Peace and Democracy

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Glossary

Democratic Peace The concept, or historical pattern, that modern democracies do not wage war on each other but pursue peaceful means of settling policy disputes or sharing scarce resources.

Liberal Theory In this context, the view that a democratic nation, other conditions aside, is inherently more likely by reason of its form of government to promote and pursue a policy of peace than is a nondemocratic nation; contrasted with the realist theory.

Militarized Dispute A description of conflict between nations that falls short of actual combat on a significant scale, but that nevertheless involves some form of confrontation such as threat of military action or the deployment of forces, or even limited use of force.

Realist Theory In this context, the view that the conduct of nations is determined mainly or entirely by the power relations of the states involved, and that the form of government of a nation therefore has no significant role in determining issues of war and peace; contrasted with the liberal theory.

This article is a revised version of my article in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Peace.* It draws on work published in Gleditsch (1992), Gleditsch and Hegre (1997, 2004), Gleditsch, Hegre & Strand (2007), and Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates & Gleditsch (2001). The work was supported financially by the Research Council of Norway.

Challenging The Realist Paradigm

Democracy and peace are two of the most important goals of international development. Most countries, even many that are not highly democratic or very peaceful, pay lip service to these ideals, as do the United Nations and other international organizations. The central question of this article is whether these two goals are compatible with each other, or even mutually support each other. Realist theory, traditionally the leading mode of thought within the academic study of international relations, views regime type and other national characteristics, except power, as being of little relevance to relations between states. The international system is seen as near-anarchic, with little legal regulation, without a central powerful authority, and with little possibility of disciplining its powerful members for deviant behavior. Thus, issues of war and peace will be decided mainly by the structure of power between states, as determined by national military capabilities, conditions for successful deterrence, and alliance patterns. Periods of peace are understood mainly as the successful practice of a balance of power between states.

Democratic peace theory challenges the realist paradigm in claiming that there is a growing zone of peace between democracies, which on a permanent basis have abandoned war as a means of settling disputes among themselves. In line with this thinking, the continued spread of democracy is seen as promoting a more peaceful international community of states. If this holds true, the promotion of democracy is likely to provide a bonus in terms of peace.

The Democratic Peace Phenomenon

The relationship between international peace and democracy can be analyzed at three different levels. At the dyadic or pairwise level, a number of studies have found that *democracies rarely, if ever, fight one another.* At the nation level, most analyses have concluded that democracies participate in war just as much as countries with other political systems. Whether this means that they are no more peaceful in their overall behavior is a more controversial point. At the system level, the question is whether a world with a higher share of democracies will also be more peaceful. Most of those who have addressed

the systemic question have assumed that the answer can be inferred from findings at one of the other levels of analysis. To date, there is relatively little empirical analysis at the system level. Civil war is now the dominant form of armed conflict, so we finally ask whether there is a democratic peace at the intrastate level.

Democracies Do Not Fight One Another

Many Enlightenment philosophers saw democratic government as encouraging a more peaceful interaction between states. More than 200 years ago, Immanuel Kant described a pacific union created by liberal republics. At that time, there were few, if any, democracies in our sense of the word, and Kant's prescription for peace had little force as a description of the international system. But in the nineteenth century, democratic government took hold in an increasing number of countries. The observation that democracies do not fight one another was noted at least as early as the late 1930s, and a first statistical study was published in the mid-1960s. However, it was not until the 1980s that the empirical study took off, giving rise to an enormous and sometimes heated debate.

