


## WAR AND STRIFE



In October 2011, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency identified and killed an American-born Al Qaeda leader named Anwar al-Awlaki. Two weeks later, al-Awlaki's 16-year-old son Abdulrahman al-Awlaki was also killed in a drone strike in Yemen. The killing of the younger al-Awlaki, a U.S. citizen, by executive order and without due process, marked a turning point in the use of armed drones in the war on terror. It may have set a dangerous precedent, especially as other states and possibly terrorists gain drone technology. Iran, for example, is close to being able to deploy its own long-range drones, and it has declared many of its former citizens, as well as some foreigners, guilty of crimes punishable by death. How might Britain respond should Iran use an armed drone to execute an Iranian citizen living in Oxford, England, especially if collateral damage would result?

Among the many issues engaging the actors in international relations, war is generally viewed as the oldest, the most prevalent, and, in the long term, the most important. Wars—in particular major wars between states—have been the focus of historians for centuries. Major works on war include Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431 BC) and Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* (1832). World War I and its aftermath

(the founding of the League of Nations) led American diplomatic historians and legal scholars to create a new discipline called international relations. Since that time, prominent scholars in this field have addressed many of the critical and vexing issues surrounding war—its causes, its conduct, its consequences, its prevention, and even the possibility of its elimination. This attention to war and security is clearly warranted. Of all human values, physical security—security from violence, starvation, and the elements—comes first. All other human values that are crucially important to the quality of our lives—good government, economic development, a clean environment—presuppose a minimal level of physical security. Consider the difficulties the United States and its NATO allies have had in Afghanistan in trying to revive the economy, establish legal authority, and guarantee human rights, especially for women. In the absence of a minimum level of physical security (in this case, security from violence), these important goals have proven elusive.

Yet history suggests that a minimum level of security has not always been attainable. Historians have recorded approximately 14,500 armed struggles over time, with about 3.5 billion people dying either as a direct or an indirect result. Since 1816, between 224 and 559 international and intrastate wars have occurred, depending on how war is defined. As more and more states became industrialized, interstate war became more lethal and less controllable, and it engaged ever-wider segments of belligerents' societies. This new reality of interstate war culminated in two horrific convulsions: World Wars I (1914–18) and II (1939–45).

However, following the world wars and the Korean War (1950–53), and perhaps due to their destructiveness and potential to escalate to nuclear war, both the frequency and intensity of interstate war began a slow decline. The average number of interstate wars has shrunk every year: more than six in the 1950s and less than one in the 2000s. That is important since those wars often kill more people on average than civil wars. From the 1950s to the end of the Cold War, the total number of armed conflicts of all kinds has increased three times over, but most are low-intensity wars with a modest number of fatalities. Since the beginning of the 1990s to 2015, overall conflict numbers have declined by about 40 percent, while conflicts that have killed at least 1,000 persons a year have declined by more than half.<sup>1</sup> Yet, because our contemporary understanding of war remains incomplete, many international relations scholars worry that this trend could reverse itself. War therefore remains perhaps the most compelling issue in world politics, and theorists continue to analyze why international and intrastate conflicts occur.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define war and identify the different categories of war.
- Explain how the levels of analysis help us explain the causes of wars.
- Describe the key characteristics of conventional and unconventional warfare.
- Highlight the circumstances under which a war can be considered “just.”
- Explain how realists and liberals differ in their approaches to managing insecurity.

## What Is War?

International relations scholars maintain a healthy debate about how to define war, over what counts and does not count as a war. Over time, however, three features have emerged as agreed-upon standards. First, a war demands organized, deliberate violence by an identifiable political authority. Riots are often lethal, but they are not considered “war” because, by definition, a riot is neither deliberate nor organized. Second, wars are relatively more lethal than other forms of organized violence. Pogroms, bombings, and massacres are deliberate and organized but generally not sufficiently lethal to count as war. Currently, most international relations scholars accept that at least 1,000 deaths in a calendar year are needed in order for an event to count as a war. Third, and finally, for an event to count as a war, both sides must have some real capacity to harm each other, although that capacity need not be equal on both sides. We do not count genocides, massacres, terrorist attacks, and pogroms as wars because in a genocide, for example, only one side has any real capacity to kill, while the other side is effectively defenseless.

In sum, **war** is an organized and deliberate political act by an established political authority that must cause 1,000 or more deaths in a 12-month period and require at least two actors capable of harming each other.

These definitional issues are not simply academic. They have real-world consequences. An important case in point was the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which over

750,000 men, women, and children were murdered in just four months. Had the international community named this violence properly as a genocide, the pressure to intervene militarily to halt it might have been greater, since in a genocide the side being murdered would have no chance of winning. However, the violence was instead characterized as a renewal of *civil war*, raising the legitimate question of whether international intervention should occur in Rwanda's internal affairs. So what began as a genocide—the organized mass murder of defenseless civilians sharing a particular characteristic—by government-supported extremists soon *escalated* to a civil war in which a former combatant, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, remobilized, rearmed, and attacked the government, systematically destroying the forces of the extremists and halting the genocide by forcing the government and its surviving *genocidaires* to flee.

## Categorizing Wars

International relations scholars have developed many classification schemes to categorize wars. At the broadest level, we distinguish between wars that take place between sovereign states (**interstate war**) and wars that take place within states (**intrastate war**). Beyond this distinction, we tend to divide wars into total and limited (based on their aims and the proportion of resources dedicated to achieving these aims), and finally, the character of war fought, such as conventional or unconventional.

### INTERSTATE AND INTRASTATE WAR

Since the advent of the state system in the years following the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), the state as a form of political association has proven ideal at organizing and directing the resources necessary for waging war. As Charles Tilly famously put it, “War made the state and the state made war.”<sup>2</sup>

As a result, wars between states have captured the lion's share of attention from international relations theorists and scholars of war. Theorists are interested for two reasons. First, by definition, states have recognizable leaders and locations. When we say “France,” we understand we are speaking about a government that controls a specific territory that others recognize as France. Therefore, states make good subjects for analysis and comparison. Second, states have formal militaries—some tiny and not much more than police forces; others vast and capable of projecting force across the surface of the globe and even into outer space. These militaries, and the state's capacity to marshal resources in support of them, make states very formidable adversaries. Thus, interstate wars are often characterized by relatively rapid loss of life and destruction of property. At the end of World War II, the world's states faced the prospect that a future interstate war might not only destroy them as such, but also, in a nuclear exchange, might destroy all human life.

Yet over time, the number of interstate wars has declined. After World War II, they dropped dramatically. The primary ones since 1980 have been the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88), the Ethiopia-Eritrea War (1999–2000), and the Russo-Georgia War (2008). Interstate wars have been increasingly replaced by intrastate war—violence whose origins lay within states, sometimes supported by neighboring or distant states—as the most common type of war. The First Indochina War (1946–54), the Greek civil war (1944–49), the Malayan Emergency (1948–60), and the Korean War (1950–53) were all examples of the new pattern.

Intrastate wars—civil wars—have decreased over time as well, but not nearly as rapidly as interstate wars have. Intrastate wars include those between a faction and a government fighting over control of territory (Boko Haram in Nigeria); establishment of a government for control of a failed or fragile state (Somalia or Liberia); ethno-nationalist movements seeking greater autonomy or secession (Chechens in Russia, Kachins in Myanmar); or wars between ethnic, clan, or religious groups for control of the state (Rwanda, South Sudan, Burundi, Yemen). The American and Russian civil wars stand as prime examples.

More recent civil wars include the civil war in Ukraine (2014) and those that followed the Arab Spring of 2011, especially those in Libya (February–October 2011) and Syria (June 2012–present). Both qualify as wars because well over 1,000 battle deaths resulted from conflict between an incumbent government and rebels, and because each side had military capacity, though government forces had the greater capacity, to harm the other. Both followed a similar course: government forces harshly repressed peaceful protests by mostly young people, which then led to an escalation of protests and international condemnation. That escalation led to a more harsh government response, with protests becoming both more widespread and more violent. After evidence of government murders, rapes, torture, and massacres, there were calls for international intervention. In Libya's case, both the incumbent government and its international supporters were caught by surprise, and limited military intervention by NATO on behalf of Libyan rebels accelerated the collapse of the incumbent government. In Syria, the incumbent government was better prepared, and more importantly, its allies (especially the Russian Federation) were prepared to offer military and diplomatic support. Finally, as if a civil war between rebel groups and Syria's government were not complicated enough, in 2013, the Islamic State began making territorial gains in eastern Syria. In 2015, the United States and its allies attempted to halt the advance of the IS into Syria by means of targeted air strikes, but these appear to have failed. In addition, as we learned in Chapter 4, the Russian Federation began targeted air strikes. However, these were aimed not at the IS but at opposition rebel groups in western Syria. Russia has said it cannot prevent "volunteer" ground forces from intervening, either. So currently, the civil war in Syria—which has also provoked a flood of desperate refugees seeking safe haven in Europe

and neighboring countries—ranks among the world's most complicated and deadly civil wars.

Although some civil wars remain contained within state boundaries, civil wars are increasingly international—as we can see in Libya, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The repercussions of civil wars are felt across borders, as refugees from civil conflicts flow into neighboring states and funds are transferred out of the country. States, groups, and individuals from outside the warring country become involved by funding particular groups, selling weapons to various factions, and giving diplomatic support to one group over another. Thus, although the issues over which belligerents fight are often local, once started, most civil wars quickly become internationalized.

### TOTAL AND LIMITED WAR

**Total wars** tend to be armed conflicts involving massive loss of life and widespread destruction, usually with many participants, including multiple major powers. These wars are fought for high stakes: one or more belligerents seek to conquer and occupy enemy territory or to take over the government of an opponent and/or control an opponent's economic resources. Total wars are often fought over conflicts of ideas (communism versus capitalism; democracy versus authoritarianism) or religion (Catholic versus Protestant; Shiite versus Sunni Muslim; Hinduism versus Islam). In total war, decision makers marshal all available national resources—conscripted labor; indiscriminate weapons of warfare; economic, diplomatic, and natural resources—to force the unconditional surrender of their opponents. Importantly, even when opposing military forces are the primary target, in total war, opposing civilian casualties are accepted or even deliberately sought in pursuit of victory. The Thirty Years' War (1618–48), the longest total war ever fought, involved numerous great powers (England, France, Habsburg Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden) and resulted in over 2 million battlefield deaths. The War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14) pitted most of the same powers against each other again and ended in over 1 million deaths. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815) resulted in over 2.5 million deaths in battle. In each war, civilian loss of life either equaled or dramatically exceeded battlefield deaths. For much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, wars between and among great powers were common.

World War I and World War II were critical watersheds in the history of total war. The same great powers fought in both: Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Japan, Russia/the Soviet Union, and the United States. But just as industrialization revolutionized agriculture and transport, it also revolutionized the killing power of states. Industrialization demanded workers, who moved from rural areas to concentrate in cities. The scope of the battlefield, once restricted to the physical areas over which soldiers fought, after World War I, soon expanded to include armaments and

munitions workers, and eventually, even agricultural workers. Although total war had always imagined the mobilization of an entire society for war, industrialization—especially after World War I—made this ideal a reality. Casualties were horrific: most belligerents lost 4 to 5 percent of their pre-war population in World War I, and doubled their losses in World War II. After World War II, total war had become far too blunt and costly an instrument to enter into deliberately.

This increased devastation and cost may in part explain why since the end of World War II, interstate wars, particularly large-scale wars between or among the great powers, have become less frequent; the number of countries participating in such wars has fallen, and the duration of such wars has shortened. These factors have led several political scientists to speculate on whether or not extremely costly total wars like World Wars I and II are events of the past.

For example, John Mueller argues that such wars have become obsolete. Among the reasons he cites are the memory of the devastation World War II caused, the great powers' postwar satisfaction with the status quo, and the recognition that any war among the great powers, nuclear or not, could escalate to a level that would become too costly.<sup>3</sup> More recent scholarship has argued other causes of peace. Joshua Goldstein, for example, argues that a long decline in interstate war (including total war) is due to increasingly effective UN peacekeeping operations. Robert Jervis has offered an



From the perspective of the International Security Assistance Force, the war in Afghanistan was a limited one. From an Afghan point of view, however, the violence has been total and is certain to affect the country's recovery, security, and development for decades to come.

explanation embedded in the notion of a security community that combines thinking drawn from the best insights of realism (for example, NATO) and liberalism (for example, the UN, IMF, and GATT). In the security community composed of the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, Jervis argues, war is unthinkable.<sup>4</sup>

Realists explain the security community as arising from American economic, and especially military, hegemony. Since the end of World War II, the United States has had the world's largest economy, and in part because of that status, U.S. military spending on average has exceeded the combined spending of the next seven countries. Militarily, then, the United States has had no peer. That military dominance is magnified by the effect of nuclear weapons and by the continued recognition that an all-out, general war would be unwinnable and hence irrational, just as Mueller posits. In short, there was no World War III because the United States, in combination with support from its allies, was both willing and able to use its economic and military power to prevent it.

The liberal explanation has two parts. First, liberals argue that had it not been for the misguided economic policies of the 1920s, the economic depression that spread across the globe in the 1930s—and created fertile ground for extreme ideas and leaders such as Benito Mussolini—would never have happened. War would have either been entirely prevented, or at least contained. This notion explains the postwar liberal emphasis on trade openness and transparency, as represented by the IMF and GATT (now the WTO). Second, liberals argue that the steady proliferation of democratic states has expanded the European zone of peace globally. Not only are democracies unlikely to go to war with each other, but that effect also becomes magnified if they are economically interdependent and if they share membership in international organizations, as Chapter 5 explains.

