomenon itself. We need to define what we mean by democracy and war, so as to be able to say just how rare an occasion it is for two democracies to go to war with each other. When we do so it will be evident that those occasions virtually never arise. We then shall spend the rest of the book trying to understand the reasons for that rarity, and its implications for international politics in the post-cold war era.

Interstate war. War here means large-scale institutionally organized lethal violence, and to define "large-scale" we shall use the threshold commonly used in the social scientific literature on war: one thousand battle fatalities (Small and Singer 1982). The figure of one thousand deaths is arbitrary but reasonable. It is meant to eliminate from the category of wars those violent events that might plausibly be ascribed to:

1. "Accident" (e.g., planes that may have strayed across a national boundary by mistake, and been downed).
2. Deliberate actions by local commanders, but not properly authorized by central authorities, as in many border incidents.
3. Limited, local authorized military actions not necessarily intended to progress to large-scale violent conflict but undertaken more as bargaining moves in a crisis, such as military probes intended to demonstrate one's own commitment and to test the resolve of the adversary.
4. Deliberate military actions larger than mere probes, but not substantially resisted by a usually much weaker adversary. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, which was met with substantial nonviolent resistance but not force of arms and resulted in less than a score of immediate deaths, is such an example, and contrasts with the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 which produced roughly seventeen thousand Hungarian and Soviet dead.

A threshold of one thousand battle deaths rather neatly cuts off the above kinds of events while leaving largely intact the category of most conflicts that intuitively satisfy the commonsense meaning of war. (Not, of course such rhetorical examples as the "war on poverty" or "war on drugs," or for that matter the boat seizures and very limited exchange of gunfire [no casualties or intent to inflict casualties (see Habeeb 1988, chap. 6)] between Britain and Iceland in the 1975 "Cod War" over fishing rights.) It is also convenient that the one thousand-battle-death threshold provides a neat empirical break, with few conflicts between nation-states very near it on either side. The most questionable case is probably that between Britain and the Argentine military dictatorship in 1982, over the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas. The battle-death count is customarily given as about 950, or just below our numerical threshold. But not to count it would be splitting hairs. It was deliberate, authorized,

and involved some fierce land, naval, and air engagements and two invasions (first by Argentina, and then when the British returned to expel the Argentine invaders). It should count as a war, without apology.

The U.K.-Argentine war was unusual in that it inflicted very few civilian casualties. Most wars are not so limited, with civilian deaths frequently far outnumbering those of combatants. Deaths from hunger and disease may also far outnumber battle-inflicted casualties, as surely happened in many nineteenth-century wars and may well have been the case with the Iraqis after Operation Desert Storm. But the number of such deaths may be difficult or impossible to estimate reliably and may be as much a consequence of inadequate medical and public-health capabilities as of military actions. Without minimizing the human consequences of such civilian deaths, it is simply less ambiguous to limit the definition to battle deaths. Similarly, the definition omits wounded and military personnel missing in action, figures commonly included in "casualty" totals but of lower reliability.

A related problem is that of deciding which political units are to be listed as fighting in a war. Sometimes in coalition warfare most or all of the deaths in a particular coalition will be borne by one or a few members with other members formally but not practically engaged in combat. For the latter, especially in circumstances where a nominal combatant suffers few or *no* identifiable deaths, it seems forced to include it among war participants. Small and Singer (1982, chap. 4) use a criterion requiring a state either to commit at least one thousand troops to battle, or to suffer at least one hundred battle fatalities, in order to count as a participant.

This definition also excludes, on theoretical grounds, covert actions in which one government secretly undertakes activities, including the use of lethal violence and the support of violent actors within the other government's territory, either to coerce or to overthrow that government. Such activities may not involve deaths on the scale of "wars," and when they do the foreign intervention is by its very covert nature hard to document (though one can often, if perhaps belatedly, discover the metaphoric "smoking gun"). But these activities, precisely because they are denied at the time by the government that undertakes them, imply very different political processes than does a war publicly and officially undertaken. Because they may be undertaken under circumstances when overt war is not acceptable they will, however, receive attention at a later point in the book.

For purposes of theoretical precision in argument yet another qualification is required, and that is a definition of "interstate" war. Here that term means war between sovereign "states" internationally recognized as such by other states, including by major powers whose recognition of a government typically confers de facto statehood. Some such definition focusing on organized independent states is common in the social science literature, and is important for the analysis of this book. It is meant to exclude those "colonial" wars fought for the acquisition of territory inhabited by "primitive" people without recognized states, as practiced by nineteenth-century imperialism, or for the twentieth-century liberation of those people. War it may certainly be, but interstate it is not unless or until both sides are generally recognized as having the attributes of statehood. Applying this definition may well display a Western cultural bias, but it is appropriate to the behavior of states which, in the period, also are defined as "democratic" by the admittedly Western standards spelled out below. Nonstate participants would not meet those standards.

Wars of liberation—with one or both parties not yet recognized as a state—are in this respect similar to those civil wars in which one or both parties to the conflict fights precisely so as to be free of sharing statehood with the other. Such wars are fought to escape from the coercive institutions of a common state, and to include them would confuse rather than clarify the generalization that democracies rarely go to war with each other. As will be clear in the next chapter, a crucial element in that generalization often depends upon the role of democratic institutions and practices in promoting peaceful conflict resolution within states. Intrastate conflicts that become so fierce that lethal violence is common often indicate that the institutions of the state have become the problem rather than the solution. For example, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland have lived in peace with each other, as separate states, since 1922; the conflict in Northern Ireland arises precisely because many people there emphatically do not wish to be governed as part of the existing common political structure. Democracies are only slightly less likely than other kinds of states to experience civil war (Bremer 1992b).

Democracy. For modern states, democracy (or polyarchy, following Dahl 1971) is usually identified with a voting franchise for a substantial fraction of citizens, a government brought to power in contested elections, and an executive either popularly elected or responsible to an elected legislature, often also with requirements for civil liberties such as free speech.[4] Huntington (1991, 7, 9) uses very similar criteria of "a twentieth-century political system as democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote." In addition, he identifies a free election for transfer of power from a nondemocratic government as "the critical point in the process of democratization." Ray (1993) similarly requires that the possibility for the leaders of the government to be defeated in an election and replaced has been demonstrated by historical precedent.

A simple dichotomy between democracy and autocracy of course hides real shades of difference, and mixed systems that share features of both. Moreover, the precise application of these terms is to some degree culturally and temporally dependent. As we shall see, democracy did not mean quite the same to the ancient Greeks as it does to people of the late twentieth century. Even in the modern era the yardstick has been rubbery. Nineteenth century democracies often had property qualifications for the vote and typically excluded women, while the United States—democratic by virtually any standard of the day—disenfranchised blacks. Britain, with its royal prerogatives, rotten boroughs, and very restricted franchise before the Reform Act of 1832, hardly could be counted as a democracy. Even that reform brought voting rights to less than one-fifth of adult males, so one might reasonably withhold the "democracy" designation until after the Second Reform Act of 1867, or even until the secret ballot was introduced in 1872. By then, at the latest, Britain took its place with the relatively few other states commonly characterized as democratic in the parlance of the era. But if, before the late nineteenth century, we admit countries with as few as 10 per cent of all adults eligible to vote as democratic (a criterion used by Small and Singer 1976; Doyle 1983a uses a cutoff of 30 percent of all males), by the middle to late twentieth century nothing less than a substantially universal franchise will suffice.

The term "contested elections" admits similar ambiguities, but in practice it has come to require two or more legally recognized parties. States with significant prerogatives in military and foreign affairs for nonelected agents (e.g., monarchs) should be excluded as having nonresponsible executives, even in the nineteenth century.