Patterns of warfare after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 have been intensively studied using data from the Correlates of War Project. If the thresholds for 'democracy' and 'war' are not set too low, there are few if any clear cases of war between democracies during this period. Indeed, this regularity has been characterized by Jack Levy as being as close to a law as anything we have in international relations. Ignoring cases that result from quirks in the data (notably imprecise timing of regime changes), the three most problematic cases are the Spanish–American War in 1898, World War I, and the British declaration of war on Finland in World War II. While Spain had an elected parliament, the monarchy retained considerable executive power and US decision makers did not perceive Spain as a democracy. Regarding World War I, some have argued that Germany was largely democratic in 1914 when war broke out against Britain, France, and other Western democracies. However, even more clearly than in the case of the King of Spain, the German Emperor had special prerogatives, particularly in foreign and defense policy. This is one reason why systematic data on democracy score Germany as less democratic than its main opponents in the West. Finally, in World War II, the Finnish dispute was with the Soviet Union, not with Western democracies. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941 and forced Stalin to change sides in the war, Finland found itself on the wrong side. Following pressure from Stalin, the United Kingdom declared war on Finland. Technically, Finland was at war for three years with the UK (and with several British Dominions, but not with the United States). However, there was no fighting between Finland and the Western democracies, who regarded Finland more as a victim than as an enemy. Overall, the empirical evidence points to a much lower probability of war between democracies than for other combinations of states. War is usually defined as organized military action with annual battle deaths exceeding 1000. The peace between democracies appears to hold up if the threshold on violence is considerably lower, for example, set at the 25 annual battle-deaths used as the threshold for the Uppsala/PRIO conflict data. However, a number of militarized disputes have occurred between democracies, that is, conflicts with threats of military action, force deployed, and even limited use of force. Many such disputes are conflicts over fishing rights ('cod wars'), where the use of force is generally between fishing vessels on the one hand and military or coast guard vessels on the other, with no direct forceful confrontations between the representatives of the two states. Indeed, such incidents may be illustrative of the reluctance of democracies to use force against each other, even in the case of sharp disputes. Other low-level conflicts are more serious, such as the repeated border incidents between Ecuador and Peru, some of which have taken place in periods where both countries were under democratic rule. However, such disputes have claimed a very small number of lives.

Although the debate about the democratic peace frequently assumes that countries can be neatly divided into democracies and nondemocracies, empirical studies face similar threshold problems as in defining war. In the previous century, few countries satisfied the requirements that most observers today would specify for calling a country democratic, such as universal suffrage, freedom of speech, and accountability of elected officials. Indeed, some studies of the democratic peace have used suffrage thresholds as low as 10%. Of course, if even such wide definitions of democracy yield very few wars between democracies, or none, more restrictive definitions will not alter the relationship. In terms of the two main dimensions of democracy (or 'polyarchy') used by Robert Dahl and Tatu Vanhanen, competition between political alternatives seems to be more decisive than the level of participation in promoting the values that lead to a democratic peace.

There is less agreement on why democracies do not fight each other than on the statistical regularity. The normative explanation argues that democracies use nonviolent means to resolve domestic political conflicts. A competitive political system requires second-order agreement that alternative views are legitimate to take precedence over disagreements over political issues. When the verdict is in from the ultimate arbiter of

political disagreements, the people or its elected representatives, the parties generally accept the outcome or challenge it only by nonviolent means, such as verbal protest or legal procedures. When two democracies face a disagreement, they transfer this nonviolent conflict behavior to the interstate level. Democracies have stable expectations that nonviolent conflict behavior will be reciprocated. In Rudolph Rummel's words, democracy is "a general method of nonviolence." This is why democracies resolve territorial issues or competition for limited resources like oil, freshwater, or transnational fish stocks by negotiation and agreements for the shared use of the resource rather than by violence. Nonviolent behavior may, of course, also be observed in mixed democratic/nondemocratic dyads. Democracy is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for dyadic peace.