Constructivists level an equally powerful set of propositions to explain the decline of interstate and total war since World War II. They posit that it is not change in the material conditions (American hegemony or economic interdependency) that matters, but rather change in the attitudes of individuals who are increasingly “socialized into attitudes, beliefs, and values that are conducive to peace.”<sup>5</sup> As Robert Jervis—a self-identified realist who has made increasing use of constructivist arguments in his own theory—explains, “The destructiveness of war, the benefits of peace, and the changes in values interact and reinforce each other.”<sup>6</sup> This explanation is effectively psychologist Steven Pinker's argument in *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (see Chapter 1). He argues that mutually reinforcing trends (the disciplinary power of states, the democratic peace, the empowerment of women) have led to a condition in which not just war but *all* interhuman violence has declined. Jervis and Pinker thus share the constructivist view that norms—such as the nature of security and the range of means permissible to pursue it—shift over time, creating new hazards and new opportunities.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to total war, **limited wars** are often initiated or fought over less-than-critical issues (at least for one belligerent), and as such, tend to involve less-than-total



national resources. Thus, for Austria-Hungary, World War I began as a limited war in which it sought to punish Serbia for its presumed support of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Yet by the end of August 1914, what had begun as a limited war had escalated into a total war, involving goals as ambitious as the complete conquest of adversaries (marked by their unconditional surrender) and the use of all national means available.

The Korean War (1950–53) is an excellent example of limited war. In the Korean War, U.S. and then UN forces were mobilized to prevent the outright conquest of South Korea by the North (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK). This goal made the war a limited one from the UN perspective. However, because both sides tended to view material outcomes as representative of the validity of their respective ideologies, the war between the communist North and the non-communist UN contained powerful incentives for escalation.

After the stunning success of General Douglas MacArthur's Inchon landing, for example, the DPRK's military collapsed, and its remnants were forced to retreat all the way to the country's frontier with the newly communist People's Republic of China (PRC). MacArthur and many in the United States and U.S. government viewed this victory as an opportunity to unify Korea under non-communist rule—a much more ambitious goal. So what began as war for limited aims on the UN side briefly escalated into a war of complete conquest. Then, in the winter of 1950, China intervened. The war could now only be thought of as “limited” in comparison to the real possibility that it might escalate to include the Soviet Union as well. U.S. president Harry S. Truman and his advisers decided to settle for a return to the status quo of 1950. China's leadership grudgingly agreed, effectively leaving the Korean peninsula divided. Although the United States possessed nuclear weapons and could have mobilized and deployed many additional combat forces, the fear of escalation to another—perhaps nuclear—world war led to an armistice instead of an outright victory.

In limited wars, because the aims of war are relatively modest, belligerents do not unleash all available armaments. In these two cases, conventional weapons of warfare were used—tanks, foot soldiers, aircraft, and missiles. But, despite their availability, nuclear weapons were never deployed.

There is no better illustration of limited war than the Arab-Israeli disputes from 1973 onward. Israel has fought six interstate wars against its neighbors—Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon—and struggled against repeated Palestinian uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza. Since the conclusion of the 1973 Yom Kippur War (limited from the Egyptian perspective, total from the Israeli perspective), none of the opposing states have sought the complete destruction of their foes, and the conflict has blown hot and cold. Both sides have employed some of the techniques described later. With the increased destructiveness of modern warfare, limited war has become the most common option for states contemplating violence against other states.

While the number of interstate wars has declined precipitously, limited wars, and particularly civil wars that are total in nature, have not. Between 1846 and 1918, approximately 50 civil wars were fought. In contrast, in the decade following the end of the Cold War (1990–2000), the total number of civil wars was about 195. Although the number of civil wars has declined modestly between 2000 and 2015, two-thirds of all conflicts since World War II have been civil wars.

Civil wars share several characteristics. They often last a long time, even decades, with periods of fighting punctuated by periods of relative calm. Whereas the goals may seem relatively limited by the standards of major interstate wars—secession, group autonomy—the human costs are often high because in the context of the rivalry between incumbent governments and rebels, these stakes are often perceived to be total. Both combatants and civilians are killed and maimed; food supplies are interrupted; diseases spread as health systems suffer; money is diverted from constructive economic development to purchasing armaments; and generations of people grow up knowing only war.

Most total civil wars are now concentrated on the African continent. Ethiopia's war with two of its regions (Ogaden and Eritrea) lasted decades, as did the civil wars between the north and south in both Sudan and Chad. Liberia and Sierra Leone, likewise, have also been sites of civil conflict where various factions, guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups, and mercenaries have fought for control. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is another example of a civil war, but one that has become internationalized. In 1996, an internal rebellion broke out against the long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Very quickly, both Uganda, and Rwanda supported the rebellion, with the latter interested in eliminating Hutu militias that had fled Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. After Mobutu was ousted and replaced with a new leader, Laurent Kabila, a wider war erupted two years later. Powerful Congolese leaders and ethnic groups, supported by Rwanda and Uganda, opposed the new government. Angola and Zimbabwe supported Kabila's government, as did Chad and Eritrea. Over 5 million people were killed between 1998 and 2012, despite the efforts of a large UN peacekeeping force.

In virtually all these cases, the civil wars have been intensified by the availability of small arms, the recruitment of child soldiers, and financing from illicit trade in narcotics, diamonds, and oil. In all these cases, too, human rights abuses and humanitarian crises have captured media attention but rarely the political commitment or financial resources of the international community.

## The Causes of War

In an analysis of any war—Vietnam, Angola, Cambodia, World War II, or the Franco-Prussian War, to take but a few examples—we will find more than one cause for the outbreak of violence. This multiplicity of explanations can seem overwhelming. How

can we study the causes of war systematically, when the causes often seem idiosyncratic? To identify patterns and variables that might explain not just one war but war more generally, international relations scholars have found it useful to consider causes of war at the three levels of analysis Kenneth Waltz identified in *Man, the State, and War*<sup>8</sup>—the individual, the state, and the international system.

## The Individual: Realist and Liberal Interpretations

Both the characteristics of individual leaders and the general attributes of people (discussed in Chapter 6) have been blamed for war. Some individual leaders are aggressive and bellicose; they use their leadership positions to further their causes. Others may be nonconfrontational by nature, perhaps avoiding commitments that might deter aggression, making war more likely. Thus, according to some realists and liberals, war occurs because of the personal characteristics of major leaders. It is impossible, however, to prove the general veracity of this position. Would past wars have occurred had different leaders—perhaps more pacifistic ones—been in power? What about wars that nearly happened but did not happen, due to the intervention of a charismatic leader? As we can see, the impact of individual leaders on war is difficult to generalize. We can identify some wars in which individuals played a crucial role, but if we are looking for a general explanation—one that might guide us across different periods or cultures—explanations based on individual characteristics or human nature will prove insufficient.

If the innate character flaws of individuals do not cause war, is it possible that leaders, like all humans, are subject to misperceptions that might lead to war? According to liberals, misperceptions by leaders—seeing aggressiveness where it may not be intended, attributing the actions of one person to a group—can indeed lead to the outbreak of war. Unlike individual characteristics such as charisma or the possession of extreme views, we can generalize about the human tendency toward misperception. Several types of misperceptions may lead to war. One of the most common is exaggerating the adversary's hostility, believing that it is more hostile than it may actually be or that it has greater military or economic capability than it actually has. This tendency may lead a state to build up its own arms or seek new allies, which its actual or potential rivals, in turn, may view as hostile acts. Misperceptions thus spiral, leading to costly arms races, new alliances, and potentially to war. The events leading up to World War I are often viewed as such a conflict spiral.

Beyond the characteristics of individual leaders, perhaps factors particular to the masses lead to the outbreak of war. Some realist thinkers—Saint Augustine and Reinhold Niebuhr, for example—take this position. Augustine wrote that every act is an act of self-preservation on the part of individuals. For Niebuhr, the link goes even deeper; the origins of war reside in the depths of the human psyche.<sup>9</sup> This approach is

compatible with that of sociobiologists who study animal behavior. Virtually all species are equipped to use violence to ensure survival; it is biologically innate. Yet human beings are an infinitely more complex species than other animal species. If true, these presumptions lead to two possible alternative assessments. For pessimists, if war is the product of innate human characteristics or human nature, then there can be no reprieve. For optimists, even if war or aggression is innate, the only hope of eliminating war resides in changing social institutions, socializing or educating individuals out of destructive tendencies.

Of course, war does not happen constantly; it remains an *unusual* event. Thus, characteristics inherent in all individuals cannot be the only cause of war. Nor can the explanation be that human nature, indeed, has fundamentally changed, because wars still occur. Most experiments aimed at changing mass human behavior have failed miserably, and there is no visible proof that basic attitudes affecting insecurity, greed, aggression, and identity have been altered sufficiently to preclude war.

Thus, the individual level of analysis, though clearly implicated in some wars, is unlikely to stand as a good cause of war *in general*. Individuals, after all, do not make war. Only groups of political actors (for example, clans, tribes, nations, organizations, states, and alliances) make war.

## State and Society: Liberal and Radical Explanations

A second level of analysis suggests that war occurs because of the internal characteristics of states. States vary in size, geography, ethnic homogeneity, and economic and government type. The question, then, is how do the characteristics of different states affect the possibility of war? Do some state characteristics have a higher correlation with the propensity to go to war than others do?

State and societal explanations for war are among the oldest. Plato, for example, posited that war is less likely where the population is cohesive and enjoys a moderate level of prosperity. Since the population would be able to thwart an attack, an enemy is likely to refrain from attacking it. Many thinkers during the Enlightenment, including Immanuel Kant, believed that war was more likely in aristocratic states.

Drawing on the Kantian position, liberals posit that republican regimes (those with representative governments and separation of powers) are least likely to wage war against each other; that is the basic position of the theory of the democratic peace introduced in Chapter 5. Democratic leaders hear from multiple voices, including the public, which tend to restrain decision makers, decrease the likelihood of misperceptions, and therefore lessen the chance of war. They also offer citizens who have grievances a chance to redress these complaints by nonviolent means. The ability to redress aids stability and prosperity. Ordinary citizens may be hesitant to sup-

port going to war because they themselves will bear the costs of war—paying with their lives (in the case of soldiers), the lives of friends and family, and taxes. Democratic states are thus especially unlikely to go to war with each other, because the citizens in each state can trust that the citizens in the other state are as disinclined to go to war as they are. According to liberals, this mitigates the threat that a democratic opponent represents, even one with greater relative power. But by this logic, the corollary is true also: citizens in democratic states tend to magnify the threat of nondemocratic states in which the government is less constrained by the public's will, even when such states appear to have a lesser capacity to fight and win wars. More broadly, democracies engage in war only periodically, and only when the public and their chosen leaders deem it necessary to maintain security.

Other liberal tenets hold that some types of economic systems are more susceptible to war than others are. Liberal states are likely to be states whose citizens enjoy relative wealth. Such societies feel little need to divert the attention of dissatisfied masses to an external conflict; the wealthy masses are largely satisfied with the status quo. And even when they are not satisfied presently, liberal economies are marked by the possibility of upward economic (and social) mobility: in a liberal state, even the poorest person may one day become one of the richest. Liberals argue that such conflicts as do arise can be limited by altering terms of trade, or by other concessions short of outright war. Furthermore, war interrupts trade, blocks profits, and causes inflation. Thus, liberal capitalist states are more likely to avoid war and promote peace.

But not every theorist sees the liberal state as benign and peace loving. Indeed, radical theorists offer the most thorough critique of liberalism and its economic counterpart, capitalism. They argue that capitalist, liberal modes of production inevitably lead to competition for economic dominance and political leadership between the two major social classes within the state—the bourgeoisie (middle classes) and the proletariat (workers). This struggle leads to conflict, both internal and external, because the state, dominated by an entrenched bourgeoisie, is driven to accelerate the engine of capitalism at the expense of the proletariat and for the economic preservation of the bourgeoisie.

This view attributes conflict and war to the internal dynamics of capitalist economic systems, which stagnate and slowly collapse in the absence of external stimulation. Three different explanations have been offered for why they must turn outward. First, the British economist John A. Hobson claimed that the internal demand for goods would slow down in capitalist countries, leading to pressures for imperialist expansion to find external markets to sustain economic growth. Second, according to Lenin and other Marxists, the problem is not underdemand but declining rates of return on capital. Capitalist states expand outward to find new markets; expanding markets increase the rates of return on capital investment. Third, Lenin and many later-twentieth-century radicals point to the need for raw materials to sustain capitalist growth; states require

external suppliers to obtain such resources. So, according to the radical view, capitalist states inevitably expand, but radical theorists disagree among themselves about precisely why expansion occurs.

Although radical interpretations may help explain colonialism and imperialism, the link to war is more tenuous. One possible link is that capitalist states spend not only on consumer goods but also on the military, leading inevitably to arms races and eventually war. Another link points to leaders who resort to external conflict to divert public attention from domestic economic crises, corruption, or scandal. Such a conflict is called a **diversionary war** and is likely to provide internal cohesion, at least in the short run. For example, considerable evidence supports the notion that the Argentinian military used the Falkland/Malvinas Islands conflict in 1982 to rally the population around the flag and draw attention away from the country's economic contraction. Still another link suggests that the masses may push a ruling elite toward war. This view is clearly at odds with the liberal belief that the masses are basically peace loving. Adherents of this view point to the Spanish-American War of 1898 as an example in which the U.S. public, supported or inflamed by stilted reports in the new mass print media, pushed a reluctant McKinley administration into aggressive action. And many in the United States saw a clear three-way link between the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the support for the attacks from Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, and Iraq's Saddam Hussein. As a result, both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars—the first, beginning in October 2001, named Operation Enduring Freedom; and the second, beginning in March 2003, named Operation Iraqi Freedom—enjoyed widespread popular support early on.