By the middle to late twentieth century the matter of guaranteed and respected civil rights, including rights to political organization and political expression, also become a key element in any commonsense definition of democracy (Dahl 1989). The exercise of such civil rights tends to be highly correlated with the existence of democratic institutions as just elaborated, but not perfectly so. The institutions may be found without the regular widespread exercise of the rights; the opposite (civil liberties assured, but not democratic institutions) is rarer. For purposes of the discussion here we will nevertheless not use civil liberties per se as a defining quality, and we shall also ignore the matter of free-market economic liberties. While there is very likely a causal nexus between economic liberties and secure political freedom, the relationship is complex and, unlike some authors (Rummel 1983, Doyle 1983a) I will not build it into the definition.

In not including civil rights and economic liberty as defining qualities of democracy we are lowering the standards by which a country can be labeled a democracy. That is highly relevant to our next topic, an examination of conflicts alleged by some scholars to be wars between democracies. By lowering the standards we are making it more likely that some events will be labeled wars between democracies—events that I and many other writers contend are, at most, exceedingly rare.

Theoretical precision, however, requires one further qualification: some rather minimal stability or longevity. Huntington (1991, 11) emphasizes stability or institutionalization as "a central dimension in the analysis of any political system." To count a war as one waged by a democracy Doyle (1983a) requires that representative government be in existence for at least three years prior to the war. Perhaps that is a bit too long, yet some period must have elapsed during which democratic processes and institutions could become established, so that both the citizens of the "democratic" state and its adversary could regard it as one governed by democratic principles. Most of the doubtful cases arise within a single year of the establishment of democratic government.

By application of these criteria it is impossible to identify unambiguously *any* wars between democratic states in the period since 1815. A few close calls exist, in which some relaxation of the criteria could produce such a case. But to have no clearcut cases, out of approximately 71 interstate wars involving a total of nearly 270 participants, is impressive. Even these numbers are deceptively low as representing total possibilities. For example, as listed by Small and Singer (1982), 21 states count as participating on the Allied side in World War II, with 8 on the Axis side. Thus in that war alone there were 168 pairs of warring states. Allowing for other multilateral wars, approximately 500 pairs of states went to war against each other in the period. Of these, fewer than a handful can with any plausibility at all be considered candidates for exceptions to a generalization that democracies do not fight each other.

SOME ALLEGED WARS BETWEEN DEMOCRACIES

To see what these criteria produce, consider the list in table 1.1 of wars that have sometimes been suggested as exceptions to the generalization that democracies do not go to war with each other.

Four should be dismissed because they fall outside the criteria established even for any kind of interstate war in the period. The first, the War of 1812, is easy to dismiss simply because it precedes the beginning date—1815—of the best-known compilation of all wars (Small and Singer 1982). That may seem like a cheap and arbitrary escape, but it is not. There simply were very few democracies in the international system before that date, and as we discussed with the British case above, though Britain had moved quite far from royal absolutism it just did not fit the criteria either of suffrage or of fully responsible executive.

The American Civil War and the Second Philippine War are also readily eliminated as plausible candidates by straightforward use of the definitions. Whatever it may be called below the Mason-Dixon line, the Civil War is rightly named, in that the Confederacy never gained international recognition of its sovereignty; as a war for separation or to prevent separation it comes under our rubric of wars induced by the frictions of sharing common statehood. The Philippine War of 1899 was a colonial war, in which the United States was trying to solidify control of a former Spanish colony it had acquired. The Philippine resistance constituted an authentic war of resistance against colonialism, but not on the part of an elected democratic government. This is not in any way to denigrate the resistance, but merely to insist on a distinction that will be important throughout the book: especially by the standards of Western ethnocentric attitudes at the time, the Philippine resistance was not widely regarded as "democratic" in a way that would induce either normative or institutional constraints on the United States.

TABLE 1.1
Some "Candidate" Wars between Democracies

War of 1812, U.S. and Great Britain
Roman Republic (Papal States) vs. France, 1849
American Civil War, 1861
Ecuador-Colombia, 1863
Franco-Prussian War, 1870
Boer War, 1899
Spanish-American War, 1898
Second Philippine War, 1899
World War I, Imperial Germany vs. western democracies 1914 / 17
World War II, Finland vs. western democracies 1941
Lebanon vs. Israel, 1948
Lebanon vs. Israel, 1967

The Boer War, begun in 1899, also fails to fit the requirements for an interstate war. Small and Singer (1982) identify it as an extrasystemic war because the South African Republic—by far the larger of the two Boer combatants, the other being the Orange Free State—was not generally recognized as an independent state. Britain recognized only its internal sovereignty, retaining suzerainty and requiring it to submit all treaties to the British government for approval. This, too, is properly an unsuccessful war for independence. Moreover, the two Boer republics strained the definition of democracy, then as for almost a century subsequently. Not only was suffrage restricted to the white male minority (roughly 10 percent of the adult population) in the South African Republic, but the electorate was further reduced, perhaps by half, by a property qualification and long-term residence requirements (Lacour-Gayet 1978, 168, 170, 182, 194).[5]

Two other conflicts can be dismissed because they fall short of the casualty levels required for a "war." These are Finland's participation in World War II on the "wrong" side and Lebanon's involvement in the Six-Day War of 1967. Finland was actively at war only with the Soviet Union, in an attempt to wrest back the territory taken from it in the Winter War of 1939–40. Although it was nominally at war with the Western allies, there is no record of combat or casualties between Finland and democratic states that would even approach the rather low threshold specified above. In the Six-Day War of 1967 Lebanon (then still an at least marginally democratic state, as it was not when invaded by Israel in 1982) participated in "combat" only by sending a few aircraft into Israeli airspace; the planes were driven back with, apparently, no casualties at all.

In the remaining six cases one or both of the participants fails the test for democracy. Lebanon's participation in the 1948 war was well above the criterion used for a belligerent. Israel, however, had not previously been independent, and had not yet held a national election. While the authenticity of Israel's national leadership was hardly in question, Lebanon—itself not fully democratic—could not have been expected to accredit it as a democratic state.

The 1863 war between Ecuador and Colombia also fits the criteria for war, but neither regime meets any reasonable requirement for democratic stability. Both governments came to power through revolution. Colombia's president governed with a new federal constitution promulgated only in May 1863; Ecuador's Gabriel García Moreno became president two years earlier, but is described as heading an "autocratic regime" (Kohn 1986, 150) and governing "with absolute authority" (Langer 1972, 852). As for France against the Roman Republic, both parties were but ephemerally democratic. Following the revolution of early 1848, presidential elections took place under the new French constitution only in December of that year. The notion of a democratic Papal States sounds oxymoronic. The pope introduced a constitution with an elective council of deputies in 1848, but reserved veto power to himself and the College of Cardinals. After an insurrection in November, he fled and the Roman Republic was proclaimed in February 1849. Within two months the republic was at war with France.

The Franco-Prussian War can be eliminated simply by looking at France. Reforms ratified in the plebiscite of May 1870 could be interpreted as making the empire into a constitutional monarchy, but war began a mere two months later. In Prussia/Germany the emperor appointed and could dismiss the chancellor; a defeat in the Reichstag did not remove the chancellor from office. The emperor's direct authority over the army and foreign policy deprives the state of the democratic criterion of "responsible executive" on war and peace matters; Berghahn (1973, 9) calls the constitutional position of the monarchy "almost absolutist." Doyle (1983a) rightly excludes Imperial Germany from his list of liberal states. Such a decision removes World War I from the candidate list.

The most difficult case is the Spanish-American War of 1898. Spain after 1890 had universal male suffrage, and a bicameral legislature with an executive nominally responsible to it. But the reality was more complex. The ministry was selected by the king, who thus remained the effective ruler of the state. Nominally competitive elections were really manipulated by a process known as *caciquismo*. By mutual agreement, the Liberal and Conservative parties rotated in office; governmental changes preceded rather than followed elections. Through extensive corruption and administrative procedures the king and politicians in Madrid controlled the selection of parliamentary candidates and their election. Election results were often published in the press before polling day. The meaningless elections were thus manipulated by the king and his close advisers; the system lacked the democratic quality of a responsible executive (Carr 1980, 10–15). May (1961, 97) describes the system as "preserving the appearance of a parliamentary democracy with none of its suspected dangers." None of the published large-scale analyses of the question of democracies fighting each other puts Spain among the democratic countries (Small and Singer 1976, Doyle 1983a, b; Chan 1984; Maoz and Abdolali 1989; Bremer 1992a), nor do most major long-term political surveys. (Vanhanen 1984; Banks 1971; Gurr et al. 1989 code it as sharing democratic and autocratic characteristics.)