A competing explanation for the democratic peace, promoted by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and others, is framed in terms of institutional constraints. The executive power is answerable directly to the people or to its representatives and is bound to seek their tacit or explicit consent before engaging in dramatic forms of conflict behavior. This will delay escalation in a crisis, and increase the probability of finding a diplomatic solution. A variant of this argument suggests that war is more costly to the general population than to the central decision makers. In a democratic political system the decision makers will eventually be called to account for whatever support they have given to policies that led to war. To forestall this, decision makers will be more cautious. At first glance, the structural constraints explanation might seem unsuited to explain why the overall participation in war is as high for democracies as for nondemocracies. However, democracies selectively choose to fight in low-cost wars and other wars that they can win quickly. The reluctance of the public to support the war impedes the executive only in cases where a costly war is expected. A modified structural argument is that only certain types of democracies with a higher degree of restraint on the central decision makers, such as parliamentarian systems (as opposed to presidential ones), consensus democracies (as opposed to majoritarian systems), and federal systems (as opposed to unitary states), will be less war-prone. Both the normative and structural explanations have their adherents and attempts to test them against each other have been somewhat inconclusive. For one thing, it is difficult to measure the intervening variables, which are generally attitudinal, for all or most of the nation dyads in the statistical studies. A stable set of mutual expectations, for instance, cannot be measured with the same degree of validity as a particular institutional pattern. Some argue that upon closer examination, the analytical distinction between the normative and the structural explanations becomes less clear and they blend into each other.

A number of scholars have looked for factors that might explain both democracy and peace, making the democratic peace spurious. For instance, Melvin Small and J. David Singer have suggested that democratic states are few and far apart. Since war primarily takes place between neighbors, a lack of democratic neighbors might account for the lack of war between democracies. In fact, democracies tend to cluster together rather than to be farther apart than the average pair of states. Thus, this factor can hardly account for the lack of war between democracies. Other attempts to find third variables that would render the relationship spurious have included wealth, alliance patterns, an international environment where democracies face a common enemy (as they did during the Cold War), or a shared preference for the status quo among democracies. Some of these factors raise problems of endogeneity; for instance, democracy might influence the alliance pattern while the alliance patterns also reinforce democracy.

The Cold War explanation for the democratic peace has sometimes been reinforced with an argument that because wars are relatively infrequent and because democracies initially were few and far between, the lack of war between democracies might be a statistical accident. According to this argument, it is only during the Cold War that we find a fairly large number of democracies. The lack of war between these countries might be accounted for by the fact that most of them were allied with the United States, or by the peculiar stable bipolar pattern of mutual deterrence that prevailed during the Cold War, the so-called Long Peace. However, double-democratic dyads tended to be peaceful even before the Cold War. And as time passes since the end of the Cold War without war breaking out between two democracies, the force of the realist argument is weakened. Many realists expected armed conflict to rise after the Cold War. As clearly shown by recent compilations of conflict data, the immediate aftermath of the Cold War with the breakup of federal states like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was accompanied by violence, most of it intrastate. But very soon this was more than compensated for by the ending of a number the armed conflicts that were fueled by the Cold War, including several conflicts in Central America and in Southern Africa. By 2005, the number of ongoing armed conflicts was lower than ever since the mid-1970s and the probability that any particular country was involved in an armed conflict had not been lower since the mid-1950s. The overall severity of the world's armed conflicts, as measured by battle-deaths, shows a long-term decline since the peak of violence in World War II. The annual figures are subject to spikes for particularly large wars, like the Korean War and the Vietnam War, but the spikes are lower over time.

Currently, the strongest candidate for an alternative explanation is to account for the democratic peace

through economic development, market norms, or simply 'capitalism'. Erik Gartzke, Håvard Hegre, and Michael Mousseau are associated with such lines of thinking. In this perspective, a liberal market economy is a cause of peace as well as a democratic political system.

While the relationship between shared democracy and the lack of war is one of the strongest empirical relationships found in international relations, the lack of democracy is by no means the most powerful explanation for international war. Multivariate studies of war indicate that more of the variation in interstate war over the last two centuries can be accounted for by factors such as geographical distance, wealth, and alliance patterns. During most of this period, democracy was relatively rare among nations and joint democracy even rarer among dyads. If the democratic peace continues to hold up in a post-Cold War world of an increasing number of democracies, it will become an increasingly significant factor in accounting for the lack of war.