Those who argue that contests over the nature of a state's government are a basic cause of war have identified another explanation for the outbreak of some wars. Many civil wars have been fought over which groups, ideologies, and leaders should control a state's government. The United States' own civil war (1861–65) between the North and the South; Russia's civil war (1917–19) between liberal and socialist forces; China's civil war (1927–49) between nationalist and communist forces; and the civil wars in Vietnam, Korea, the Sudan, and Chad—each pitting north against south—are stark illustrations. In many of these cases, the struggle among competing economic systems and among groups vying for scarce resources within a state illustrates further the proposition that internal state dynamics are responsible for the outbreak of war. The American Civil War was fought not only over the institution of slavery and the question of which region should control policy, but also over the Southerners' belief that the government inequitably and unfairly allocated economic resources. China's civil war pitted a wealthy, landed elite supportive of the nationalist cause against an exploited peasantry struggling, often unsuccessfully, for survival. The intermittent Sudanese civil war pitted an economically depressed south against a northern government that poured economic resources into the region of the capital.

Yet, in virtually every case cited here, neither characteristics of the state nor state structures sufficiently explain the causes of war and peace. This is why neorealists such as Kenneth N. Waltz argue that we need to look for explanations at the level of the international system.

## The International System: Realist and Radical Interpretations

If one key issue or argument distinguishes realists from their liberal and radical critics, it is that for realists, war is a natural, and hence an inevitable feature of interstate politics. War is as tragic and unpreventable as hurricanes and earthquakes. In advancing this argument, contemporary realists tend to focus on a single description of the international system as *anarchic*. Such an anarchic system is often compared with a “state of nature,” after philosopher Thomas Hobbes’s characterization, in which humans live without a recognized authority, and must therefore manage their own safety by themselves. In his most famous book, *Leviathan*, Hobbes argued that whenever men live without a common power that keeps them all in fear, they are in a condition of war: “every man against every man.” This state leads to constant fear and uncertainty. By extension, because states in the international system do not recognize any authority above them, the international system is equivalent to a state of war, and Hobbes’s description of that state perfectly characterizes the realist view. War, Hobbes continued, was not the same thing as battle or constant fighting. Instead, it was any tract of time in which war remained *possible*. Hobbes likened this situation to the relationship between climate and weather; it may not rain every day, but in some climates, rain is much more common than in others. Essentially, Hobbes concluded that so long as a single strong man (or state) was not more powerful than all the others combined, human beings would be forced to live in a climate of war.<sup>10</sup>

According to realists then, war breaks out in the interstate system *because nothing in the interstate system prevents it*. So long as there is anarchy, there will be war. War, in such a system, might even appear to be the best course of action that a given state can take. After all, states must protect themselves. A state’s security is ensured only by its accumulating military and economic power. But one state’s accumulation makes other states less secure, according to the logic of the security dilemma.

An anarchic system may have few rules about how to decide among states’ contending claims. One of the major categories of contested claims is territory. For almost all of the previous century, the Arab-Israeli dispute rested on competing territorial claims to Palestine; in the Horn of Africa, the territorial aspirations of the Somali people remain disputed; in the Andes, Ecuador and Peru have competing territorial claims; and in the South China Sea, Japan, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam are

all struggling over conflicting claims to offshore islands such as the Spratly Islands. According to the international-system-level explanation, these disputes tend to escalate to violence because there are no authoritative and legitimized arbiters of claims. John Mearsheimer calls this the “911 problem—absence of central authority, to which a threatened state can turn for help.”<sup>11</sup>

Neither is there an effective arbiter of competing claims to self-determination. Who decides whether Tibetan, Chechen, Catalonians, or Quebecois claims for self-determination are legitimate? Who decides whether Kurdish claims against Turkey and Iraq are worthy of consideration? Without an internationally legitimized arbiter, authority is relegated to the states themselves, with the most powerful ones often becoming the decisive, interested arbiters.

In addition, several realist variants attribute war to other facets of the anarchic nature of the international system. One system-level explanation for war, advanced in the work of Kenneth Organski, is power transition theory. To Organski and his intellectual heirs, it is not only mismatched material power that tempts states to war, but also *anticipation* of shifts in the relative balance of power. War occurs because more power leads to expectations of more influence, wealth, and security. Thus, a power transition can cause war in one of two patterns. In one pattern, a challenger might launch a war to solidify its position: according to some power transition theorists, the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), and the two world wars (1914–18 and 1939–45, respectively) all share this pattern.<sup>12</sup> In a second pattern, the hegemon might launch a preventive war to keep a rising challenger down. Some have argued that current international pressure on Iran to halt its nuclear development fits this pattern. Either way, according to the theory, power transitions increase the likelihood of war.

A variant derived from power transition theory is that uneven rates of economic development cause war. George Modelski and William R. Thompson find regular cycles of power transition starting in 1494. They observe 100-year cycles between hegemonic wars—wars that fundamentally alter the structure of the international system. A hegemonic war creates a new hegemonic power; its power waxes and wanes, a struggle follows, and a new hegemon assumes dominance. The cycle begins again.<sup>13</sup>

Radicals also believe the international system structure is responsible for war. Dominant capitalist states within the international system need to expand economically, waging war with developing regions over control of natural resources and labor markets, or with other capitalist states over control of developing regions. According to radicals, the dynamic of expansion inherent in the international capitalist system is the major cause of wars.

Realist and radical reliance on one level of explanation may be overly simplistic, however. Because the international system framework exists all the time, to explain why wars occur at some times but not others, we also need to consider the other levels



LEVEL	CAUSE OF WAR
<b>Individual</b> ("First Image")	Aggressive leaders Misperceptions by leaders Human nature
<b>State/Society</b> ("Second Image")	Capitalist states, according to radicals Nonliberal/authoritarian states, according to liberals Domestic politics, scapegoating Struggle between groups for economic resources Ethnonational challengers
<b>International System</b> ("Third Image")	Anarchy (self-help) Power transitions (rising challengers or declining great powers) Aggressiveness of the international capitalist class (imperialism)

of analysis.<sup>14</sup> In actuality, most wars are caused by interactions between various factors at different levels of analysis. (See Table 8.1.)

## How Wars Are Fought

Along with the aims of war, and the quality and quantity of resources states and other actors devote to winning, international relations theorists also argue there are important differences in *how* wars are fought. One important distinction is whether a war is fought conventionally or unconventionally. As the terms themselves denote, whether a war is conventional or unconventional depends a great deal on norms: what counts as conventional in 200 BCE might be considered dramatically unconventional today. In this chapter we introduce contemporary understandings—widely shared—of what counts as conventional or unconventional.

### Conventional War

Throughout most of human history, wars were fought by people—almost invariably male—who were specially chosen, trained, and authorized to attack or defend against their counterparts in other political communities. Almost all societies have also considered some groups off limits, at least where killing is concerned. The tools of war reflected

this restriction. Weapons of choice have ranged from swords and shields to bows, guns, and cannons; to industrialized armies fielding infantry and riding in tanks; to navies sailing in specialized ships; and to air forces flying fixed-wing aircraft. Such weapons are used to defeat the enemy on a territorial battlefield. The key attribute of conventional weapons is that their destructive effects can be limited in space and time to those who are the legitimate targets of war. Conventional wars are won or lost when the warriors of one group, or their leaders, acknowledge defeat following a clash of arms.

The two world wars challenged the prevalence of conventional war in three ways. World War I saw the first large-scale use of chemical weapons on the battlefield. Near the Flemish (Belgian) town of Ypres, in 1915, German forces unleashed 168 tons of chlorine gas against French positions. French troops suffered 6,000 casualties in just a few minutes as prevailing winds carried the poisonous gas across the fields and into the trenches. But German forces were unable to exploit the four-mile-wide gap in French lines that opened as a result. Many German troops had been wounded or killed in handling the gas or by moving through areas still affected and they were unable to exploit the temporary advantages gained. In addition, the effects of the weapons had proved difficult to restrict to combat. Chemicals leached into the soil and water table, affecting agriculture for months afterward. After the war, winners and losers signed a Geneva Protocol outlawing the use of chemical weapons in war.

World War II added two additional challenges to the prevalence of conventional weapons. First, the advent of strategic bombing led both to the possibility of large-scale harm to noncombatants and to a reexamination of who or what a “noncombatant” actually was. Prior to the war, the simple rule had been that civilians were to be protected from intentional harm. But the belligerents possessed large fleets of ships, armored vehicles, and planes, all of which demanded a constant supply of inputs. Were the civilians who made and supplied these great engines of war to be protected, too? What about the farmers who fed the soldiers, airmen, and sailors? As the war intensified, the dividing line between those who were to be protected from deliberate harm and those who could be legitimately targeted broke down. By the war’s end, both sides had taken to using massive air strikes to deliberately target civilians. In March 1945, well before the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, bombers from the U.S. Eighth Air Force targeted Japan’s capital, Tokyo, with incendiary bombs. The ensuing flames killed over 100,000 Japanese in a single raid, most of them civilians. World War II also fast-forwarded the development of a nuclear weapon.

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

The dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 did not have an immediate and dramatic impact on war-fighting capability. Conventional means, to some extent, had already matched the destructiveness of the atomic bomb and its capac-

ity to kill hundreds of thousands without discrimination. Many in the U.S. military, for example, considered atomic weapons simply to be more economical extensions of conventional bombs. But these first steps into the nuclear age—the first and last time nuclear weapons were deliberately used against states in war—had already hinted at a key problem related to their use: the long-lasting effects of radiation. During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union constructed larger and more lethal weapons, and developed more accurate delivery systems, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles, each capable of killing the earth's population many times over. Thermonuclear weapons led to the possibility that combatants could not limit the destruction of a nuclear exchange to a target only—nuclear weapons were now hundreds of times more powerful than those dropped on Hiroshima. A nuclear conflict might rapidly escalate into an exchange that could extinguish life on earth, either by radiation from fallout or by altering the climate in a “nuclear winter.” This mutual assured destruction (or MAD) led the major antagonists to shelve plans to fight using nuclear weapons. Instead, they fought through proxies, using more conventional weapons (see Chapter 2).

The fact that nuclear weapons have never been employed in war since their use against Japan has prompted two important debates about the political effects of nuclear weapons. First, did nuclear deterrence prevent a third world war and therefore justify the risk and expense the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, China, and France sustained through their development and deployment of nuclear weapons during the Cold War? Second, if nuclear deterrence causes peace—if the very destructiveness of nuclear weapons makes rational decision makers unlikely to use them or initiate a war that could escalate to their use—could the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries, called **nuclear proliferation**, cause peace? Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz debated these issues in the 1980s. They renewed the debate in the beginning of the twenty-first century after India and Pakistan—fierce rivals—had each acquired nuclear capability. Waltz argues that “more may be better,” that under certain circumstances (namely, a rational government and a secure retaliatory capacity), the proliferation of nuclear weapons implies an expanding zone of deterrence and a lower risk of interstate war. Sagan strongly disagrees, arguing that the proliferation of nuclear weapons is more likely to lead to a failure in deterrence or an accidental war.<sup>15</sup> Sagan argues that the conditions Waltz cites for nuclear peace-causing are rare, and certainly not present in South Asia.

This debate over the threat the possession of nuclear weapons poses has gained a new salience as the technology to build nuclear weapons has proliferated. The tangled network of the Pakistani official A. Q. Khan, who provided elements of nuclear technology from Europe to Pakistan and then North Korea, has led many to reexamine the stabilizing effect of proliferation. More crucially, nuclear theorists have questioned whether a nuclear-capable Iran would make war in the region more or less likely. If Waltz is right, so long as Iran has a rational government and a number of weapons secure from a preemptive first strike, the risk of major conventional war in

the Middle East would be dramatically reduced. If Sagan is right, even if Iran meets these minimal conditions (of which Sagan's argument is skeptical), the Middle East will be in increased danger of a nuclear exchange, an accidental launch or detonation, or perhaps an unauthorized launch. The Iran nuclear deal discussed below attempts to make sure that neither Sagan nor Waltz are correct.

Chemical and biological weapons, together with nuclear weapons, make up the more general category of **weapons of mass destruction (WMD)**. The key factor that separates WMD from conventional weapons is that *by their very nature*, their destructive effects cannot be limited in space and time. This is why they are often called “indiscriminate” weapons, a feature they share with antipersonnel land mines, depleted uranium munitions, and cluster bombs. Chemical and biological weapons have existed for many more years than nuclear weapons have. Although surreptitious testing and use of such weapons have persisted, many technical difficulties in their effective delivery persist. As noted earlier, chemical weapons were actually used on a large scale in World War I, but they proved useless strategically, and instead, only increased the suffering of war. Benito Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia through Eritrea in 1935 must count as the only recent example of the effective use of chemical weapons in war; the aerial spraying of mustard gas on the mostly barefoot Ethiopian troops caused their rapid defeat. In that case, the Italians faced an adversary who had no possibility to retaliate in kind. In addition, the oily chemical tended to float on water and remained lethal on vegetation and bare ground for weeks. As a result, Fascist Italy's use of mustard gas killed and maimed thousands of Ethiopian noncombatants. For its part, Mussolini's government went to great lengths to hide its violation of the 1923 Geneva Accords' prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, in many cases, actually violating other laws of war to do so; the actions included strafing field hospitals marked with the red cross to eliminate evidence that Italy had used mustard gas. Possibly as a result of these costs, and of the likelihood of soon facing adversaries armed in kind, neither Fascist Italy nor any of the other belligerents used chemical weapons in World War II. Yet evidence suggests the use of chemical weapons by one or both adversaries during both the Iran-Iraq War during the 1980s, and by the Assad government in the current Syrian civil war.

Biological weapons—in particular, mutated strains of formerly common diseases such as plague and smallpox—have always suffered from the possibility that not only an adversary's troops and people but also one's own troops and people could be victims. In addition, their use as a weapon comes with the cost of a high probability of violating the norm of noncombatant immunity, something few states want to do. Today, most observers are more concerned with the possibility that rogue states or terrorists might obtain and deploy biological or other weapons of mass destruction; they are less concerned that states with rational leaders will do so.