It seems, therefore, best to treat it as a close call but probably not a refutation even of the strong statement that democracies *never* make war on each other. Equally important, as we shall see later in the book, is the matter of perceptions. The Spanish political situation was at best marginal enough that key United States decisionmakers could readily persuade themselves and their audiences that it was not democratic. Consider, for example, the remarks of the two Republican senators from Massachusetts. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge: "We are there because we represent the spirit of liberty and the spirit of the new time, and Spain is over against us because she is mediaeval, cruel, dying." Senator George Hoar: "The results of a great war [on which the U.S. was embarking] are due to the policy of the king and the noble and the tyrant, not the policy of the people" (*Congressional Record*, April 13, 1898, p. 3783 and April 14, 1898, p. 3831).

Subsequent to my writing the above, Ray (1993) has presented a thorough review of these and other alleged cases of wars between democracies, and concludes that the generalization of no wars between democracies remains true. Whether or not one holds to the lawlike "never" statement may not really be very important. Almost all of the few near misses are in the nineteenth century. Since that was an era of generally very imperfect democracy by modern criteria, it is no surprise to find most of the near misses then.

Depending on the precise criteria, only twelve to fifteen states qualified as democracies at the end of the nineteenth century. The empirical significance of the rarity of war between democracies emerges only in the first half of the twentieth century, with at least twice the number of democracies as earlier, and especially with the existence of perhaps sixty democracies by the mid-1980s. Since the statistical likelihood of war between democracies is related to the number of pairs of democracies, the contrast between the two centuries is striking: by a very loose definition, possibly three or four wars out of roughly sixty pairs before 1900, and at most one or two out of about eighteen hundred pairs thereafter.[6] As twentieth-century politics unfold, the phenomenon of war between democracies becomes impossible or almost impossible to find.

Even with the differing definitions of democracy and of war, this generalization is exceedingly robust. Long-term rival states, with many conflicts of interest between them, have gone to war or had substantial fatal clashes only when one or both of them was not governed democratically. For example, in the case of the Greek-Turkish dispute over Cyprus, by far the worst violence erupted in 1974 under the most dictatorial government either country experienced since 1945, when the Greek colonels overthrew the elected Cypriot government of Archbishop Makarios. Faced with the prospect of forcible *enosis* between Greece and Cyprus, Turkey replied by invading the island and occupying nearly a third of its territory. By contrast, the 1963–64 clashes—when democratic Greek and Turkish governments supported their protégés during outbreaks on the islands—were much more easily contained, largely by an American warning and UN peacekeeping action. And confrontations later in the 1970s, between democratic governments, were restrained short of any fatalities (Markides 1977; Rustow 1987; Stearns, ed., 1992). India and Pakistan have of course fought repeatedly and sometimes bloodily during their history as independent states. Yet no fatalities are recorded in disputes between them during Pakistan's most democratic periods of 1962–64 and 1988–92 (Burke 1973; Thomas 1986; Tillema 1991).

Even the kind of crisis bargaining that uses military force in a threatening manner becomes, in the twentieth century, rare between democracies, even if not quite absent. And if there is crisis bargaining, it does not escalate to the point of war.

Table 1.2 illustrates these facts in data on all militarized diplomatic disputes over the period from 1946 to 1986. "Dyad" means a pair of states; for the table we count each year of existence separately, thus Britain and France in 1946 constitute one observation, and another in 1947. The highest level of conflict reached in the dispute between that pair of states is identified. (Disputes that spill over into two or more years are counted only in the year they began or were escalated to a higher level.) The phrase "politically relevant dyads" refers to all pairs of states that are contiguous or at least fairly close to each other, or where one of the states in the pair is a major power and hence has military "global reach." This recognizes, as noted above, that the majority of states in the international system lack the means or the interest to engage in militarized disputes with each other, and hence are irrelevant to a serious analysis. Further information on definitions and sources can be postponed for much more detailed analysis in chapter 4.

TABLE 1.2
Dispute Behavior of Politically Relevant Interstate Dyads, 1946–1986

Highest Level of Dispute	*Both States Democratic*	*One or Both Nondemocratic*	*Total Dyads*
No dispute	3,864	24,503	28,367
Threat of force	2	39	41
Display of force	4	116	120
Use of force	8	513	521
War	0	32	32
TOTALS	3,878	25,203	29,081
Escalation Probabilities			
To threat of force	0.05%	0.16%	
To display of force	85.7%	94.4%	
To use of force	57.1%	77.9%	
To war	0.0%	4.6%	

Sources: See chapter 4 for sources and definitions.

The information in this simple table has several rich theoretical implications, and we shall return to it in subsequent chapters. There were no wars between democracies, and even though the number of democratic dyads is relatively small, if they had fought wars as frequently with each other as one finds in the second column, there would have been five wars between democracies. Note also that in this period there were only fourteen instances of disputing pairs involving the threat, display, or use of military force by one democracy against another. The odds that any pair of politically relevant democratic states would have a militarized dispute, at any level, in a year during this period were only 1 in 276. By contrast, if one or both states in the pair was not a democracy, the odds were as short as 1 in 36—eight times greater. Surely this is a very dramatic difference in behavior. The actual use of military force involved trivial occasions like the "Cod War"; very minor fire by Israel against Britain during the 1956 Suez intervention, in which the British and Israelis were in fact accomplices; brief conflict between British and Turkish forces during a 1963 peacekeeping operation on Cyprus; and Turkish sinking of a Greek boat in 1978.

One can also use the tabular information to calculate "escalation probabilities" for militarized disputes that do occur. For democracies, the chances that any militarized dispute would progress up the scale of force were consistently lower, at every level, than for pairs in which one or both states were not democracies. For example, only a little more than half of the few disputes between democracies resulted in the actual use of force, whereas nearly 80 percent of all disputes by other kinds of pairs of states escalated at least to the use of force. For earlier periods (the nineteenth century, and 1900–1945) the relationships for conflict-proneness and escalation appear to be in the same direction—democratic pairs of states dispute less—but much weaker than in the post-1945 era (Maoz and Abdolali 1989; Bremer 1992a).

It is tempting to believe that a norm against the use of force between democracies, and even the threat of use of force, has emerged and strengthened over time. To pursue the matter of norms, however, becomes a subject for much further analysis. The emergence of norms against democracies fighting each other is traceable, and by many theories it did indeed become a powerful restraint. Other theories, however, attribute the relative absence of lethal violence between democracies to many other influences. The next chapter lays out these partly competing, partly complementary theories in detail.

Consideration of the evidence then begins—in a historically problematic context, the world of ancient Greek city-states—with a detailed analysis of who fought whom during the Peloponnesian War. Whereas a number of examples of warring democratic pairs of states emerge during that era, there are hints in the historical record of restraints as well as of the instances when the restraints failed.

We then examine the explanatory power of the competing theories during the post–World War II era—the time when by far the largest number of democracies and hence of possible warring democratic pairs existed. We will grasp the meaning of the democratic peace by establishing that the rarity of lethal violence between democracies is not due to any apparent confounding influence, but to something in the nature of the democratic-to-democratic state relationship itself, and then begin to identify what that is.

In an effort to widen the empirical net further beyond the modern Western experience, we then look at the experience of preindustrial ethnographic units—societies as studied by anthropologists. This will provide still further evidence that such polities, when governed according to democratic "participatory" principles, do not often fight similarly governed polities.