Some skeptics have looked in detail at specific conflicts where war was narrowly avoided and have failed to find evidence of either structural constraints or nonviolent norms of conflict behavior at work. Rather, they have found traditional realist factors such as power politics to have prevented full-scale war in the end, as when Christopher Layne examined four crises between the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany in the period from 1861 through 1923. Others have examined these and other cases, reaching different conclusions. For instance, political factors have been invoked to explain how Scandinavia was transformed from a region ridden by domestic and interstate wars to a virtual zone of peace. The interpretation of single cases seems highly dependent both on the theoretical preferences of the researcher, as well as those of the historians whose work is synthesized. Most of the history of war and peace has been written in a realist mode. The theory of the democratic peace may stimulate a reexamination of the historical description of interstate relations.

It has been suggested by William Thompson and others that the democratic peace thesis may put the cart before the horse in that the resolution of regional conflicts frequently predates the development of democracy. Thus it may be peace that leads to democracy rather the other way around. On the other hand, democracies tend to win the wars they join and regimes which lose are frequently subject to regime change. In this sense, war can be seen as the midwife of democracy. The political transformation of Japan and Germany after World War II are classical cases. The three waves of democracy following World War I, World War II, and the Cold War are associated with the defeat of autocracies in conflict with coalitions dominated by democracies.

Democracies Fight as Much as Other States

The persistence of the empirical finding that democracies do not fight wars against each other is matched by the lack of a relationship between the political system and war at the nation level. Most studies have found that democracies participate as much in war as do nondemocracies, at least if one looks at the entire period since the Napoleonic wars. Some studies have found democracies to be less (or more) involved in war in smaller areas or for shorter time periods. For instance, democracies have been somewhat less involved in war during the Cold War and in the post-Cold War period. Many have nevertheless found the lack of war between democracies and the high participation of democracies in war to be a paradoxical combination, which raises questions about the peacefulness of democracies. Statistically, the two findings are quite compatible, and they imply that war is more frequent between democracies and nondemocracies than between two nondemocracies. In other words, the politically mixed dyads are the most war-prone. These findings do not depend much on the exact threshold set for democracy or for the level of violence.

One possible explanation for why democracies fight as frequently as others is that they are attacked by nondemocracies, and that their own war participation is mostly reactive. By their very example, democracy may be seen as a subversive challenge, provoking attack from neighboring autocracies. Such a pattern would be consistent with a view of democracies as constrained in their foreign policies, as well as with the explanation of the democratic peace in terms of a nonviolent normative culture in democracies. However, democracies do not initiate war less frequently than do nondemocracies, but war initiation is notoriously difficult to measure. The question of the initiation of violence easily becomes mixed up with patterns of escalation and extension of the conflict. For instance, in several studies of interstate war the United States is coded as the initiator of the Vietnam War in 1965, which the Correlates of War Project takes as tipping the balance of the war from a civil war to an interstate war. Vietnam was not at peace when the United States escalated the war. The question of preventive or preemptive war also complicates the link between war initiation and peacefulness. The six most violent interstate wars since the Congress of Vienna were the two World Wars, the Sino–Japanese War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Iran–Iraq War – all of which occurred in the twentieth century, each of which claiming more than half a million battle-deaths. All of these were initiated by nondemocracies, initially with other nondemocracies as the original targets. Generally, while democracies participate in war as frequently as do nondemocracies, they are less frequent participants at the onset of war. Democracies tend to join the war later, they may escalate the war, but they are less frequently present at its creation.

One reason for the frequent war-fighting of democracies, is that they more frequently participate in military

alliances among themselves and also with nondemocracies. Thus, in the large multicountry wars of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first (the two World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War as well as the coalition wars over Kuwait, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq), the number of participants allied with the democracies was much higher than the number of countries on the other side. Many democracies that are pulled into war through their alliances suffer relatively minor losses – the Netherlands, for instance, suffered but 100 casualties in the Korean War – and their participation may be seen as more symbolic and political than as a material contribution to the war effort.