In 2003, the George W. Bush administration, frustrated with Saddam Hussein's repeated refusal to abide by the terms of the cease-fire that had ended the first Gulf War in 1991, decided to prepare for a possible military invasion of Iraq. Among the U.S. government's many concerns was the possibility that Saddam Hussein was developing WMD. This concern proved to be the administration's main justification for war. The fear that Saddam's Iraq would either use such weapons against the United States or its allies or transfer such a weapon to a terrorist group helped gain sufficient U.S. public support for the invasion.

More recently, the realization that Iran is developing uranium-enrichment capacity and refuses to renounce a nuclear option has led to some of the most contentious political conflicts of the new millennium. In October 2015, Iran signed an agreement called the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," limiting its development of components for a possible nuclear weapon for 15 years in exchange for an end to crippling economic sanctions. While this agreement may be an important step in stemming the tide of nuclear proliferation, it still leaves open the questions of whether Iran can cheat on the agreement and what will happen once the 15-year moratorium ends. Likewise, North Korea's tests of nuclear weapons since 2006, and more recently, new launch vehicles, have raised serious concerns in the international community.

## Unconventional Warfare

**Unconventional warfare** is as old as conventional warfare and is distinguished in general by a willingness to flout restrictions on legitimate targets of violence or refuse to accept the traditional outcomes of battles—say, the destruction of a regular army, loss of a capital, or capture of a national leader—as an indicator of victory or defeat.

Two major changes progressively moved unconventional war from a side role to a prominent feature of war. First, the French Revolution unleashed the power of nationalism in support of large-scale military operations, enabling Napoleon Bonaparte's armies to make use of tactics that the older professional militaries of Europe at first could not counteract. Nationalism inflamed common people to resist "foreign" aggression and occupation, even when faced with receiving bribes or being penalized through torture and death. Nationalism has proven a double-edged sword ever since. Although Napoleon's forces initially swept aside the old order, the source of his greatest defeats lay in nationalist-inspired resistance in Russia and Spain (Spanish resistance came to be called "small war" or, in Spanish, **guerrilla warfare**). But nationalist-inspired resistance was not by itself sufficient to make unconventional warfare effective against the power of states or incumbent governments. That took a strategic innovation that combined the ancient doctrine of guerrilla warfare with explicit use of the power of nationalism.



Abu Sabaya (standing at left), a leader of Abu Sayyaf—a Muslim extremist group—poses with a group of rebels on Indonesia’s Jolo Island in July of 2000 during the Sipadan Hostage Crisis. The group aims to establish a conservative version of Sharia Law throughout Indonesia.

That strategy was first called “revolutionary guerrilla war” by its chief innovator, Mao Zedong. It was specifically designed to counter a technologically advanced and well-equipped industrial adversary by effectively reversing the conventional relationship between soldiers and civilians. In conventional war, soldiers risk their lives to protect civilians. In guerrilla warfare, civilians risk their lives to protect the guerrillas, who hide among them and who cannot easily be distinguished from ordinary civilians when not actually fighting.<sup>16</sup>

Using revolutionary guerrilla warfare during the Chinese Civil War (1927–37, 1945–49) and in China’s resistance to Japanese occupation during World War II (1937–45), Mao’s Peoples Liberation Army was able to survive many setbacks. Eventually, it defeated the well-armed and U.S.-supplied Nationalist armies of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), whose forces fled to the island of Formosa, now Taiwan. This unexpected outcome left Mao with a vast storehouse of captured weapons and, more importantly, led to the spread of revolutionary guerrilla warfare as a template for other insurgents, particularly in Asia.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a string of unexpected defeats of the major advanced industrial powers, each of which lost wars against “weak” or “backward” adversaries. Britain was forced to grant independence to India. France was

defeated in Indochina and Algeria; Portugal in Mozambique and Angola; the United States in Vietnam; the Soviet Union in Afghanistan; and Israel in Lebanon. In each case, well-equipped, industrialized militaries had sought to overcome smaller, nonindustrial adversaries and lost. Ominously, both the French experience in Algeria and the Soviet experience in Afghanistan added a new element to the mix: religion as a means of inspiring and aggregating resistance.

Today, this pattern of advanced industrial states pitted against either nonstate actors or relatively weak states has become commonplace. International relations theorists now refer to such contests as **asymmetric conflict**.

Asymmetric conflict undercuts an important proposition of both conventional warfare and nuclear war: that conventional weapons and nuclear confrontations are more likely to occur among states having rough equality of military strength and using similar strategies and tactics. If one party is decidedly weaker, the proposition goes, fear of defeat makes that party unlikely to resort to war. Asymmetric conflicts, in contrast, are conducted between parties of very unequal strength. The weaker party seeks to innovate around its opponent's strengths, including its technological superiority, by exploiting that opponent's weaknesses.<sup>17</sup>

Like any strategy, revolutionary guerrilla warfare itself has weaknesses. In two asymmetric conflicts following World War II, the strong actors—Britain during the Malayan Emergency (1948–60) and the United States in the Philippines (1952–53)—devised a counterinsurgency strategy that effectively defeated revolutionary guerrilla wars. That strategy aimed not at insurgent armed forces (terrorists and guerrillas), or even their leaders, but instead focused on the real strength of successful guerrilla warfare: the people. As Mao recognized in his early writings, incumbent governments can defeat a well-led, well-organized guerrilla resistance in only two ways: either change the minds of the people (via a conciliation, or “hearts and minds,” strategy) or destroy them utterly (a strategy one theorist calls “barbarism”).<sup>18</sup> In either case, the social support of a guerrilla resistance is destroyed, and that resistance will collapse. Mao was confident that his “Western” and democratic adversaries were too arrogant in their own power to attempt to change minds and too squeamish in their ethical conduct to pursue a genocidal counterinsurgency. Yet in both Malaya and the Philippines, incumbent governments, supported by Britain and the United States, sought to redress the grievances that had led many of the country's poor or disaffected either to active support of guerrillas or to political apathy. Since World War II, “hearts and minds” strategies have proven the most effective method of counterinsurgency on the ground, but they are costly in political terms because they take a long time to work and, in most cases, they demand large numbers of troops.<sup>19</sup>

Yet guerrilla warfare is only one of several strategies a combatant might use to overcome a more materially powerful incumbent and its allies. Another such strategy is **nonviolent resistance**: resistance to authority that employs measures other than

violence. Like revolutionary guerrilla warfare, nonviolent resistance deliberately places ordinary people at grave risk of harm in the pursuit of political objectives. Unlike guerrilla warfare or terrorism, however, nonviolent resistance avoids the use of violence as a means of protest. Prominent examples of nonviolent resistance include Mohandas Gandhi's resistance to British rule in the 1940s and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights movement of the 1960s. Another strategy for overcoming a materially more powerful adversary is terrorism.

## Terrorism

**Terrorism**, a particular kind of asymmetric conflict, is increasingly perceived as a serious international security threat because the causes that motivate terrorists to murder defenseless civilians have become increasingly transnational rather than local, and because advances in WMD technology have made it theoretically possible for substate actors to cause state-level damage (say, with a nuclear bomb smuggled by a terrorist into a major metropolitan area). Though they did not involve WMD, Al Qaeda's attacks against U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998, against cities on U.S. soil in 2001, and in the London Underground and buses in 2005 were justified in the group's eyes as a religious imperative that recognized neither the state nor the international system of states.

Because a core feature of terrorism is the deliberate harm of noncombatants, "terrorists" are necessarily outlaws: by definition, outlaws neither observe the law nor are protected by it. Scholars of terrorism, a moribund subfield of international relations inquiry until 2001, today disagree on a universal definition of terrorism, but most definitions share three key elements:

1. It is *political* in nature or intent.
2. Perpetrators are *nonstate* actors.
3. Targets are *noncombatants*, such as ordinary citizens (especially young children or the elderly), political figures, or bureaucrats.

One contemporary terrorism expert, Audrey Kurth Cronin, adds a fourth element: terrorism attacks are unconventional and unpredictable.<sup>20</sup> Terrorism has often been called the strategy of the weak, but this argument begs the question of what "power" actually is. Is power only the material power to kill, or can it reside in the power of ideas? Gandhi, for example, did not overcome the British and win India's independence by means of violent revolution. The power of ideas proved decisive. Terrorists also hope to harness the power of ideas: they invariably justify their violence by reference to immortality imagery. This imagery tends to take one of three classic forms: nationalist, Marxist, or religious. In each case, terrorists intend their violent acts to preserve the nation, the proletariat, or the faithful, and ensure its immortality. In the Irish



Republican Army's long struggles with British rule in Ireland, all three immortality images came into play, as predominantly socialist, nationalist, and Catholic "terrorists" sought to coerce Britain into abandoning Ireland's Protestant minority, among other things.

Like guerrilla warfare, terrorism has a long history. During Greek and Roman times, individuals often carried out terrorist acts against their rulers. Interestingly, the contemporary sense of the word "terror" dates from the French Revolution, in which Robespierre's fragile government leveled extreme, and at times indiscriminate, violence against the French people. But neither state perpetration nor sponsorship of terror should be confused with terrorism as such, because, as observed earlier, a core element of terrorism is that it be perpetrated by nonstate actors. It is therefore difficult to say what to call the kind of mass killing perpetrated by states such as the United States against Native Americans, Hitler's Third Reich against Jews, Stalin's Soviet Union against Ukrainians, and Pol Pot's Cambodia against noncommunists. All terrorism may be barbarism, but not all barbarism terrorism.

Although terrorism involves physical harm, the essence of terrorism is psychological, not physical. Whatever the aims of the individual terrorist, killing is a by-product of terrorism as a strategy. The real aim of terrorism is to call attention to a cause, while at the same time calling into question the legitimacy of a target government by highlighting its inability to protect its citizens. For example, during the 1972 Summer Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, a group of Palestinian Arab terrorists styling themselves "Black September" took 11 Israeli athletes hostage in the Olympic Village. Two of the hostages were murdered immediately. During a botched rescue attempt by the surprised and ill-prepared Germans, the remaining nine hostages were murdered by their captors. Black September was a part of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), a group founded by Yasser Arafat in 1964 to advance the cause of Palestinian Arab statehood by means of violence. But until Munich, few outside the Middle East had ever heard of the PLO. After the games, the PLO (and "terrorists" more broadly) became a widespread topic of conversation and state action. Another method of gaining attention was hijacking commercial airplanes. In December 1973, Arab terrorists killed 32 people in Rome's airport during an attack on a U.S. aircraft. Hostages were taken in support of the hijackers' demand for the release of imprisoned Palestinian Arabs. In 1976, a Middle Eastern organization hijacked a French plane with mostly Israeli passengers and flew it to Uganda, where the hijackers threatened to kill the hostages unless Arab prisoners in Israel were released. In the aftermath of several such high-profile cases, the international community responded by signing a series of international agreements designed to tighten airport security, sanction states that gave refuge to hijackers, and condemn state-supported terrorism. The 1979 International Convention against the Taking of Hostages is a prominent example of such an agreement.



In January 2015, a young Jordanian fighter pilot named Muath Safi Yousef al-Kasasbeh was burned alive by the Islamic State after having been captured in Syria. His execution was videotaped by the IS and distributed on the Internet via a Twitter account. Al-Kasasbeh's execution provoked outrage in Jordan and worldwide.

Much recent terrorist activity has its roots in the Middle East—in the ongoing quest of Palestinian Arabs for self-determination and their own internal conflicts over strategy, in the hostility among various Islamic groups toward Western forces and ideas (in particular, what they perceive as Western support of Israel's persecution of Palestinian Arabs and the education and independence of women), and in the resurgence of extremist Islamic fundamentalism. Among terrorist groups with roots in the Middle East are Hamas, Hezbollah, and Palestine Islamic Jihad. After September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda was the most publicized of these groups. A shadowy network of extremist Islamic fundamentalists from many countries, including some outside the Middle East, Al Qaeda, led by the late Osama bin Laden, is motivated by the desire to install strict Islamic regimes in the Middle East, support radical Islamic insurgencies in Southeast Asia, and punish the United States for its support of Israel. When the United States and its allies began to seriously hurt Al Qaeda—as they did from 2009 to 2012—its leadership adapted by dispersing and forming new affiliates, such as Al Qaeda in Iraq and Al Qaeda in Yemen. But support for Al Qaeda has now diminished.

In its stead, as Chapter 5 explains, the Islamic State has emerged, with its roots in the 1979 Iran Shiite revolution and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. That invasion by the U.S.

empowered Shiites over the Arab Sunni minority, and the IS has taken up the radical Sunni cause. The IS broadcasts its terrorist acts through social media: the beheadings of Westerners and Muslim opponents; mass executions; the rape of non-Muslim women like the Yazidi minority; the sexual slavery of non-Sunni Muslims; the taking of hostages for ransom; and the destruction of cultural antiquities. But it differs from most terrorist organizations in important respects, too. It seeks to control territory and has done so in parts of Syria and Iraq. It self-finances by controlling oil assets. And the IS claims religious authority centered in the proclamation of a caliphate, led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Many of its estimated 15,000 foreign recruits, from as many as 80 countries, are attracted by its utopian goals. As one scholar explains, the IS seeks to “create a ‘pure’ Sunni Islamist state governed by a brutal interpretation of *sharia*, to immediately obliterate the political borders of the Middle East that were created by Western powers in the twentieth century; and to position itself as the sole political, religious, and military authority over all of the world’s Muslims.”<sup>21</sup> Yet the very use of terror and its tactics, as well as its religious fundamentalism, has isolated the IS from virtually all of its neighbors, most Muslims, and the rest of the international community.

Though the examples above are from the Middle East, terrorism also has a long history in other parts of the world, reflecting diverse, often multiple, motivations. Some groups adhere to extreme religious positions, such as the Irish Republican Army, the protector of Northern Irish Catholics in their struggle against Protestant British rule. The Hindu-Muslim rivalry in India has led to many terrorist incidents. Other groups seek or have sought territorial separation or autonomy from a state. The Basque separatists (ETA) in Spain, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, and Chechen groups in Russia are all excellent examples.