Finally, the concluding chapter considers all this evidence, and the discourse of late twentieth-century international relations, in search of glimpses into the future. It addresses the emerging policy debate about whether further democratization, in addition to being a "good thing" for people in their relations within democratically governed countries, may be a major force to promote peace between countries. If so, by what principles can democracy best be advanced in a world of nationalism and ethnic hatred? What are the prudent possibilities for intervention—whether by economic means or by military force—to promote democracy? Can we grasp the possibility of a wider democratic peace? What are the prospects for building a world predominantly of democratic states that are able to live together—not without conflicts of interest, but without the large-scale lethal violence called war which has so blighted the human experience to date?

CHAPTER 2

Why Democratic Peace?

WHEN DEMOCRATIC states were rare, the Kantian perspective had little practical import, and power politics reigned. But if the Kantian perspective is correct, recent events replacing authoritarian regimes with democratic values and institutions in much of Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America[1] may have profound implications not just for governmental practices within states, but for worldwide peace among states. It may be possible in part to supersede the "realist" principles (anarchy, the security dilemma of states) that have dominated practice to the exclusion of "liberal" or "idealist" ones since at least the seventeenth century.

Politics within a democracy is seen as largely a nonzero-sum enterprise; by cooperating, all can gain something even if all do not gain equally, and the winners are restrained from crushing the losers. Indeed, today's winners may, as coalitions shift, wish tomorrow to ally with today's losers. If the conflicts degenerate to physical violence, either by those in control of the state or by insurgents, all can lose. In most international politics—the anarchy of a self-help system with no overall governing authority—these norms and practices are not the same. "Realists" remind us of the powerful norms of legitimate self-defense and the acceptability of military deterrence, norms much more extensive internationally than within democratic states. Politics among nations takes on a more zero-sum hue, with the state's sovereign existence at risk.

The principles of anarchy and self-help in a zero-sum world are most acute in "structural realist" theories of international relations. The nature of states' internal systems of government is seen as nearly irrelevant; their overall behavior is basically determined by the structure of the international system and their position in that structure. "Peace" is a fleeting condition, dependent upon deterrence and eternal vigilance. By this structural realist understanding the kind of stable peace that exists among democracies cannot last, because eventually democracies would be compelled, by the structure of the international system and their eternal security dilemma, to enter a state of war or at best of military deterrence (Waltz 1979, Mearsheimer 1990). Realism has no place for an expectation that democracies will not fight each other. To the degree we establish that peace between democracies is a fact, and are able to explain it theoretically, we build an alternative view of the world with great import for expectations and for policy. We begin with the theories.

If scholars are near consensus that democratically governed states rarely go to war with each other or even fight each other at low levels of lethal violence, this does not mean there is anything like consensus on why the phenomenon occurs. Nor can the same generalization be supported for relations among other kinds of political systems (for example, military or other dictatorships). Sharing common forms of political structure and political culture in general does not prevent war between independent states.[2] If similarity of form of government in general were enough, then we would have seen peace between the Soviet Union and China, between the Soviet Union and its formerly communist East European neighbors, and between China and Vietnam. Despite important differences in political values and organization among the communist countries, they were much more like one another in values and ideology than like the democracies or even like right-wing dictatorships. Yet war between these countries, and disputes that threatened to erupt in war, were commonplace.

Certainly some kinds of differences, if politically salient, can cause conflict. But that becomes virtually tautological unless one can specify what differences will be salient. For sixteenth-century Europe religious differences between Catholics and Protestants provided politically salient ideological reasons for killing each other; by the twentieth century those differences were irrelevant to violent conflict save in isolated pockets like Northern Ireland. Thus it seems likely that the reasons for "democratic peace" are either rooted somehow in the nature of democracy itself, or are correlated in the modern world with the phenomenon of democracy.

Some scholars vigorously question the causal inference that democracies are at peace with each other simply because they are democratic. They point instead to other influences that are correlated with democracy and hence create a spurious relation between democracy itself and general peace between democratic states. Without going into the vast range of hypotheses about the causes of war and peace, we need to consider some of the most important ones that might specifically account for the relationship between democratic states.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Alternative hypotheses to explain the phenomenon include the following.

Transnational and international institutions make peace. The states in question are peaceful toward each other because they are bound by common ties in a network of institutions crossing national boundaries. Democracies often do share many common institutions. Analysts may emphasize the role of the European Community (EC), for example, and certainly one of the major motivations of the founders of the institutions that evolved into the EC was to bind together previously hostile states so that they would be unable to make war on each other. Some international organizations clearly have this intention. Others, not primarily addressed to war prevention, help to resolve many troublesome conflicts of interest that might feed suspicion and hostility. But states and ethnic groups typically share common institutions just because they have major interests in conflict as well as in common; institutions are supposed to provide a means to resolve those conflicts peacefully. If the common institutions cannot do so, or if one party is coerced into unwillingly sharing common institutions with another, the institutions exacerbate conflict and may become the occasion for civil war.[3] Hence the existence of common intergovernmental or supranational institutions cannot so plausibly be invoked as a prior reason for the absence of war. Peaceful relations must in some degree precede the institutions.

An influential variant of the institutional approach focuses on transnationalism: individual autonomy and pluralism within democratic states foster the emergence of transnational linkages and institutions—among individuals, private groups, and governmental agencies. Those linkages can serve to resolve transnational conflicts peaceably and, by forming transnational alliances into other states, inhibit their national governments from acting violently toward each other. This perspective derives from classics both of international integration theory and of bureaucratic politics and foreign policy.[4] It is not, however, completely separable from the matter of democracy. Democracies foster, and are fostered by, the pluralism arising from many independent centers of power and influence; autocracies do not. Democracies are open to many private and governmental transnational linkages; autocracies rarely are. (Recall the late and unlamented Iron Curtain.) Thus transnationalism cannot easily be considered separately from the distinction between democracies and other kinds of states. Since it is substantially correlated with the "open" institutions of democratic politics, it cannot be treated analytically or empirically as an independent cause.

Distance prevents war. Most wars are fought between physically adjacent states, thanks to their combination of capability and willingness (reasons) to fight neighbors.[5] Likewise, individuals are most likely to be murdered by friends and close relatives with whom they are are in constant contact. But until after World War II democracies tended to be relatively few and far between. Hence the absence of murderous quarrels between democracies was not too surprising, and may need—at least for the pre-1945 era—little further explanation. Even for much of the post-1945 period, the rarity of contiguous democratic states outside of Western Europe might explain much of the absence of violent conflict between democracies.[6] Yet the more recent one's snapshot of the international system, with many contiguous democracies in Europe and the Western Hemisphere, the less conclusive the distance argument seems.

Alliances make peace. Allies may be presumed to choose each other because of their common interests, and hence to be already peacefully inclined toward each other. Moreover, their common interests are likely to concern security against a common enemy. If so, they are not likely to fight each other. Many democracies have shared common interests in presenting a unified alliance front. NATO and the Western alliance system provide the most recent example, but in both world wars the democracies found themselves ranged together (with some nondemocracies alongside, to be sure) against the nondemocratic Central/Axis powers.[7] So of course democracies won't fight each other.

One trouble with this hypothesis is that it begs the question. Did they not fight each other because they were allied, or did they ally because they feared a common foe (and hence did not fight each other)? And if the latter, did they fear a common foe because they were united in a desire to preserve their common democratic institutions? If the latter, then democracy, not alliance, accounts for the peace among them.

A related hypothesis accounts for peace among members of multilateral alliances not by the alliance per se, but by the active policy of a dominant major power to keep peace within the alliance. Such a hegemonic power may make it very clear to the small powers that in the interest of common security against a major power rival it simply will not tolerate violence among them. Surely in the Western Hemisphere (Rio Pact) and in NATO the United States played such a role, with threats to withhold economic and military assistance to the culprits.[8]

The trouble with this variant of the hypothesis, however, is that as a generalization it is empirically backward. Repeated systematic analyses, beginning with Bueno de Mesquita's (1981), affirm that allies are in general more likely to fight each other, even while still formally allied, than are nonallies. Again, the reasons are not so mysterious: the apparently "common" interests may be enforced by a big power with the capability and will to keep straying allies in the fold. Military action by the Soviet Union against Hungary in 1956 provides an example. Consistent with this interpretation, Bremer (1992a) finds allied states likely to fight each other when both states are militarized. But democratic allied states are different; they are not likely to have violent conflicts with each other (Siverson and Emmons 1991; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992, 166–67).