Rudolph Rummel has shown that democratic countries suffer much smaller losses in war than autocratic countries. Democracies are known to show greater respect for human life in the sense that they generally do not engage in genocide of their own citizens or those of other countries, they rarely, if ever, permit scarcities of food to develop into mass starvation, and they have more frequently abolished the death penalty. It would be consistent with this to find that democracies tend to avoid fighting wars in a way that will sacrifice great numbers of people in meaningless confrontations. However, as Dan Reiter and Allan Stam have shown, democracies have usually overpowered their opponents in war and a disproportionate share of the violence has taken place on the territory of nondemocracies. Democracies are also generally more advanced technologically and can project force at greater distances. This is a plausible explanation for why democracies suffer fewer casualties and it does not necessarily imply that democracies are more peaceful. The lower casualty rate of democracies is even compatible with notions of democracies as arrogant and self-righteous, and anxious to fight their wars by proxy in the Third World where their violence will affect the democracies less.

Even if there is no clear tendency for established democracies to participate more or less in war, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder have argued that the process of political change may destabilize countries and make them more prone to domestic as well as international violence. However, as Michael Ward and Kristian S. Gleditsch argue, changes away from democracy are probably at least as dangerous as changes in the other direction. And the risks resulting from political change are eventually overcome as the system stabilizes at a high level of democracy.

More Democracy, More Peace?

During the last 200 years, there has been a process of increasing democratization at the national level. This process has not been monotonic; rather there have been 'waves' of democratization, in Samuel Huntington's famous phrase, followed by periods of stagnation and setbacks. The current wave of democratization, which started well before the end of the Cold War, has sent the share of independent countries with a reasonably democratic political system well over 50% higher than ever before. Although many new democracies eventually turn out to have low respect for civil and political rights behind the façade of electoral democracy, the third wave has not yet crested.

The most pressing question arising out of the debate about the democratic peace is whether we should expect a rising level of democracy to be accompanied by less war in the international system? Most of those who have commented on this question have assumed that the lack of war between democracies implies logically that an increase in the share of democracies (which also implies an increasing share of jointly democratic dyads) must lead to less war. However, the lack of a relationship between democracy and the overall participation of countries in war might lead us to expect no change in the frequency of war with increasing levels of democracy. At a low level of global democracy an increase in the number of democracies produces more double-democratic dyads (which are peaceful), but also more politically mixed dyads (which are the most war-prone). In the early stages of a process of global democratization, adding one new democracy implies a much greater increase in mixed dyads than in double-democratic dyads. If the probability of war in the different kinds of dyads remains the same, the initial process of democratization should be accompanied by an increasing frequency of war in the system as a whole. Only when a certain threshold is passed, further democratization will lead to a decreasing frequency of war in the system. Thus, the relationship between democracy and war at the system level might assume an inverted-U shape. In the long run, if democracies do not fight one another at all, war will be eliminated in a world where all countries are democratic.

Aggregate figures for the development over time of democracy and peace (**Figure 1**) provide tentative support to the idea that war first increases and then declines with increasing global levels of democracy. Since most wars take place between neighbors, a regional perspective is probably more relevant. In Europe, the process of democratization may be far enough along that increasing democratization will contribute to reducing the incidence of war (disregarding the short-term destabilization resulting from political change). But in other areas with a low degree of democracy, such as the Middle East, the emergence of more democratic regimes may be interpreted as a challenge to authoritarian rule and provoke new wars. However, if democracy does become the hegemonic form of government worldwide it is less likely that an authoritarian country can attack a democratic neighbor without retribution.