Since the 1990s, terrorism has taken a new turn.<sup>22</sup> Terrorist acts have become more lethal, even as the groups responsible have become more dispersed. In the 1970s, about 17 percent of terrorist attacks killed someone, whereas in the 1990s, almost 25 percent of terrorist attacks resulted in deaths. Until 2000, the worst loss of life was the 1985 bombing of an Air India flight, in which 329 people were killed. That statistic changed dramatically on September 11, 2001, when over 3,000 civilians died and \$80 billion in economic losses were incurred. Increasingly, terrorists have made use of a diverse array of weapons. AK-47s, sarin gas, shoulder-fired missiles, anthrax, backpack explosives, and airplanes as guided missiles have all been used. The IS has made theater of executing prisoners by beheading, a particularly grisly form of execution in which the IS records the act and then distributes it online. The infrastructure that supports terrorism has also become more sophisticated. It is financed through money-laundering schemes and illegal criminal activities. Training camps attract not just young, single, and uneducated potential terrorists but also older, better-educated individuals who are willing to commit suicide to accomplish their objectives. Terrorist

groups have also made increasingly effective use of the Internet and social media as a recruitment tool.

The groups practicing terrorism have become wider ranging, from nationalists and neo-Nazis to religious, left-wing and right-wing militants. (See Table 8.2.) State-sponsored terrorism, the support of terrorist groups by states, remains common. The United States and many of its allies (for example, Britain, Germany, and France) have repeatedly accused North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, and Cuba of having lent support to terrorist groups. Yet, while strong evidence of state complicity exists in each case, the accusing states are apt to overlook their *own* sponsorship of groups others might call “terrorists.” In the U.S. case, U.S. support of *contras*—groups opposing communist rule in Nicaragua in the 1980s—could easily count as state-sponsored terrorism because the *contras* did not limit their targets to Nicaraguan police and soldiers, but also attacked civilians. Terrorists are increasingly launching attacks in developing countries. Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia, India, Kenya, and Pakistan are all examples.

**TABLE 8.2**

**SELECTED TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS**

GROUP	LOCATION	CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTACKS
<b>Al Qaeda</b>	Formerly in Afghanistan; now dispersed throughout Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, and Yemen	Formed by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s among Arabs who fought the Soviets in Afghanistan; responsible for bombings in Africa (1998), Yemen (2000), United States (2001), Spain (2004), Great Britain (2005), India (2006), Pakistan (2008, 2009), Algeria (2010)
<b>Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)</b>	Israel, West Bank, Gaza Strip	Its leader signed bin Laden’s 1998 <i>fatwa</i> calling for attacks on U.S. interests; elected in 2006 as governing authority in Gaza
<b>Hezbollah (Party of God)</b>	Lebanon	Also known as Islamic Jihad; often directed by Iran and suspected in the bombing of the U.S. embassy and marine barracks in Beirut in 1983; dominates Lebanon politically; fights against Israel

(CONTINUED)

GROUP	LOCATION	CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTACKS
<b>Boko Haram (Western Ways Are Forbidden)</b>	Nigeria's relatively impoverished northern states; some activities in neighboring states	Salafi jihadists who violently pursue the establishment of a strict version of Sharia law throughout Nigeria. Kidnapped 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria, in April 2014. As of early 2016, none of the girls have been rescued.
<b>Haqqani Network</b>	Pashtunistan (eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan)	Insurgent Islamist group; supported by U.S. CIA during Soviet occupation of Afghanistan; now allied with Taliban and tacitly supported by Pakistan; fought against ISAF in Afghanistan until 2010.
<b>The Islamic State</b>	Centered in Syria and Northern Iraq, but actively franchising to Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya, and possibly Chechnya	An outgrowth of Al Qaeda in Iraq, currently led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a former senior officer in Saddam Hussein's Iraqi Army and self-proclaimed Caliph; the world's wealthiest terrorist group; aims to establish an "Islamic" caliphate (no territorial boundaries) and is responsible for thousands of murders, including beheadings, rapes, and sexual slavery of any who oppose its restrictive interpretation of Sharia law.

Preventing terrorist activity has become increasingly difficult because most perpetrators have networks of supporters in the resident populations. Protecting populations from random acts of violence is an almost impossible task, given the availability of guns and bombs in the international marketplace. Pressure on governments is very strong because people worry disproportionately about terrorism, even though it kills a relatively small number of people, and because many people believe a violent response by state security forces will help protect them. Despite advances in detection

technology like face-recognition software, committed individuals or groups of terrorists are difficult to preempt or deter. Indeed, such individuals may be seen as heroes in their community.

The international community has taken action against terrorists, first by creating a framework of international rules dealing with terrorism. The framework includes 12 conventions that address such issues as punishing hijackers and those who protect them; protecting airports, diplomats, and nuclear materials in transport; and blocking the flow of financial resources to global terrorist networks. Individual states have also taken steps to increase state security (the United States' controversial USA Patriot Act is one example); to support counterintelligence activities; and to promote cooperation among national enforcement agencies in tracking and apprehending terrorists. States have sanctioned other states they view as supporting terrorists, or as not taking effective enforcement measures. Libya, Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, and Iraq are prominent examples. But it is important to recall that even developed states such as the United States,



In April 2014, terrorists affiliated with Boko Haram (or “Western ways are forbidden”) kidnapped 276 schoolgirls at a secondary school in Chibok, Nigeria. To date, the Nigerian government has proven unable to find the girls, who many believe have since been forced to convert to Islam and in some cases marry Boko Haram fighters. Here, a student who escaped the school identifies some of her classmates.

Belgium, and France have had difficulty in “taking effective enforcement measures” against terrorists, although each has shut down many terrorist financial networks and enhanced security in airports and ports. After all, the terrorists who attacked New York’s World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, learned to fly commercial airplanes in Florida. And some of the terrorists responsible for the Paris bombings in 2015 were French citizens or were living in Belgium.

## The Just War Tradition

When, if ever, is it just for states to go to war? Is war always an illegal and immoral act, or is it acceptable under certain conditions? What constitutes an appropriate justification—*jus ad bellum*—to enter into war? And what constitutes moral and ethical conduct—*jus in bello*—once a state decides to go to war? Normative political theorists draw our attention to the classical **just war tradition**. Although a Western and Christian doctrine dating from medieval times, just war theory draws on ancient Greek philosophy and precepts found in the Koran. As developed by Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Hugo Grotius, and, more recently, the political philosopher Michael Walzer, just war theory asserts that several criteria can make the decision to enter a war a just one.<sup>23</sup> There must be a just cause (self-defense or the defense of others, or a massive violation of human rights) and a declaration of intent by a competent authority (which, since the formation of the United Nations, has been interpreted to mean the UN Security Council). The leaders need to have the correct intentions, desiring to end abuses and establish a just peace. They also need to have exhausted all other possibilities for ending the abuse, employing war as a last resort. Actors must rapidly remove forces after securing the humanitarian objectives. Because states choose war for a variety of reasons, however, it is rarely easy to assess the justness of a particular cause or particular intentions.

The just war tradition also addresses legitimate conduct in war. Combatants and noncombatants must be differentiated, with the latter protected from harm as much as possible. Violence must be proportionate to the ends to be achieved. Combatants should avoid causing undue human suffering and using particularly heinous weapons. Because mustard gas caused especially cruel deaths during World War I, it was subsequently outlawed, thus providing the basis for future chemical and biological warfare conventions. Many of the extended norms of the just war tradition were codified in the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and the two additional protocols concluded in 1977. These are designed to protect civilians, prisoners of war, and wounded soldiers, as well as to ban particular methods of war and certain weapons that cause unnecessary suffering.

Just war is an evolving practice. Key contemporary debates surround the question of how newer killing technologies—nuclear weapons, land mines, cluster munitions, fuel air explosives, and in particular drone strikes—affect our assessments of moral and ethical conduct during war. A key concern of just war theorists is the fact that some technological advances make the notion of **noncombatant immunity**, the protection of all civilians not using weapons and prisoners of war, among others, very difficult. The use of nuclear weapons has been viewed as a just war concern for two reasons. First, as observed earlier, unlike with most conventional weapons, the destructive effects of nuclear weapons are impossible to restrict in time and space. Although as many as 110,000 Japanese were killed in the first few hours after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese government estimates that total fatalities directly attributable to the bombings today exceed 250,000. Second, the destructive potential of contemporary thermonuclear weapons is simply unprecedented. No one can say for certain what the impact of even a limited exchange of such weapons might be on the global ecosystem. An all-out exchange, in which hundreds of such weapons were deliberately detonated, might end all life on the planet (save perhaps insect life), damage the atmosphere, or plunge the earth into an extended “nuclear winter.” Thus, the proportionality of means and ends, which stands as a second pillar of just war theory, would be violated.

Other weapons have also come under fire under the “nondiscriminatory nature” theory of unjust war. Two of particular note include antipersonnel land mines and cluster munitions. Although land mines originally were viewed as legitimate weapons, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) has succeeded in shifting perceptions of these weapons by emphasizing—as with other weapons of mass destruction—the indiscriminate effect of their capacity to harm. That approach and process has also been adopted by the Cluster Munitions Coalition, a coalition of NGOs present in over 100 countries. In 2008, the Convention on Cluster Munitions was signed, banning the use of weapons with a high potential to harm noncombatants and providing assistance for clearance and victim assistance.

The campaigns against antipersonnel land mines and cluster munitions reflect growing pressure to restrict or eliminate the use of various weapons and practices in accord with just war principles. Constructivists can rightly cite the power of norms and socialization to alter the behavior (and identity) of both state and nonstate actors in this regard. After 2001, for example, the George W. Bush administration sought guidance on whether certain interrogation techniques—in particular one called waterboarding, in which suspects are nearly suffocated repeatedly during questioning—were “torture.” If waterboarding were torture, it would be illegal, even within the context of the war on terrorism. After being assured that waterboarding was not torture, the Bush administration approved its use in interrogations. The ensuing controversy proved fierce. Most interrogation and legal experts consider waterboarding both an ineffective interroga-



tion technique and torture. The subject has been debated by U.S. presidential candidates in 2011 and 2016, when some Republican candidates supported waterboarding and other enhanced techniques. Others responded that waterboarding was torture, and therefore inherently un-American.

Another recent debate around morals and ethics in war has surfaced surrounding drone strikes. Initially, drones were used to place sophisticated eyes and ears over combat areas without risking pilots and expensive aircraft. But their use has increased radically since 2001. Many drones in the U.S. inventory are armed with missiles that operators thousands of miles away can aim and launch. From 2004 to 2015, an estimated 2,476–3,989 people were killed and 1,158–1,738 injured in U.S. CIA drone strikes in Pakistan alone. Of these, an estimated 423–965 were noncombatants, including 172–207 children. Yemen and Somalia have also seen the number of lethal drone strikes rise.

Two main questions currently surround the use of drone strikes in a just war. First, what safeguards ensure that those targeted by drone strikes are actually guilty of terrorism or of harming allied personnel? Most of those targeted do not wear uniforms, nor do they formally serve a state. The process by which U.S. intelligence agencies determine targets remains classified. Second, and related, is the harm caused by drone missile strikes justified? In the above statistics on Pakistan, for example, 17–24 percent of those killed in drone strikes were noncombatants.

## The Debate over Humanitarian Intervention

No issue emerging from the just war tradition has been more critical or controversial than the debate over **humanitarian intervention**. The just war tradition asserts that military intervention by states or the international community may be justified or even obligatory to alleviate massive violations of human rights. Yet that position directly contradicts a hallmark of the Westphalian tradition—respect for state sovereignty. Historically, states selectively applied military intervention on behalf of humanitarian causes. In the nineteenth century, Europeans used military force to protect Christians in Turkey and the Middle East, though they chose not to protect other religious groups. And European nations did not intervene militarily to stop slavery, though they prohibited their own citizens from participating in the slave trade.<sup>24</sup>

Since the end of World War II, the notion has emerged that all human beings deserve protection—not just particular groups—and that states have an obligation to intervene. This idea is called the **responsibility to protect (R2P)**. The idea is that in cases of massive violations of human rights, when domestic avenues for redress have been exhausted and actions by other states might reasonably end the abuse, these states have a *responsibility* to intervene in the domestic affairs of the state in which the abuse is

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

# The Difficult Trade-Offs of Drone Warfare

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, Al Qaeda has been the target of a concerted effort by the United States and its allies to destroy or demobilize it, mainly by identifying Al Qaeda's leaders and killing them. In 2011, Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda's most famous leader and its chief architect, was killed in a raid by U.S. special operations forces in Abbottabad, Pakistan. But, like any organization under duress, Al Qaeda and affiliated groups responded by innovating new ways of planning and executing operations and new ways of avoiding detection and attack. Chief among these tactics are decentralizing leadership and physically dispersing either to countries that are too weak to arrest Al Qaeda operatives, or to countries that are hostile to the United States and its allies. When military interventions by U.S. ground forces in these countries seem likely to be either too costly or counterproductive, what means of self-defense might a state such as the United States consider?

One answer is highlighted in the headline "4 Yemen Al Qaeda leaders killed in suspected US drone strike."<sup>a</sup> Armed drone strikes give U.S. leaders a relatively low cost and highly effective tool for damaging or demobilizing terrorist groups, without putting American troops in harm's way. The material costs of sending an unmanned aerial vehicle over a target area are much less than even a small deployment of U.S. special operations forces

like Navy SEALs or Delta forces. Targets are killed in places like Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan with what is deemed an acceptable level of collateral damage. In none of those countries would an armed military intervention be cheap or practical. American decision makers remember from their experiences in 2001-13 that allied armed forces struggled in Afghanistan to defeat a variety of adversaries deemed "extremist" at great cost and to little ultimate positive effect.