Wealth makes peace. Since democracies are often wealthy, it can be hard to separate their effects. Several variants of this argument persist. One is that for politically stable, economically advanced, and rapidly growing countries the cost/benefit ratio of any war fought on or near their home territories with another advanced state looks extraordinarily unpromising. Historically many wars have been fought to acquire territory; the value of acquiring as war booty the territory of an advanced industrial country would rarely compensate for the costs of wartime destruction and the problems of pacifying newly incorporated peoples (Mueller 1989; Shepherd 1986). The disincentives would be magnified for highly interdependent economies, which suffer even from damage inflicted on each other's territory that destroys investments, markets, or sources of imports. Interdependence also creates groups with vested interests in continuing economic exchange (Rosecrance 1986; Milner 1988).

The wealth-makes-peace argument is thus closely related to the one that transnational interests of trade and investment make peace. Writers as various as the nineteenth-century liberal Richard Cobden, the Marxist Karl Kautsky, and Joseph Schumpeter argued that the web of economic interdependence would promote international peace. Yet Lenin and other theorists of imperialism opined otherwise. Economic interdependence, for example between the United States and Japan, provides both glue and friction. Even where a relationship between trade and peace can be demonstrated, there may be a chicken-and-egg problem. Weak economic ties within the industrialized world during the Depression help explain the political tensions that produced World War II, but after that war peaceful relations were largely established before high levels of economic interdependence were reached in the 1970s (Russett and Starr 1992, 385–92). Some systematic evidence indicates that trade diminishes political conflict, with the party receiving greater benefits from trade acting on greater incentives (Gasiorowski and Polacheck 1982; Polachek 1980). But if one party perceives the benefits as markedly asymmetrical against it, the effects are not pacific. Trade between rich and poor states may concentrate on raw materials, with the threat of military action by the rich state in the background or forefront. Other research (Pollins 1989a, b) points the primary causal arrow from political relations to economic ones ("trade follows the flag") rather than the other way. As with other generalizations, the conclusions are often context-dependent or indeterminate (Russett 1967; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992, 289).

Yet another variant of the wealth-makes-peace view emphasizes growth. Many democracies have experienced fairly consistent rapid economic growth during the past half-century. Rapidly growing states may generally be less inclined to initiate conflict. The reasons are similar to those regarding the connection between wealth and lack of conflict. A special case, however, may be made regarding growth in democracies. States often engage in international conflict to divert attention and anger from domestic problems (Levy 1989). Democratic governments are not immune to such temptations. They often initiate international disputes during economic slowdowns or recessions, or if in economic difficulty respond more aggressively when others initiate disputes (Ostrom and Job 1986; Russett 1990, chap. 2; Russett and Barzilai 1991; Mintz and Russett 1992). But rapidly growing democracies would not have such an incentive for conflict between them.

Political stability makes peace. The diversionary effects of economic instability are related to those of political instability. States with stable and durable political systems will lack incentives to externalize domestic discontent into conflict with foreign countries. They will be even more reluctant to engage in conflict against other states that are politically stable. If they see the government of the would-be opponent as possessing substantial legitimacy, they will expect the population at large, and those sectors of society that have ensured domestic stability, to back it in international conflict (Huth and Russett 1993, Maoz 1989). Unstable governments have more to gain from scapegoating and diversion, and are more likely to do so when they confront an adversary that faces substantial domestic political problems.

If stable governments are less likely to initiate international disputes, especially against other stable governments, it is important to note that twentieth-century European and Anglo-American democracies were generally more stable—more durable and adaptable—than were nondemocracies (Gurr 1974). The more years a given type of political system lasts, the better its odds of surviving another year. Perhaps the inherent stability that characterizes many democratic political systems accounts for their low rate of conflict with other democracies. In fact, the combination of variables denoted as stable democracy becomes a component of the theory to be developed and tested in this book.

Conceptually and empirically the competing explanations overlap somewhat and reinforce each other. Some of them are quite plausible. The network of international institutions has been strongest in the past half-century among the democratic, allied, prosperous, and politically stable states of Western Europe. Yet counterexamples can be cited for each proffered explanation. There have not been wars even between poor but democratic states, yet World War II is an obvious example of a war pitting advanced capitalist states against each other. Argentina and Britain fought in 1982 despite their common alliance with the United States. The Soviet Union, after achieving apparent stability by the early 1920s, nevertheless fought four wars. Later we will analyze the incidence of wars nd less violent conflicts between states in the post-1945 era, with proper tatistical controls to test many of the above alternative hypotheses. Even when controls for physical distance, alliance, wealth, economic growth, and political stability are incorporated into the analysis, an independent explanatory role for democracy remains.[9] Nevertheless, no merely empirical relationship can be compelling without a powerful theoretical explanation. Nor can it be clear how widely, in different historical and cultural contexts, the relationship may apply. Two kinds of theories, one stressing norms and the other stressing political structures, offer explanations to which we now turn.

Democratic Norms and Culture?

We should begin with the common assertion that democracies are *inherently* more peaceful or "dovish" internationally because of the political culture favoring the peaceful resolution of disputes, or because democratic processes produce restraint by the general populace which will have to pay the price of war in blood and money (Schumpeter 1955; Snyder 1991). Individual examples of the operation of these factors can easily be found. Over the course of a long war democratic governments may experience seriously eroding domestic support for the war effort, and may feel constrained, if they do go to war, to pursue strategies designed to minimize their own costs, especially in casualties. (U.S. strategy against Iraq in 1991 immediately comes to mind.)

This is a strong assertion, however, and, overall, the evidence for it as a generalization is not very compelling.[10] It ignores the evidence for the familiar "rally 'round the flag effect" typically induced by the threat or use of force by democracies against other countries. Hostility especially to certain kinds of foreigners—those seen as governed autocratically—can often be mobilized to support military actions by democracies (Geva, DeRouen, and Mintz 1993; Mintz and Geva 1993). Elites can even feel impelled by popular pressures to act militarily (Russett 1990, chap. 2). Also, so long as this explanation focuses on the characteristics of single states, it cannot explain the consistent evidence that democracies are about as war-prone and disputatious in general (not toward other democracies) as are other kinds of states (recently, Maoz and Abdollali 1989; Bremer 1992a; chapter 4 of this volume). Nor can it explain the pattern of nineteenth- and twentieth-century imperialism by democracies. (On Snyder's 1991 effort see Zakaria 1992.) And it would have us believe that the United States was regularly on the defensive, rarely on the offensive, during the Cold War. Though there are elements of plausibility in the argument that democracies are inherently peaceful, it contains too many

holes, and is accompanied by too many exceptions, to be usable as a major theoretical building block.

A more plausible theoretical strain, however, yields a more limited assumption. It focuses on powerful norms within democratic states against the use of lethal force under certain conditions—namely, "dovishness" in relations between democracies, though not necessarily in their relations with other kinds of states. Several authors offer a perspective emphasizing social diversity, perceptions of individual rights, overlapping group memberships, cross-pressures, shifting coalitions, expectations of limited government, and toleration of dissent by a presumably loyal opposition. The basic norm of democratic theory is that disputes can be resolved without force through democratic political processes that in some balance ensure both majority rule and minority rights. A norm of equality operates both as voting equality and certain egalitarian rights to human dignity. Democratic government rests on the consent of the governed, but justice demands that consent not be abused. Resort to organized lethal violence, or the threat of it, is considered illegitimate, and unnecessary to secure one's "legitimate" rights. Dissent within broad limits by a loyal opposition is expected and even needed for enlightened policy-making, and the opposition's basic loyalty to the system is to be assumed in the absence of evidence to the contrary.[11]

All participants in the political process are expected to share these norms. Even though all these images may be founded to a large extent on myth as well as on reality, they may operate as powerful restraints on violence between such systems. In practice the norms do sometimes break down, but the normative restraints on violent behavior—by state and citizens—are fully as important as the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force in keeping incidents of the organized use of force rare. The norms themselves may be more important than any particular institutional structure (two-party/multiparty, republican/parliamentary) or formal constitutional provision. If institutions precede the development of norms in the polity, the basis for restraint is likely to be less secure.