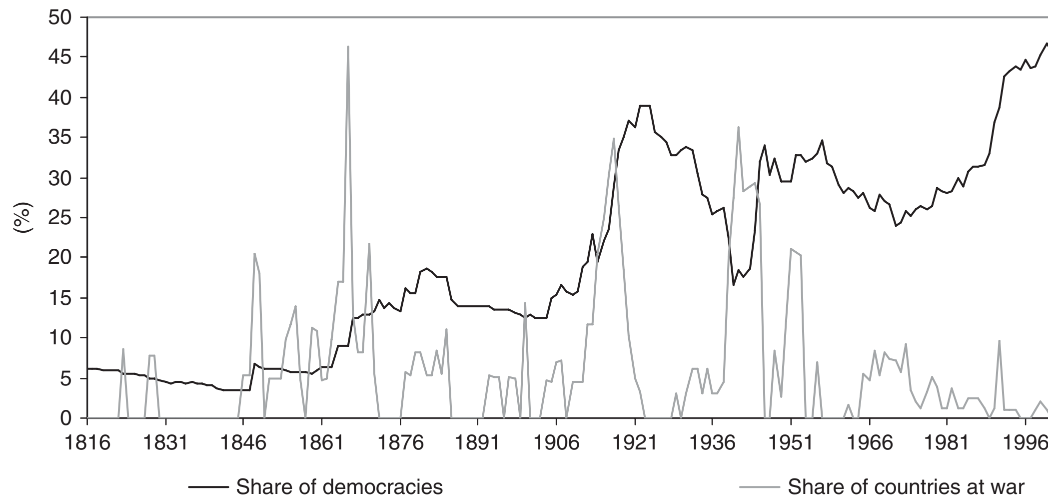

Figure 1 The share (%) of democratic countries 1816–2002 and the share of countries participating in interstate war during the same period. Democracy data from the Polity project, war data from Correlates of War.

Democracies and Civil War

Since the end of World War II most wars have been civil wars, although the bloodiest wars are still mostly international ones. During the period 1946–2005, there were 231 armed conflicts with more than 25 battle-deaths in a single year in 140 countries. Since the end of the Cold War, most conflicts have taken place in the Third World and the large majority have been internal.

The very idea of democracy as a 'method of nonviolence' would indicate that democracies should solve their internal problems without using violence. The more democratic the country, the higher the regard for the political rights of minorities, which may one day become majorities or parts of ruling coalitions. On the other hand, resource mobilization theorists argue that the more democratic a regime, the more conflict it will experience. Openness in a political system encourages activity of all kinds and all of it will probably not take a peaceful form. A measure of conflict may be a price that democracies have to pay for allowing individual freedom. This might lead us to expect more internal violence with increasing levels of democracy and might explain why the end of the Cold War released some violence that was previously repressed by autocratic forces. Treating these two perspectives as complementary rather than competing has led Edward Muller, Erich Weede, Håvard Hegre, and others to conclude that internal violence is likely to be low under very strict authoritarian rule, but also in highly democratic countries. In the former, there is no opportunity to form an opposition, and any rebellion is nipped in the bud before it develops into an organized force. In democracies there is no motive for rebellion, because conflicts are handled in nonviolent ways. In the in-between societies – the semidemocracies – the opposition is able to organize. But it is unable to get full recognition for the legitimacy of its demands, and the political bargaining process is skewed in favor of the executive authority. In this in-between area, then, armed rebellion may seem justified and may offer greater promise of change than to wait for the rulers to change their ways peacefully. Empirical studies clearly support this view, for civil wars as well as for minor internal armed conflicts.

Some democratic countries have experienced severe cases of terrorism during and following the Cold War. Some of this terrorism has been supported politically and financially from nondemocratic neighboring states. Jan Oscar Engene has linked the occurrence of terrorism to flaws in the practice of democracy and a relatively recent legacy of authoritarian rule, as in Germany and Japan. Stable, well-established, and 'inclusive' democracies are generally free of significant political terrorism.

The Limits of Democratic Peace

The democratic peace thesis is one of the most promising findings to come out of the quantitative study of war and peace. Indeed, the observation that democracies do not fight one another is so simple and obvious that it is a little surprising that it was not made earlier. Of course, the idea that a single factor (a common dedication to democracy) could virtually eliminate the possibility of war between two countries may seem too good to be true. The first systematic study was made by a criminologist, Dean Babst, and as an outsider he may have found it easier to spot the most obvious correlate of war, while the insiders were pursuing various more sophisticated and theoretically grounded but eventually less productive leads.