Though drone warfare can be effective and relatively inexpensive, the use of drones to kill extremist leaders or other "high-value targets" suffers from several problems. The weapons



*Wall mural in Sana'a, Yemen, depicts resentment of U.S. drone strikes and calls attention to the social construction of "targets" and "terrorists." A girl or boy who opposes U.S. intervention and plans or undertakes violence to oppose it will often become a target to the United States, whereas to her or his family, she or he will likely be seen as another victim of U.S. colonial or even religious aggression.*

that most drones use in attacks have not been particularly discriminate. That is, targeted leaders often are found in their homes, or in the company of children, the elderly, or ordinary citizens who are likely to be killed. Survivors will be unlikely to forget or forgive the deaths of their children, even if those deaths were unintended. Declassified documents from the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, the two organizations most likely to use armed drones to kill high-value targets, show that they “do not always know who they are killing, but are making an imperfect best guess.”<sup>b</sup> This admission, along with the reality of collateral damage, has led to vocal and persistent criticism of the use of armed drones, especially in the Muslim world. And that may explain the

decline in the use of armed drones to kill high-value targets everywhere but Yemen.

Many states—including those not friendly to the United States and its allies—are pursuing drone development programs. Very soon, these states may target those *they* consider to be extremist, like artists, dissidents, or even nationals living in Western countries. Collateral damage would be expected to follow. Then those countries whose sovereign territory is being breached and their allies in the international system would be challenged to develop new laws and treaties to deal with this new technological capacity to view, target, and ultimately kill individuals and small groups with armed drones from thousands of miles away.

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### FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. The use of armed drones in predominantly Muslim states such as Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia has led to a serious backlash against the United States not only in Muslim countries, but in Europe as well. Is the use of drones “worth” those costs?
2. Why is the use of drones popular in the United States? Do you support or oppose the continuation of drone strikes?
3. In what ways are armed drones similar to other weapons? In what ways are they different?

a. “4 Yemen Al Qaeda leaders killed in suspected US drone strike,” *Associated Press*, May 12, 2015.

b. Scott Shane, “Drone Strikes Reveal Uncomfortable Truth: U.S. Is Often Unsure About Who Will Die,” *New York Times*, April 23, 2015.

occurring. As two UN officials put it, this “marks the coming of age of the imperative of action in the face of human rights abuses, over the citadels of state sovereignty.”<sup>25</sup> Though this belief emerged in the middle of the twentieth century, it gained prominence during the 1990s after humanitarian crises in Somalia and Rwanda, and following widespread murder, rape, and devastation in Darfur, Sudan (2003–05). Recently, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin invoked a version of R2P in his justification for annexing Crimea in 2014. Putin argued a military intervention was part of Russia’s responsibility to protect the lives and property of ethnic Russians in Crimea and parts of Eastern Ukraine.

Questions about R2P remain. How massive do the violations of human rights have to be to justify intervention? The Geneva Conventions specify that “genocide” is not about how *many* people are killed, but about the *intent* to kill an entire group. Who decides when to respond to the abuses? Might some states use humanitarian intervention as a pretext for achieving other, less humanitarian goals? Should states have an obligation to intervene militarily in these humanitarian emergencies? Why are some interventions justified (e.g., Kosovo and Libya), while others, in which equally heinous abuse is taking place (e.g., Rwanda and Syria), are ignored? As the same UN officials warn, military intervention can often be “devoid of legal sanction, selectively deployed and achieving only ambiguous ends.”<sup>26</sup>

Given their experiences under colonial rule, many Asian and African countries are skeptical about humanitarian justifications for intervention by Western countries. Other states, such as Russia and China, have insisted that for a claim of humanitarian intervention to be legitimate, it must be authorized by the UN Security Council, where Russia and China are among the powers possessing a veto. In practice, humanitarian interventions are often multilateral, although they do not always receive authorization by the UN. For instance, when Western states sought military intervention in Kosovo, as discussed in Chapter 2, Russia opposed the measure, so Western powers turned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) instead. They also turned to NATO in the case of Libya because of operational expediency.

States that have supported humanitarian interventions in the past do not always support future interventions. This change in policy can occur for several reasons, including the perception of the success or failure of previous missions, as well as the nature of other interests at stake in the conflict. Having suffered a humiliating setback in Somalia in 1993, for instance, the United States (and the UN) opposed increased use of the military to protect civilians in Rwanda in 1994, despite clear evidence of genocide. Similarly, only a small military contingent from the African Union was originally mobilized for the Darfur region, despite 300,000 deaths and the culpability of the Sudanese government. In the Darfur case, other national interests were deemed more vital than support for humanitarian intervention: China cared about access to Sudanese oil; Russia cared about export arms markets; the United States was preoccupied

with Iraq and the war on terrorism. In May 2012, a massacre in the Syrian village of Taldou of women, children, and even infants by the security forces of Syria's Bashar al Assad caused an international outcry, but China and Russia opposed UN-sanctioned military intervention. Both countries issued statements asserting that any foreign military intervention would only make the situation in Syria, and the region, worse. Russia's and China's positions on intervention ultimately failed to halt international military intervention in the civil war in Syria (2012–present). This outcome may be why Russia later determined that its own military intervention in Syria was both necessary to reverse the chaos caused by U.S. and allied interventions, and just.

So although support for R2P is an emergent norm, it remains the subject of ongoing controversy. Because states do not intervene in all situations of humanitarian emergency, state sovereignty remains intact. But when gross violations of human rights are obvious, and when military intervention does not conflict with other national interests, states increasingly view humanitarian intervention as a justifiable use of force.

## Contending Perspectives on Managing Insecurity

Disparity in power between states, the inability to know the intentions of states and individuals, and the lack of an overarching international authority means that states—even powerful ones—are continually confronted by the need to manage their insecurity.

Four approaches to managing insecurity are well tested in international politics. Two of these approaches reflect realist thinking, requiring individual states themselves to maintain an adequate power potential. The other approaches reflect the liberal theoretical perspective and thus focus largely on multilateral responses by groups of states acting to coordinate their policies. Realists and liberals support different policy responses to arms proliferation, the resulting security dilemma, and managing insecurity more generally, as Table 8.3 on p. 300 describes.

### Realist Approaches: Balance of Power and Deterrence

Realist approaches to managing insecurity come from the fact that for realists, war is a necessary condition of interstate politics: it can be managed but never eradicated. Classical realists, ranging from Thucydides to Machiavelli to Hobbes to Hans Morgenthau, argued that human nature made transcending war unlikely. Neorealists replaced the emphasis on human nature with an emphasis on structure, arguing that war will be a



## Conflict in Ukraine, 2014: A View from Russia

*Since Vladimir Putin's accession to the presidency of the Russian Federation in 2000, Russia has once again acted according to realist expectations, affirming its national interest by protecting Russian nationals in neighboring lands and reasserting the power and prestige of the Russian Federation after the demise of the Soviet Union.*

After weeks of protest over the corrupt and ineffective leadership of Ukraine's president, Viktor Yanukovich, and over his suspension of the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement, violent confrontations erupted between government security forces and Ukrainian protesters. Over a five-day period, these violent clashes culminated in the ouster of Yanukovich and his subsequent flight to Russia. In the weeks that followed, Russian president Vladimir Putin refused to recognize Ukraine's interim government. Then thousands of obviously trained soldiers in uniforms with no national insignia began to flood into Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. On February 23, pro-Russian demonstrations "spontaneously" broke out in the city of Sevastopol, and on February 27, soldiers stormed key sites across Crimea. This action was soon followed by a Crimean referendum where the population voted for independence by a wide electoral margin. In a subsequent petition, the newly independent Crimea joined the Russian Federation.

Crimea has a long association with Russia; beginning in 1802, it was included in the Russian Governorate. After the Soviet revolution in 1917, Crimea came under the jurisdiction of Moscow. But because of its close economic and cultural ties to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, also part of the Soviet Union, Crimea was transferred to that jurisdiction in 1954. When Ukraine itself became indepen-

dent in 1991, Crimea became an autonomous region within Ukraine—until the 2014 reversion to the Russian Federation. For the 84 percent Russian speakers in Crimea, this was a return to their ancestral home. Protecting nationals in other areas is the responsibility of states. Hence Russia's actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine to protect the 17 percent Russian minority in Ukraine, mainly located in the eastern region, are proper.

Russia's concern for protecting its borders is a logical extension of its history. Russia has been invaded many times from Western Europe—each time with fearful losses of life and property. Following World War II, the Soviet Union established the Warsaw Pact alliance with the states in central Europe to create a geographical buffer between Western Europe and the USSR, thus making it harder to invade the USSR. The USSR also maintained a very large military presence in East Germany and other Eastern European States. Russia's leaders remain consistently convinced that Western states have never given up on the idea of invading Russia and installing a "Western-style liberal government." Thus, even during the initial thaw of the immediate post-Cold War, Russia maintained hundreds of thousands of troops in Warsaw Pact countries primarily out of insecurity from an invasion.

During the 1990s, independent and neutral Ukraine established partnerships with Russia and other Commonwealth of Independent

States countries. It also established relationships with NATO and the European Union. To Russia, both organizations posed a threat. In Russian eyes, NATO had become an unnecessary military alliance since the Cold War had ended. Why did NATO not disband as the Warsaw Pact had done? Perhaps, Russia reasoned, NATO intended to expand as a military alliance right up to Russia's borders. And so it was with the EU. Is not the purpose of the ever-expanding EU to pose an economic wedge between Russia and its neighbors? Should neighboring states like Ukraine draw closer to the West and gain economic and military power and popular sovereignty governments, Russia itself would be threatened. Russian troops in Eastern Ukraine, joining with ethnic Russians fighting the Ukrainian government, send a clear message that becoming closer to the West is not to be tolerated.

Why had the West not learned the limits of what Russia tolerates along its borders? In 2008, Russian armed forces invaded South Ossetia and clashed with the armed forces of Georgia, a new NATO partnership member. Georgia's military was crushed. Russians had every reason to expect that this action would suffice to put the West on notice that it would not tolerate NATO expansion. But NATO expansion continued undaunted: from 1999 to 2009, NATO accepted 12 new member states and currently has 28 members in total.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian people suffered a wrenching economic adjustment. People struggled; the state struggled. Part of the attraction of Vladimir Putin as leader is his belief that Russian power and influence can be restored. Aided by high petroleum prices beginning at the turn of the century, Putin has become popular by rebuilding the economy and reasserting Russia onto the



*Russian-made battle tanks, fitted with reactive armor but not marked with Russian identification, on their way to Crimea. Russia annexed Crimea after a referendum among the Crimean population. The vote was condemned by the United Nations as invalid.*

world stage. Most Russians today feel that Russia is not sufficiently respected in international affairs. Use of force may be a necessary condition of being respected as a great power. President Putin's commitment of armed forces to Ukraine and, in 2015, to Syria serve dual purposes: they enhance Russian security geopolitically, and they reassert Russia's prestige worldwide.

### FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. Why did the West not react with military force when Crimea joined the Russian Federation?
2. How is the situation in Crimea different from that of Eastern Ukraine?
3. Both Ukraine and Russia were driven by domestic-level factors to act internationally. Explain.

TABLE 8.3

## APPROACHES TO MANAGING INSECURITY

	REALIST	LIBERAL
Approach	Reliance on force or threat of force to manage power	International institutions coordinate actions to manage power
Policies	Balance of power; Deterrence	Collective security; Trade liberalization; Arms control and disarmament

permanent feature of interstate politics so long as anarchy persists. This formulation at least hints at a possibility that states might eliminate war if a single state could amass sufficient power to defeat all other states. Because this possibility is remote, neorealists effectively share the pessimism of classical realists: as a prominent feature of interstate politics, war can never be transcended.

One key concept that informs realism is the prisoner's dilemma (see Chapter 3), a conflict of interest structured in such a way that rational actors choose to harm each other as a best strategy for avoiding a worse outcome. Another key concept is the **security dilemma**, in which even actors with no hostile or aggressive intentions may be led by their own insecurity into a costly and risky arms race. As the political scientist John Herz described it, "Striving to attain security from attack, [states] are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on."<sup>27</sup> The security dilemma, then, results in a permanent condition of tension and power conflicts among states, even when none actually seek conquest and war.

Although realism itself imagines intra- and interstate warfare as enduring features of international politics, realists advance important arguments about how to decrease the frequency and intensity of wars once they break out. Power balancing is the first approach. The core logic of power balancing is simple: when power is unbalanced, stronger actors will be tempted to use their advantage to secure still more power. The greater the imbalance, the greater the temptation. This is because, for the stronger actor, the costs and risks of war seem low in comparison to potential gains, thus making war a *rational* strategy. But when aggressive, insecure, or greedy actors face others with relatively equal power, they are likely to hesitate to go to war because the costs of war are more likely to exceed expected benefits. Realism's logic therefore explains much of what



we observe in interstate politics. It can provide an effective guide to policies aimed at preserving a status quo short of war. However, realist security-management strategies depend on the notion that adversaries share definitions of relevant costs and benefits and that they assign roughly equal values to both. When they do not, a realist strategy for security management can easily go awry, making warfare more rather than less likely, and more rather than less destructive.

## BALANCE OF POWER

In Chapter 4, we saw that a balance of power is a particular configuration of a multipolar international system. But theorists use the terms in other ways as well. So *balance of power* may refer to an equilibrium between any two parties, and *balancing power* may describe an approach to managing power and insecurity. The latter usage is relevant here.

Balance-of-power theorists posit that to manage insecurity, states make rational and calculated evaluations of the costs and benefits of particular policies that determine the state's role in a balance of power. All states in the system are continually making choices to maintain their position vis-à-vis their adversaries, thereby maintaining a balance of power. When that balance of power is jeopardized, as it was by the rise of German power in the early 1900s, insecurity leads states to pursue countervailing alliances or policies.<sup>28</sup> More recently, in October 2015, the United States sent warships to within 12 miles of a Chinese man-made island in the Spratly Island chain to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to the principles of the UN convention on the laws of the sea (UNCLOS), and, at the same time, reassure U.S. allies such as the Philippines and Japan that the United States would not permit unilateral territorial claims or the abridgment of the right of free transit through these contested waters, or unilateral claims to the wealth in mineral resources thought to lie under the sea bed nearby. In this context, the United States is attempting to balance against growing Chinese power in the Pacific by supporting the status quo and the principle that disputes over territory should be resolved through multilateral negotiations.