By this hypothesis, the *culture, perceptions, and practices* that permit compromise and the peaceful resolution of conflicts without the threat of violence within countries come to apply across national boundaries toward other democratic countries. In short, if people in a democracy perceive themselves as autonomous, self-governing people who share norms of live-and-let-live, they will respect the rights of others to self-determination if those others are also perceived as self-governing and hence not easily led into aggressive foreign policies by a self-serving elite. The same structures and behaviors that "we" assume will limit our aggression, both internally and externally, may be expected similarly to limit similarly governed people in other polities. Those who claim the principle of self-determination for themselves are expected to extend it to others. Within a transnational democratic culture, as within a democratic nation, others are seen as possessing rights and exercising those rights in a spirit of enlightened self-interest. Acknowledgment of those rights allows us to mitigate our fears that they will try to dominate us. That acknowledgement also prevents us from wishing to dominate them; a norm that it would be wrong to do so in effect raises the "costs" to us of doing so.

By contrast, these restraints do not apply toward a country governed by very different and nondemocratic principles. According to democratic norms, authoritarian states do not rest on the proper consent of the governed, and thus they cannot properly represent the will of their peoples—if they did, they would not need to rule through undemocratic, authoritarian institutions. Rulers who control their own people by such means, who do not behave in a just way that respects their own people's rights to self-determination, cannot be expected to behave better toward peoples outside their states. "Because non-liberal governments are in a state of aggression with their own people, their foreign relations become for liberal governments deeply suspect. In short, fellow liberals benefit from a presumption of amity; nonliberals suffer from a presumption of enmity" (Doyle 1986, 1161). The essence of America's Cold War ideology was that it had no quarrel with the Russian people, but only with the atheistic communist elites who repressed them. A vision of the other people as not in self-governing control of their own destiny justified a hostile policy. Authoritarian states are expected to aggress against others if given the power and the opportunity. By this reasoning, democracies must be eternally vigilant and may even need to engage in defensively motivated war or preemptive action anticipating an immediate attack.

Whereas wars against other democratic states are neither expected nor considered legitimate, wars against authoritarian states may often be both. Thus an international system composed of both democratic and authoritarian states will include both zones of peace (actual and expected, among the democracies) and zones of war or at best deterrence betwen democratic and authoritarian states. And by this reasoning democracies may fight wars and other lethal conflicts as often as authoritarian states do—which is what most of the systematic empirical evidence indicates. They just will not fight each other.

The presumption of enmity from and toward nondemocracies was exemplified by American determination to root out aggressive fascism and Nazism in Japan and Germany after World War II, and to establish the basis for democratic government there. It took more dubious forms in many Cold War interventions (including covert operations, which we shall consider later) and in the 1989 invasion of Panama. Elihu Root's

(1917) wartime rhetoric, in his presidential address to the American Society of International Law, expressed the tradition vividly:

> So long as military autocracy continues, democracy is not safe from attacks, which are certain to come, and certain to find it unprepared. The conflict is inevitable and universal; and it is *à l'outrance*. To be safe democracy must kill its enemy when it can and where it can. The world can not be half democratic and half autocratic. It must be all democratic or all Prussian. There can be no compromise. If it is all Prussian, there can be no real international law. If it is all democratic, international law honored and observed may well be expected as a natural development of the principles which make democratic self-government possible.

These assumptions lead to the following propositions about democracies' external relations. The norms of regulated political competition, compromise solutions to political conflicts, and peaceful transfer of power are externalized by democracies in their dealing with other national actors in world politics. On the other hand, nondemocracies may not externalize these norms. Hence, when two democracies come into a conflict of interest, they are able to apply democratic norms in their interaction, and these norms prevent most conflicts from mounting to the threat or use of military force. If they do go that far, at least they will not go to all-out war. By contrast, when a democracy comes into conflict with a nondemocracy, it will not expect the nondemocratic state to be restrained by those norms. It may feel obliged to adapt to the harsher norms of international conduct of the latter, lest it be exploited or eliminated by the nondemocratic state that takes advantage of the inherent moderation of democracies. Similarly, conflict between nondemocracies may be dominated by the norm of forceful conduct and search for decisive (noncompromise) outcome or elimination of the adversary.

Axelrod's (1984, 1986; also Behr 1980; Dacey and Pendegraft 1988) work on the evolution of cooperation and norms shows how norms of behavior depend heavily on the environment in which they are applied. When a player employing a conditionally cooperative strategy like tit-for-tat is confronted by someone playing a consistently noncooperative strategy, noncooperation dominates. Short of teaching cooperation to "meanies"—which takes a long time—noncooperative strategies typically force cooperative strategies to become noncooperative.[12]

Legal systems in democratic states seem to make distinctions between democratic and authoritarian states when deciding whether to enforce in their own courts the laws of other nations. Other democratic states are recognized as within a "zone of law," a legal community defined by various institutional and ideological similarities. Courts in democracies share enough common values to recognize and enforce each other's law in accord with pluralist principles of tolerance and reciprocity. They do not, however, recognize the legal systems of nondemocratic states as equal partners; they are seen as lacking the political autonomy of democratic legal systems, and hence not appropriate as providing norms for conflict resolution (Burley 1992).

Governments and political institutions can change rapidly after a revolution, but norms take time to develop. Laws can change faster than the practices in which norms are embedded. Formal norms such as one of nonrecourse to war can be written into a constitution, but become effective only with the repeated practice of bargaining and conciliation (Kratochwil 1991). Thus if violent conflicts between democracies do occur, we would expect them to take place between democratic states that are relatively young in terms of the tenure of the democratic regime. That is, they would occur between states in at least one of which democratic norms have not matured to a degree that is expressed in moderate and dependable strategies of peaceful conflict management. Democratic governments in which democratic norms are not yet fully developed are likely to be unstable, or to be perceived by other states as unstable, so they may be unable to practice norms of democratic conflict resolution internationally. Equally important, the democratic states with whom they develop conflicts of interest may not perceive them as dependable in their practices. Newness and instability cloud others' perceptions.

Of course, democracies have not fought wars only out of motivations of self-defense, however broadly one may define self-defense to include anticipation of others' aggression or to include "extended deterrence" for the defense of allies and other interests. Many of them have also fought imperialist wars to acquire or hold colonies, or to retain control of states formally independent but within their spheres of influence. Here is another aspect of perception and misperception, of cases where democracies have fought against people who on one ground or another could be characterized as not self-governing.

The nineteenth-century objects of colonial expansion were peoples who in most instances were outside the European state system. They were in most instances not people with white skins, and whose institutions of government did not conform to the Western democratic institutional forms of their colonizers. Europeans' ethnocentric views of those peoples carried the *assumption* that they did not have institutions of self-government. Not only were they available for imperial aggrandizement, they could be considered candidates for betterment and even "liberation"—the white man's burden, or *mission civilatrice*. They could be brought the benefits not only of modern material civilization, but of Western principles of self-government. If they did not have such institutions already, then by definition they were already being exploited and repressed. Their governments or tribal leaders could not, in this ethnocentric view, be just or consensual, and thus one need have few compunctions about conquering these legitimate candidates for "liberal" imperialism.[13] Later, when Western forms of self-government did begin to take root on a local basis in many of the colonies, the extremes of pseudo-Darwinian racism lost their legitimacy. Decolonization came not only because the colonial governments lost the power to retain their colonies, but because in many cases they lost confidence in their normative right to rule.

We can now summarize all this discussion about restraints on violent conflict among democracies in a set of propositions as follows.