There may also be political reasons for the initial reluctance of scholars in peace research and international

relations to take the democratic peace thesis seriously. Virtually all systematic research on the causes of war was taking place in countries affected by the Cold War. Research attributing major importance to political democracy seemed propagandistic to many peace researchers and others who subscribed to a 'third way' between East and West and disliked anything that smacked of propaganda for 'the free world' (which included many nonfree countries). The debate on imperialism in the 1970s focused on the belligerent nature of some of the leading democracies (notably France and the US) rather than on their peacefulness toward other democracies. On the other hand, the idea of a democratic peace seemed too 'soft' for many realists, who felt more comfortable with the traditional ideas of bipolarity and deterrence. Of course, since the democratic peace offers no particular formula for peace between different regime types (short of converting the nondemocracies to democracy) realist ideas were more relevant to the main dividing lines in the Cold War world. The emergence of zones of peace based on shared democracy among traditional enemies, for instance, in Western Europe, could be attributed to their common fear of the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War ended not only the bipolar deterrence pattern, but also the hegemony of realist thought.

The emergence of the idea of a democratic peace is part of a broader revival of liberal theories of international relations. Bruce Russett and John Oneal in particular have revived interest in the old idea that war does not pay for economically highly interdependent countries and have found new evidence for it. Most wars have taken place between highly interdependent states, but that is now more commonly interpreted as an artifact of the relationship between contiguity and war, although relating economic interdependence to peace remains more controversial than the democratic peace. There is new optimism about the respect for international law and increased recognition of international organizations.

However, the idea of the democratic peace remains politically controversial and is attacked both from 'the right' and 'the left'. As noted, the realist counterattack is based mainly on the idea that the democratic peace is at best a temporary phenomenon arising during the Cold War and a spurious effect of the stable bipolar pattern of that period. Radical and liberal critics of the democratic peace thesis, on the other hand, have focused on the use of covert action and overt military intervention against regimes that resisted the hegemonic world order. For instance, during the Cold War, the United States repeatedly tried to undermine radical regimes in Latin America. These types of confrontations do not reach the level of violence required to qualify as wars, but they do not exemplify a nonviolent system of conflict resolution either. The extensive colonialism practiced by democratic countries is also difficult to reconcile with the idea of the peacefulness of democracies. The response of the proponents of the democratic peace hypothesis has usually been that at least the more drastic forms of covert action and military intervention are morally impossible to justify for democracies when the opponent is fully democratic. Military interventions and covert action against regimes like Castro's Cuba or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua are brought within the realm of the politically feasible and morally quasidefensible precisely by the lack of democratic practice in these regimes.

Most proponents of the democratic peace have strong reservations against increased interventionism in the service of democracy. State-sponsored massacres in Rwanda, Bosnia, and elsewhere helped to promote the idea of 'humanitarian intervention' as a means to prevent the worst excesses of autocrats. The Clinton administration's 'strategy of enlargement' aimed at expanding the world community of democracies. Following the events of 11 September 2001, President George W. Bush and his administration initiated major military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although these invasions had several aims, both attempted to establish democratic regimes in the target countries. Many have questioned the wisdom and morality of such democratization by force. By the time of writing (end of 2006) the prospects for achieving stable democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq do not seem very bright.

A peace-building strategy based on military intervention effectively has to be put into force by the major powers, who may be unable or unwilling to distinguish between global interests and their own. It is also questionable whether democracy is likely to take hold if countries are forced to democratize. Germany and Japan after World War II are the prime examples that such a strategy may be successful, but at great cost. Attempts to export democracy to Third World countries – whether by peaceful or not so peaceful means – have not been equally successful. During the Cold War many interventions by democratic countries led to the establishment or consolidation of authoritarian rather than democratic regimes, as in Iran in 1953 and in Guatemala in 1954. However, it is becoming increasingly rare for a major power to intervene without reference to the authority of an international organization. The major means for promoting the expansion of democracy will remain economic and political rather than military. These means of influence are slower and less dramatic, but they may also have a lower probability of backfiring. At the end of the day, democratization is probably mostly a matter of internal forces, and the outside world may have limited influence over this process. Only then can a worldwide democratic peace be built on a solid foundation.

See also: Civil Wars; Conflict Management and Resolution; Diplomacy; Peace Agreements; Peace,

Definitions and Concepts of; Peacemaking and Peacebuilding; Peace Studies, Overview; Warfare, Trends in

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