Alliances are the most important institutional tool for enhancing one's own security and balancing the perceived power potential of one's opponent. If an expanding state seems poised to achieve a dominant position, threatened states can join with others against the expanding state. This action is called external balancing. Formal and institutionalized military alliances play a key role in maintaining a balance of power, as the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances did in the post-World War II world. States may also engage in internal balancing, increasing their own military and economic capabilities to counter potential threatening enemies.

Balancing power can be applied at both international and regional levels. At the international level during the Cold War, for instance, the United States and the Soviet

Union maintained a relative balance of power. If one of the superpowers augmented its power through the expansion of its alliances or through the acquisition of deadlier, more effective armaments, the other responded in kind. Absolute gains were not as critical as relative gains; no matter how much total power one state accrued, neither state could afford to fall behind the other. Gaining allies among uncommitted states in the developing countries through foreign aid or military and diplomatic intervention was one way to ensure they balanced the power. Not maintaining the power balance was too risky a strategy since both sides tended to believe their national survival was at stake.

Balances of power among states in specific geographic regions are also a way to manage insecurity. In South Asia, for example, a balance of power maintains a tense peace between India and Pakistan—a peace made more durable by the presence of nuclear weapons, according to realist thinking. In East Asia, Japan's alliance with the United States creates a balance of power with China. In the Middle East, a balance of power between Israel and its Arab neighbors continues. In some regions, a complex set of other balances has developed: between the economically rich, oil-producing states of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf and the economically poor states of the core Middle East; and between Islamic militants (Iran), moderates (Egypt, Tunisia), and conservatives (Saudi Arabia). With the breakup of the Soviet Union, the newly independent states of Central Asia are struggling for position within a newly emerging regional balance of power that includes both Russia and China.

Realist theorists assert that balancing power is the most important technique for managing insecurity. It is compatible with human nature and the nature of the state, which is to act to protect one's self-interest by maintaining one's power position relative to that of others. If a state seeks preponderance through military acquisitions or offensive actions, then war against that state is acceptable under the balance-of-power system. If all states act similarly, the balance can be preserved without war.

One major limitation of the balance-of-power approach, however, is its requirement that states view established friendships with allies as expendable. According to the theory, should power shift, alliances should also shift to maintain the balance—regardless of friendship. But as liberals and constructivists observe, states exist in a kind of society and they resist giving up their “friends,” even when power shifts. This idea may explain why, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, long-standing U.S. allies such as Britain did not abandon their alliance with the United States, even though the bipolar balance of power had collapsed.

A second limitation stems from the inability to manage security during periods of rapid change. A balance-of-power approach supports the status quo. When change occurs, or if the status quo comes to be perceived as unjust, how should other states respond? Rapid change occurred at the end of the Cold War, for example, with the

dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact alliance. A balance-of-power strategy would have suggested that U.S. allies re-align to fill the power vacuum left by the USSR's demise. Instead, the United States attempted, with mixed success, to lead its allies into a series of escalating confrontations with what it considered "dictatorships" and "supporters of terror." After 2005, the United States' European allies began to balance against U.S. hegemony and unilateralism; however, their effort was stalled by the financial crisis of 2008 and the election of a more circumspect U.S. president, Barack Obama, who preferred multilateral approaches.

## DETERRENCE

Although the subject of deterrence has its own literature, it is best understood in relation to the balance of power as the *mechanism* that enables a balance of power to cause peace. At its most basic level, deterrence is the manipulation of fear to prevent an unwanted action. If I am much bigger than you are, I can expect your fear of being hurt or killed to deter you from attacking me. The same is true of a balance of power: when power is balanced, fear of being defeated in war is expected to keep aggressive states from attacking. By contrast, when a rapidly rising state threatens the balance of power, its confidence of victory may tempt it to war. Thus, deterrence is *how* balancing power works to reduce the likelihood of war.

Deterrence theory posits that the credible *threat* of the use of force can prevent violence such as war. In its 2002 National Security Strategy, for example, the United States made the threat very explicit for those who may pursue global terrorism. The United States writes that it will defend "the United States, the American people, our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our border. . . . We will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country."<sup>29</sup>

Deterrence theory, as initially developed, is based on several key assumptions.<sup>30</sup> First, the theory assumes that rational decision makers want to avoid resorting to war in those situations in which the anticipated cost of aggression is greater than the expected gain. Second, the theory assumes that nuclear weapons—one particularly intense form of harm—pose an unacceptable risk of mutual destruction, and thus, that decision makers will not initiate armed aggression against a nuclear state. Third, the theory assumes that alternatives to war are available to decision makers, irrespective of the issue of contention.

For deterrence to work, then, states must form alliances or build up their arsenals to present a credible threat. Information regarding the threat must be conveyed to the opponent. Knowing that a damaging reaction will counter an aggressive action, the opponent will decide not to resort to force and thereby destroy its own society.

## IN FOCUS

ASSUMPTIONS OF  
DETERRENCE THEORY

- Decision makers are rational.
- Alternatives to war are available.
- The likelihood of escalation to mutual destruction from warfare is high.
- Attempts to deter insecure states may backfire.

As logical as deterrence sounds, and as effective as it seemed during the Cold War—after all, no nuclear war occurred between the superpowers—the very assumptions on which deterrence is based are frequently subject to challenge. Are all top decision makers rational? Might not one individual or a group of individuals risk destruction in deciding to launch a first strike? Might some states be willing to sacrifice a large number of people, as Germany's Adolf Hitler, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, and Iraq's Saddam Hussein were willing to do in the past? How do states credibly convey information about their true capabilities to a potential adversary? Should they? Or would it make more sense to bluff or to lie? For states without nuclear weapons, or for nuclear-weapons states that are launching an attack against a nonnuclear state, the risks of war may seem acceptable: when one's own society is unlikely to be threatened with destruction (as in most asymmetric conflicts), deterrence is more likely to fail.

The security environment makes deterrence even more problematic in the new millennium. First, the rise of terrorism conducted by nonstate actors appears to decrease the possibility that deterrence will work. Because nonstate actors do not hold territory, the threat to destroy such territory in a retaliatory strike cannot be a potent deterrent. Flexible networks—such as Al Qaeda—spread over different geographic areas, rather than an organizational hierarchy located within a particular state, make eliminating those networks very difficult. The increasing willingness of some groups to use suicide terrorism to achieve their objectives has made the logic of deterrence appear particularly shaky. Deterrence depends on the calculation that rational actors will never deliberately act to invite costly reprisals, yet suicide terrorists are willing to sacrifice their own lives. Since loss of life has traditionally been thought of as the highest of all costs, suicide terrorism appears to render deterrence meaningless.<sup>31</sup>

Second, in the changed security environment, the United States may be approaching nuclear primacy.<sup>32</sup> For the first time in nuclear history, the United States may be able to destroy the long-range nuclear arsenals of both Russia and China with a first

strike because of improvements in U.S. nuclear capacity (including the ability to track submarines and mobile missiles) the declining capability of the Russian military, and the still slow pace of China's modernization. In fact, China has no long-range bombers and no advance-warning system. If true, U.S. nuclear primacy would deter other states from attacking the United States, but might tempt the United States to a preemptive nuclear strike against its enemies.

Realist approaches to managing insecurity rely mainly on fear, but as we have seen, they also imagine power in almost purely material terms. To the extent that changing norms, or a rise in the power of ideas, has changed world politics, can realist approaches to managing insecurity continue to be effective? If all realists have is bullets, it is hard to see how realist approaches to managing insecurity can succeed unaided. What is the liberal alternative?

## Liberal Approaches: Collective Security and Arms Control/Disarmament

Unlike realists, liberals have a theory that imagines a world without war. The core logic of the liberal position acknowledges the structural constraint of anarchy and accepts the priority of state insecurity as a factor motivating interstate relations, but argues that states seeking power, including economic power, will be led by self-interest into successively deeper and broader cooperation with other states, even if at times that cooperation is punctuated by war. Over time, cooperation may be institutionalized, reducing the costs of transactions and increasing the costs and risks of cheating. Liberals also focus on the nature of a state's political system, arguing that, in contrast to the realist view, there are essentially "good" (liberal and open) and "bad" (authoritarian and closed) states. Over time, the rewards that accrue to good states will create pressures and incentives on more and more bad states to become responsible partners in an interstate system. Finally, liberal theorists argue that the democratic peace provides powerful empirical support for their arguments, because it is virtually impossible to cite an example of two democratic states going to war against one another. Given these theoretical underpinnings, liberal approaches to managing insecurity call on the international community or international institutions to coordinate actions to reduce the likelihood and destructiveness of war.

### THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY IDEAL

Collective security is captured in the old adage "one for all and all for one." Based on the proposition that aggressive and unlawful use of force by any state against another must be stopped, collective security posits that such unlawful aggression will be met

## IN FOCUS

## ASSUMPTIONS OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY THEORY

- Wars are caused by aggressive states.
- Aggressors must be stopped.
- Aggressors are easily identified.
- Aggression is always wrong.
- Aggressors will be deterred from aggression by the credible threat of a collective response.

by united action: all (or many) states will unite against the aggressor. Potential aggressors will know this fact ahead of time, and thus, will choose not to act.

Collective security makes several fundamental assumptions.<sup>33</sup> One assumption is that the collective benefit of peace outweighs the individual benefits of war, even a successful war. Another assumption is that aggressors—no matter who they are, friends or foes—must be stopped. This assumption presumes that other members of the international community can easily identify the aggressor. Collective security also assumes moral clarity: the aggressor is morally wrong because all aggressors are morally wrong, and all those who are right must act in unison to meet the aggression. Finally, collective security assumes that aggressors know that the international community will act to punish an aggressor.

Of course, this idea is none other than deterrence, but with a twist. If all countries know that the international community will punish aggression, then would-be aggressors will be deterred from engaging in aggressive activity. The twist is that in liberal theory, states are more likely to calculate their interests collectively as shared interests rather than individually, as in the realist view. Both theoretical perspectives accept alliances as a fundamental aspect of interstate politics, but liberals put more faith in them than realists do. Hence, states will be more secure in the belief that would-be aggressors will be deterred by the prospect of united action by the international community. But for collective security to work, the threat to take action must be credible, and there must be cohesion among all the potential enforcers.

Collective security does not always work. In the period between the two world wars, Japan invaded Manchuria and Italy overran Ethiopia. In neither case did other states act as if it was in their collective interest to respond. Were Manchuria and Ethiopia really worth a world war? In these instances, collective security did not work because, as realists assert, the states capable of acting to halt the violence (particularly Britain and France) could not see sufficient national interest in doing so, especially when the

threat of another war with Germany seemed increasingly likely. In the post–World War II era, two major alliance systems—NATO and the Warsaw Pact—arrayed states into two separate camps. States dared not engage in action against an ally or a foe, even if that state was an aggressor, for fear of causing another world war.

Collective security may also fail due to the problematic nature of a key assumption, that aggressors can be easily identified. Easy identification is not always the case. In 1967, Israel launched an armed attack against Egypt: clearly an act of aggression. The week before, however, Egypt had blocked Israeli access to the Red Sea, kicked the UN out of Sinai, and, in combination with Syria and Jordan, moved hundreds of tanks and planes closer to Israel. Clearly these, too, were acts of aggression. Twenty years earlier, the state of Israel had been carved out of Arab real estate. That, too, was an act of aggression. Where does the aggression “begin”? The George W. Bush administration argued in 2003 that its invasion of Iraq was a preemptive war because Saddam Hussein was preparing to operationalize and possibly use a nuclear weapon (or transfer one to a terrorist group). So who is the aggressor? Furthermore, even if an aggressor can be identified, is that party always morally wrong? Due to an understandable fixation on the individual and collective costs of war, collective-security theorists argue, by definition, yes. Yet trying to right a previous wrong is not necessarily wrong; trying to make just a prior injustice is not always unjust. Like the balance of power, at its best, collective security in practice supports the status quo at a specific point in time. If that status quo is unjust, then why isn't the collective security that supports it also unjust?

## ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

**Arms control** and general **disarmament** schemes have been the hope of many liberals over the years since the first Hague Convention of 1899. In the rich history of arms control and disarmament treaties since the nineteenth century—including hundreds of treaties limiting the militarization of the polar regions and space, the types of weapons that may be legitimately used (such as antipersonnel land mines, anti-ballistic-missile defenses, and cluster munitions), or even limiting the testing and development of certain weapons (such as nuclear weapons)—there have been two striking features overall: (1) most signatories to these treaties actually abide by their treaty obligations; cheating is rare; and (2) many of those who have been signatories have been of an avowedly “realist” orientation. This is counterintuitive because, as observed in Chapter 3, realists tend to conflate “security” with “capacity to do physical harm.” Yet even at the very first Hague Convention in 1899, realist states such as Germany, France, Britain, and Russia all found themselves agreeing to limit the quantity and quality of arms they would manufacture and employ in war. Whatever the rationale for reductions in each individual case, the logic of this approach to security is both

powerful and straightforward: fewer weapons means greater security. Regulating arms proliferation (arms control) and reducing the amount of arms and the types of weapons employed (disarmament) should logically reduce the costs of the security dilemma.

During the Cold War, many arms control agreements were negotiated to reduce the threat of nuclear war. For example, in the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-ballistic Missile Systems (ABM treaty), both the United States and the Soviet Union agreed not to use a ballistic missile defense as a shield against a first strike by the other. The Strategic Arms Limitations Talks in 1972 and 1979 (SALT I and SALT II, respectively) put ceilings on the growth of both Soviet and U.S. strategic weapons. However, due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the U.S. Senate never ratified the second SALT treaty. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) was negotiated in 1968 at the United Nations in response to the Cuban missile crisis.