THE CULTURAL/NORMATIVE MODEL

1. In relations with other states, decisionmakers (whether they be few or many) will try to follow the same norms of conflict resolution as have been developed within and characterize their domestic political processes.
2. They will expect decisionmakers in other states likewise to follow the same norms of conflict resolution as have been developed within and characterize those other states' domestic political processes.

A. Violent conflicts between democracies will be rare because:

3. In democracies, the relevant decisionmakers expect to be able to resolve conflicts by compromise and nonviolence, respecting the rights and continued existence of opponents.
4. Therefore democracies will follow norms of peaceful conflict resolution with other democracies, and will expect other democracies to do so with them.
5. The more stable the democracy, the more will democratic norms govern its behavior with other democracies, and the more will other democracies expect democratic norms to govern its international behavior.
6. If violent conflicts between democracies do occur, at least one of the democracies is likely to be politically unstable.

B. Violent conflicts between nondemocracies, and between democracies and nondemocracies, will be more frequent because:

7. In nondemocracies, decisionmakers use, and may expect their opponents to use, violence and the threat of violence to resolve conflict as part of their domestic political processes.
8. Therefore nondemocracies may use violence and the threat of violence in conflicts with other states, and other states may expect them to use violence and the threat of violence in such conflicts.
9. Democratic norms can be more easily exploited to force concessions than can nondemocratic ones; to avoid exploitation democracies may adopt nondemocratic norms in dealing with nondemocracies.

The numbered propositions are part of the deductive structure, and whereas it will be useful further to illustrate their application and plausibility, we will not subject most of them to rigorous empirical testing. The basic empirical statements A and B, however, will be so tested, in the form that *violent conflicts between democracies should be observed much less frequently than between democracies and nondemocracies.* Indeed, because of the susceptibility of democratic norms to exploitation, we may well find *violent conflicts between democracies and at least some kinds of nondemocracies to be more frequent than would be expected* if conflicts were distributed around the international system totally by chance. Proposition 6, that *if violent conflicts do arise between democracies at least one of the democracies is likely to be politically unstable*, also is empirically testable. As such, it can provide some extra empirical content to the basic hypothesis about the relative frequency of violent conflict of democracies with other democracies and with nondemocracies.

Propositions 5 and 6 therefore incorporate into the cultural/normative theoretical structure the point about political stability that was initially treated as one of several alternative perspectives on the phenomenon of peace between democracies. They do not yet, however, indicate just why force might be used when one democracy in a pair is politically unstable.

As noted in the discussion about the possible role of economic growth or its absence, increasing evidence is accumulating that democracies are more likely to use or threaten to use military force, in general, when the economy has been doing badly. Most of the studies cited there also indicate that democracies are more likely to use or threaten to use military force in the year or months immediately preceding an election.[14] The motivation, of diverting hostility toward foreigners and of producing a "rally 'round the flag" effect for the party in power, is similar. If we expand the notion of political instability to include domestic political threats to the government because of its economic policy shortcomings, or competition in a close election, this gives us a temporal context for the possible use of military force by democracies. It suggests that the "unstable" state will initiate, or escalate, the use of force in a diplomatic dispute. But it does not tell us against whom it may direct that force.

To do that, we can elaborate the hypothesis as suggesting that the threat or use of *force will be directed against states that a democracy perceives as politically unstable.* At least two possible reasons for this come to mind: The state may see an unstable democratic regime as under these political pressures, and hence as a real danger needing to be forcibly constrained or deterred. Alternatively, an unstable democratic regime may seem a publicly more legitimate and acceptable object for diverting hostility and provoking a 'rally effect. That is, the government may truly feel itself threatened in some degree by such a regime, or, if not, it may believe that the public will at least accept perception of a threat. If the adversary is perceived as a stable democracy, by contrast, the cultural/normative argument suggests little political benefit in trying to invoke a rally against it. Thus instability may work both as encouraging the use or threat of force by the "unstable" regime, and in selecting an "unstable" object for the exercise of force.

Empirically it will be very difficult to sort out the mechanism systematically. Even in the 1946–86 period with many democracies in the international system, table 1.2 showed only fourteen militarized disputes between democracies. In their manifestation of threat or use of force all of them were extremely localized, typically an air incursion or shelling in the general direction of a boat lasting a single day. None were reciprocated uses of military force, in which the attacked party made any military reprisal, and nearly all of them were bloodless. Most could plausibly have been unauthorized acts by local commanders. In most instances it is hard to show that they were deliberate and considered governmental acts of the sort plausibly included under the rubric of politically motivated incidents just discussed. And while one can identify who actually used force or first threatened to use it, it is not so easy to say which side played the greater role in provoking the incident. Thus one should not expect to find a systematic pattern of motivation in such low-level incidents. In near-wars, however—where the level of violence may be greater, and the degree of central control and deliberate act may be stronger—we may find some such evidence.

We should also, by extension, expect such events to occur *between states where one or both states' status as a democracy leaves some basis for doubt.* Perceptions of instability may be based on the recency and immaturity of experience with democratic processes and norms: a new democracy will not yet have developed wide experience in practices of democratic conflict resolution. Perceptions of instability may also be based on a high degree of violent opposition to the democratic government: a democracy under siege of domestic terrorism, insurgency, or civil war is one in which the ostensible norms of peaceful conflict resolution simply are not working well. If a government's practice of democratic forms of government is very recent and subject to violent domestic challenge, or its practice of democracy is incomplete or imperfect by the standards of the day, it may be imperfectly constrained by the norms of democratic government that are supposed to keep conflict nonviolent. Or uncertainty about the commitment to democratic norms by the state with which one has a conflict of interest may lead to perceptions and expectations that it will practice those norms imperfectly.

The list of numbered propositions above often implies a dichotomy between democratic and nondemocratic states. But in the real world such a dichotomy masks degrees of democratic practice. Therefore if we find militarized disputes between democracies we should typically find that one party or both is only recently democratic, is subject to violent domestic challenge, or is toward the center of a democratic to nondemocratic continuum. We should also, in a revised version of proposition 6, look for evidence that one party, correctly or not, *perceives* the other as not really democratic.

STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS?

As with the normative and cultural argument, it is best to avoid assuming that democracies are dovish or peaceful in all their relations. Rather, a plausible argument can be constructed on the strategic principles of rational action; that is, about how states, in interactions of threat and bargaining, behave in anticipation of how their bargaining adversaries will behave. Decisionmakers develop images of the government and public opinion of other countries. They regard some governments or peoples as slow to fight, or as ready and eager to do so. In forming these images leaders look for various cues: in other leaders' and countries' past behavior in diplomatic or military disputes, and in other countries' form of government. Perhaps other governments will see a democracy as culturally (normatively) dovish on the above grounds, but Kant's own view argued that *institutional constraints*—a structure of division of powers, checks and balances—would make it difficult for democratic leaders to move their countries into war.

Democracies are constrained in going to war by the need to ensure broad popular support, manifested in various institutions of government. Leaders must mobilize public opinion to obtain legitimacy for their actions. Bureaucracies, the legislature, and private interest groups often incorporated in conceptualizations of the "state" must acquiesce. The nature and mix of institutions varies in different kinds of states (for example, "strong" states and "weak" states, parliamentary and presidential systems) but it is complex. Popular support in a democracy can be built by rhetoric and exhortation, but not readily compelled.

The complexity of the mobilization process means that leaders will not readily embark on an effort to prepare the country for war unless they are confident they can demonstrate a favorable ratio of costs and benefits to be achieved, at acceptable risk.[15] Moreover, the complexity of the process requires time for mobilization, as the leaders of various institutions are convinced and formal approval is obtained. Not only may it take longer for democracies to gear up for war, the process is immensely more public than in an authoritarian state. Democratic governments can respond to sudden attack by using emergency powers, and by the same powers can even strike preemptively in crisis. But in normal times they are ill suited to launching surprise attacks.[16] Apparently for these reasons, major-power democracies seem never to have launched preventive war (a deliberate attack not under immediate provocation) against another major power (Schweller 1992). The greater the scale, cost, and risk of using violence, the more effort must be devoted to preparations in public, and of the public.