The NPT illustrates both positive and negative effects of such treaties. In force since 1970, the NPT spells out the rules of nuclear proliferation. In the treaty, signatory countries without nuclear weapons agree not to acquire or develop them; states with nuclear weapons promise not to transfer the technology to nonnuclear states and to eventually dismantle their own. During the 1990s, three states that previously had nuclear weapons programs—South Africa, Brazil, and Argentina—dismantled their programs and became parties to the treaty, along with three other states—Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine—that gave up nuclear weapons left on their territory after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As with many of the arms control treaties, however, several key nuclear states and threshold non-nuclear states remain outside the treaty, including Cuba, India, Israel, and Pakistan.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a UN-based agency established in 1957 to disseminate knowledge about nuclear energy and promote its peaceful uses, is the designated guardian of the treaty. The IAEA created a system of safeguards, including inspection teams that visit nuclear facilities and report on any movement of nuclear material, in an attempt to keep nuclear material from being diverted to non-peaceful purposes and to ensure that states that signed the NPT are complying. Inspectors for the IAEA visited Iraqi sites after the 1991 Gulf War and North Korean sites in the mid-1990s. Their purpose in the first case was to verify that illegal materials in Iraq had been destroyed and, in the second case, to confirm that nuclear materials in North Korea were being used for nonmilitary purposes only. But the work of the IAEA has been constantly challenged. In 2009, Iran, which, as a signatory to the NPT was obligated to report any facility actively enriching fissile material, was discovered to have an unreported facility in violation of its treaty obligations. Iran's cheating in 2009 has called into question whether it will abide by the constraints of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed in 2015. This agreement calls upon Iran to cease enrichment of nuclear weapons-grade fuel in exchange for an end to international



economic sanctions. In addition, signatories of the NPT that already possess nuclear weapons are expected to reduce their stockpiles, but they have proven reluctant, in most cases, to do so very quickly.

The end of the Cold War and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union resulted in major new arms control agreements. More arms control agreements between the United States and Russia and its successor states are likely as the latter are forced by economic imperatives to reduce their military expenditures. Yet the logic of arms control agreements is not impeccable. Arms control does not eliminate the security dilemma. You can still feel insecure if your enemy has a bigger or better rock than you do. And, as realists would argue, state policy toward such agreements is never assured. Verification is spotty and difficult to implement. For example, in 1994, the United States and North Korea signed the Agreed Framework: North Korea agreed to stop its nuclear weapons program in exchange for a U.S. package deal of energy supplies, light-water reactors, and security guarantees. The framework collapsed in 2002, when North Korea announced it was pulling out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in response to U.S. decisions to halt shipments of fuel oil supporting North Korea's electric grid. On North Korea's restarting of the Yongbyon nuclear reactor, used to process weapons-grade nuclear material, the United States and Japan halted aid shipments.

In 2003, North Korea publicly admitted that it was engaged in a nuclear-weapons program; it has subsequently tested both long- and short-range missiles, causing great consternation in the region and in the United States. Is North Korea advancing a nuclear weapons program to enhance its own security? Or is North Korea simply bargaining for more aid in return for promising to halt its nuclear-weapons program? The agreement brokered in 2007 as a result of negotiations conducted among six parties—North Korea, China, Japan, the United States, South Korea, and Russia—directed that North Korea would close its main nuclear reactor in exchange for a package of fuel, food, and other aid. The agreement has proven highly unstable, however. In 2008, North Korea's leader, the late Kim Jong-Il, threatened to resume weapons development because the promised aid package was too small and had arrived too slowly. Later that year, further progress was stalled by rumors that Kim was near death. Kim reappeared in 2009, after which North Korea exploded a nuclear device underground, to widespread dismay and condemnation. Little progress has been made since that time. North Korea tested again in 2013 and in 2016, and in 2014, it tested a new long-range missile, capable, it claimed, of striking targets as far away as Japan.

Given how risky such a scheme would be, the complete disarmament envisioned by liberal thinkers is unlikely. Unilateral disarmament would place disarmed states in a highly insecure position, and cheaters could be rewarded. But incremental disarmament—as outlined in the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which bans the development, production, and stockpiling of chemical weapons—remains a possibility. However, the increasing sophistication and miniaturization of chemical

and biological weapons makes them difficult to detect, so it is hard to guarantee compliance. Liberals place their faith in a combination of the self-interest of states (these programs are expensive) and international institutions such as the IAEA to monitor adherence to such limited disarmament schemes.

## NATO: Managing Insecurity in a Changing Environment

Managing insecurity is a particular challenge in times of transition in the international system. Such transitions can occur when major powers undergo a change in their actual or perceived ability to project power, protect allies, or threaten enemies. The end of the Cold War was such a moment of transition, as the Soviet Union dissolved and communist regimes were replaced with proto-democratic ones. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought an immediate end to the Warsaw Pact, leaving many countries in Eastern Europe without a major power ally. The end of the Cold War also affected NATO, the Western alliance whose purpose was to balance the now-defunct Warsaw Pact. With this change, some scholars predicted the imminent demise of NATO. What happened, however, was not the organization's demise but its reconfiguration in terms of both the tasks it undertakes and the expansion of its membership.

With the bloody civil war in Yugoslavia and attendant refugee crises in Europe, NATO increasingly took on peacekeeping and stabilization roles in Bosnia. In 1999, NATO undertook its largest military operation since its creation in 1949: Operation Allied Force, the air war over Serbia. Without UN authorization, NATO forces conducted a 78-day air war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in an attempt to halt attacks against ethnic Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosovo. The war resulted in a popular uprising and the attendant overthrow of the Serbian leadership, the extradition of the Serbian strongman Slobodan Milošević to the Hague War Crimes Tribunal, and the petition by Serbia to join NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

Since the "global war on terrorism" began in September 2001, NATO has sought to maintain its relevance in the new security environment.<sup>34</sup> NATO has enhanced its operational capabilities to keep up with technology, created a rapid reaction force to respond to crises, and streamlined its military command structure. It has employed forces "out of area" in Afghanistan and Libya. Its members have helped train the Iraqi military, although the organization did not join the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq.

NATO membership has also expanded as its tasks have diversified. In 1999, the first wave of new members following the end of the Cold War, including Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, were admitted. These new members were to be contributors to enhanced security in the region, not just the recipients of a security umbrella. It has proven more difficult than anticipated, however, to convince these states to make

necessary defense reforms, increase defense expenditures, and modernize equipment and training. Yet despite these problems, a second wave of members was admitted in 2004. They included Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Albania and Croatia formally joined in 2009, bringing the total NATO membership to 28, along with 22 Partnership for Peace member states and 7 Mediterranean Dialogue states. This round of admissions was a reaction to the war on terrorism: a search by the United States and others for dependable allies who could maintain bases more proximate to the Middle East at a cheaper cost. The newer NATO members could curry favor with the United States and did not have to make reforms to be admitted to the organization.

During most of the 1990s, Russia opposed NATO enlargement, alarmed at seeing its old allies coming under NATO auspices. Russian concerns were reasonable. If NATO's reason for existence was the Soviet threat of invasion and conquest of Western Europe, and the Soviet Union no longer exists, why, asked the Russians, should NATO still exist, much less expand? This question may explain why, for many in Russia, the expansion of the alliance was viewed as a potential military threat. After 9/11, Russian opposition softened, especially once it realized that NATO's newest members were turning it into a kind of "toothless lion." But after the accession of Vladimir Putin to the presidency of the Russian Federation in 2000, opposition to NATO expansion has intensified to the point where Russia intervened militarily in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014) to put NATO on notice that it would no longer tolerate further eastward expansion of NATO. Given that under Putin's leadership, Russia's military has become progressively more effective as compared to its neighbors, and given its unquestioned status as a nuclear superpower, there seems to be little NATO can do to counter Russia's opposition.

To most member states, particularly the United States, NATO expansion has been seen as a natural consequence of winning the Cold War, establishing a new post-Cold War security order, and more recently, trying to respond to new security threats posed by terrorism. Some realists see NATO expansion as a means of achieving relative gains over Russia and further enhancing Western security, while still others argue that NATO should have disbanded after 1991 when its main reason for being disappeared. Many liberals view expansion as a means of strengthening democracy in former communist states and bringing institutional stability to areas threatened with crises, and as a way to use a security institution to facilitate membership in a much more important set of economic and diplomatic institutions, in particular the European Union. But although NATO members have tried to convince Russia that NATO's growth is not an offensive threat, Russia has not viewed this expansion as benign.

For constructivists, the issue of NATO expansion powerfully engages issues of national identity. For states formerly dominated by the Soviet Union, accession to NATO reflected their resentment over that control. Russia opposed NATO expansion not only over security concerns, but also due to the implied insult. To a constructivist,

then, the politics of NATO expansion highlight the nonmaterial bases of interstate relations between the successor states of the former Soviet Union and the former Warsaw Pact member states.

## In Sum: A Changing View of International Security

Traditionally, international security has meant states' security and the defense of states' territorial integrity from external threats or attack by other states. This was because only states could master the technology of mass killing; as a result, interstate war proved the most intense (in terms of deaths-per-unit-of-time) threat to life and property. Over time, this definition has broadened to include intrastate conflicts as well. In both situations, conflicts arise not only over control of territory but also over control of government and ideas. Although major interstate wars, such as the last century's two world wars, concentrate destruction in time, intrastate violence has resulted in just as much or even more destruction. It has become progressively less likely that the destruction civil wars cause can be contained within their states of origin. Instead, now more than any time in world history, civil conflicts may involve regional and international actors. This idea has been the major focus of this chapter.

But a new trend is occurring: the outsourcing of security from nationals in uniform to private security firms and robots.<sup>35</sup> Companies with such deliberately obscure names as Blackwater (currently known as Academi, but now a part of Constellis Holdings), Sandline International, BDM, COFRAS, and Southern Cross are new actors in security. G4S based in London is one of the largest, operating in 120 countries and having more than 620,000 employees. These contracted private companies perform diverse tasks: servicing military airplanes and ships, providing food for armies, demining, protecting high-profile officials and their families, guarding and interrogating prisoners of war, training troops, and sometimes carrying out low-intensity military operations on a client's behalf. Their "soldier" employees—the mercenaries of the twenty-first century—come from all over the world, from the Ukraine to Fiji, Australia to Chile and South Africa. Many are former government military personnel. They serve in locations from Sierra Leone to Sri Lanka, from Bosnia to the Democratic Republic of Congo, from Iraq to Afghanistan to South Sudan and Kenya.

The use of semi-intelligent or guided robots in war, as in the case of drones (previously discussed), is another form of "outsourcing" that offers a similar benefit to private-security contracting: casualties will not be human beings who are representing the state as nationals.

Today, the logistical, legal, and ethical problems emerging from each type of outsourcing remain unclear. Are private contractors merely mercenaries acting out of pecu-



Private security contractors, such as these Blackwater employees, were hired by the U.S. government after the start of the 2003 Iraq war to perform tasks such as protecting high-profile officials, transporting troops and materials, and engaging in occasional combat operations. The role of private contractors in international security has provoked troubling questions about accountability, lines of authority, and the rule of law.

niary self-interest? Or are they pragmatically solving problems that a state's military could not otherwise solve? Are they cost effective? Where do their loyalties lie? To what state or what ideology do they belong? What is their relationship with the organized military? Can they be held accountable for actions they take in war? In other words, do standard of ethics and morals in war apply to these forces? Should the international community employ them for UN-mandated peacekeeping? As regards robots such as drones, what safeguards exist to prevent their arbitrary or irresponsible use? As more and more states acquire this technology, how will they be regulated? Certain of its rectitude, the United States has already set dangerous precedents, reserving the right, for example, to target and kill terrorists—even U.S. citizens—on the sovereign territory of other states. How should the United States react if, say, China used a drone to target and kill a person in Nebraska it considered a dangerous terrorist?

In the waning years of the twentieth century, ideas among theorists have changed concerning who or what should be protected. Changing notions about what security is and who should be protected have been a key topic in constructivist discourse. Should only states be protected? Or should individuals be protected as well, not only from

interstate rivalries but from failures of their own government to protect life, property, and ideas? The idea that states and the international community have the obligation, indeed the responsibility, to protect human beings, even if it means intervention in the affairs of another state, is the norm of humanitarian intervention.

But what should the individual be protected against? Should protection include more than that against the physical violence typically associated with interstate conflict, civil war, genocide, nuclear weapons, and terrorism, as discussed in this chapter? Should the concept of security be broadened? In 2004, the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change identified additional threats to what it labeled *human security*, a term that has increasingly been used since the early 1990s. Should individuals be protected from infectious diseases and environmental degradation? Should they be protected from the harmful effects of economic globalization or from poverty? We now turn to these economic issues.

## Discussion Questions

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1. How can we identify an aggressor in international conflicts? Is such identification important? Why or why not?
2. Before World War II, European colonial powers had relatively little difficulty controlling their large overseas empires with few troops. After World War II, this situation changed dramatically. What explains the change?
3. An American decision maker charged with U.S.–Russian Federation policy requests policy memos from realists (an offensive realist and a defensive realist), a liberal, a radical, and a constructivist. How might their respective recommendations differ?
4. North Korea has challenged the norm of nonproliferation, embodied in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Is Iran’s nuclear development also a challenge to the NPT? Or is it within the treaty’s bounds? What are the legal issues? The political issues?

## Key Terms

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**arms control** (p. 307)

**asymmetric conflict** (p. 283)

**disarmament** (p. 307)

**diversionary war** (p. 274)

**guerrilla warfare** (p. 281)

**humanitarian intervention** (p. 293)

**interstate war** (p. 264)

**intrastate war** (p. 264)