Even if two states were totally ignorant of each other's form of government, structural delays in the process of mobilization for war in both states would provide time to elapse for negotiation and other means of peaceful conflict resolution. Yet perceptions matter here too. If another nation's leaders regard a state as democratic, they will anticipate a difficult and lengthy process before the democracy is likely to use significant military force against them. They will expect an opportunity to reach a negotiated settlement if they wish to achieve such a settlement. Perhaps most importantly, a democracy will not fear a surprise attack by another democracy, and thus need not cut short the negotiating process or launch a preemptive strike in anticipation of surprise attack.

If democratic leaders generally consider other democracies to be reluctant and slow to fight because of institutional constraints (and possibly because of a general aversion of the people to war), they will not fear being attacked by another democracy. Two democratic states—each constrained from going to war and anticipating the other to be so inhibited—likely will settle their conflicts short of war. Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman (1992, chap. 4) provide a deductive argument that two such states, each with perfect information about the other's constraints, will always settle their conflicts by negotiation or by retaining the status quo. In the real world perfect information is lacking, but the presence of democratic institutions provides a visible and generally correct signal of "practical dovishness"—restraints on war in the form of institutional constraint if not of inherent disposition. Reading that sign, democracies will rarely if ever go to war with each other.

Leaders of nondemocratic states may also anticipate that a democratic country will be slow to go to war. But if they are themselves aggressive, they may be more likely to threaten or bully a democracy to make concessions. In turn, that would raise the threshold of provocation facing the democracy, and perhaps overcome its initial inhibition against fighting. That would explain why the overall frequency of war fighting by democracies is no different from that of nondemocratic states.[17] But leaders of two nondemocratic states, neither encumbered by powerful structural constraints, are more likely than two democratic states to escalate to war.

This argument can be summarized as follows.

THE STRUCTURAL/INSTITUTIONAL MODEL:

A. Violent conflicts between democracies will be infrequent because:

1. In democracies, the constraints of checks and balances, division of power, and need for public debate to enlist widespread support will slow decisions to use large-scale violence and reduce the likelihood that such decisions will be made.
2. Leaders of other states will perceive leaders of democracies as so constrained.
3. Thus leaders of democracies will expect, in conflicts with other democracies, time for processes of international conflict resolution to operate, and they will not fear surprise attack.

B. Violent conflicts between nondemocracies, and between democracies and nondemocracies, will be frequent because:

4. Leaders of nondemocracies are not constrained as leaders of democracies are, so they can more easily, rapidly, and secretly initiate large-scale violence.
5. Leaders of states (democracies and nondemocracies) in conflict with nondemocracies may initiate violence rather than risk surprise attack.
6. Perceiving that leaders of democracies will be constrained, leaders of nondemocracies may press democracies to make greater concessions over issues in conflict.
7. Democracies may initiate large-scale violence with nondemocracies rather than make the greater concessions demanded.

DISTINGUISHING THE EXPLANATIONS

The cultural/normative and institutional/structural explanations are not neatly separable. Institutions depend on norms and procedures. For example, stability, which we treated as a measure of normative acceptance of democratic processes, is also an institutional constraint if political structures are not subject to overthrow. States may also consider the dominant norms in other states, as well as their institutions, as signals; thus both explanations also depend in part on perceptions. Great emphasis on reading signals of the other's intention, however, slights the importance of self-constraint. Institutions may slow or obstruct one's own ability to fight. Perhaps more importantly, a norm that it is somehow not "right" to fight another democracy raises the moral and political cost, and thus limits one's own willingness to do so. Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman (1992) neglect this, as well as the opposition a democratic government might find among its own population against fighting another *democratic government* (Geva, DeRouen, and Mintz 1993). Within democracies, structural impediments to using force are less strong than within autocracies; normative restraints must bear the load. So we should not assume that normative constraints are unimportant in relations between democracies. Both norms and institutions may contribute to the phenomenon of peace between democracies; they are somewhat complementary and overlapping. But they are also in some degree distinctive and competing explanations, allowing us to look for greater impact of one or another in various contexts.

Other influences, such as trade and the network of international law and organizations as suggested by Kant, likely also play a role in directly supplementing and strengthening that of democracy. Further elaboration of the theoretical arguments is probably needed. Certainly, detailed empirical work is necessary on how institutions operate, and on how perceptions toward other countries evolve, so as to make it possible to weigh the relative power of institutional and normative explanations. So too is the creation and application of systematic empirical tests to differentiate between the two kinds of explanations for violence in the modern interstate system. One such test, distinguishing between measures of democracy as stability (normative) and of democracy as the adoption of particular institutions, will be performed later in this book. The prediction about stable democracies being less likely than unstable ones to use military force against each other is embedded in the normative model, and more tenuously so in the structural one.

Another way of differentiating between the two is to look for other hypotheses that may be derived from either, and tested. One such hypothesis for the normative model is represented in work by Dixon (1993, also 1992). He postulates that *democracies, with norms of using third-party intervention for peaceful and non-coercive resolution of conflicts internally, will carry those norms into management of their international conflicts with other democracies.* Dixon then looks at how international conflicts have been settled in the post–World War II era. Not only does he confirm our results from table 1.2 that conflicts between democracies are much less likely to escalate to lethal violence and to be settled peacefully, but he finds that they are much more likely to be settled by some means of third-party conflict management, such as the use of good offices, mediation, and intervention. Also, all conflicts between democracies were ended either by agreement or by stalemate; none terminated in a settlement imposed by one of them or by a third party. Such a pattern is much more readily explicable by common norms than by characteristics of internal democratic institutions acting as constraint. Leng (1993) similarly infers support for the normative argument from evidence that in interstate crises democracies are much more likely to use strategies of reciprocating the escalatory or de-escalatory moves of other states than are authoritarian regimes. He argues that reciprocation is an engrained democratic norm, as constrasted with behavior like bullying, appeasing, or stonewalling.

Another test can be derived from the patterns of strategic interaction as discussed in the model of structural constraints. By that argument, two democracies engaged in a conflictual bargaining process with each other can reasonably expect each other not to escalate the dispute to the point of war or serious violence. Therefore, many bargaining models predict there would be few strategic restraints on escalating the conflict up to, but not beyond, the point of an exchange of lethal violence. In fact, each state might have strong incentives to go that far for the purpose of showing resolve; perhaps even escalating to the first (limited) use of force in confidence that the other would be unlikely to reply in any substantial military manner. Such behavior is implicit in the bargaining "game" of chicken, which is widely applied to crisis negotiation (Brams and Kilgore 1988; Brams 1990; Poundstone 1992). This reasoning, therefore, leads to the prediction that disputes between democracies should commonly escalate to the display and even limited use of force, though not to war. But as table 1.2 showed, that is not the case. Democracy/democracy pairs are less likely to enter into militarized disputes at all than are other pairs of states, and less likely to escalate them at any level up the escalation ladder—not just at the top to war.[18]

Rather, this suggests that *to use or threaten to use force is not usually normatively acceptable behavior in disputes between democracies*, even in the form of symbolic, ritualized bargaining behavior. Relations between democracies therefore fit into the category of "stable peace" (Boulding 1979) or a "security community" (Deutsch et al. 1957) in which states not only do not fight each other, they do not expect to fight each other, or significantly prepare to fight each other. In such relationships disputes are routinely settled without recourse to threat and military deterrence. Dependent as the definition of security community has been on expectations, it has been a difficult phenomenon to observe reliably; here, in the relative absence of militarized dispute and escalation, is a reasonably objective measure.

We shall continue to juxtapose the normative and structural models for their relative explanatory power throughout the book. It is also important to explore the outer limits of the empirical domain to which the proposition about lack of war between democracies may apply. All the systematic empirical work to date has employed modern and Westernized definitions of both war and democracy. Careful relaxation of these definitions, in ways appropriate to other times and contexts, may also produce insights about the relative importance of normative and institutional constraints.