

# The Nation-State Level

With the broad theoretical frameworks outlined, we are now going to move through the various levels of analysis in order to focus on the major actors that can help us better understand the international system. We are going to begin by focusing on the nation-state level, which is the primary actor in international relations (IR). After defining the nation-state and putting it into historical perspective, we will also talk about the concept of sovereignty, which is one of the primary tenets that guides the behavior of nation-states. We will then move into an analysis of the nation-state, including understanding some of the major questions that have influenced the field of IR and that pertain to the behavior of countries, primarily issues of peace and war. As we do this, it will be important to bear in mind the different theoretical approaches we raised in the previous chapter (i.e., realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism, and feminist perspectives) so that you can better understand how each can help explain aspects of the behavior of the nation-state within IR. We will conclude the chapter with a discussion of war and peace—understanding what they are, why nations resort to war and how they end, what the concept of “peace” really means, and how difficult it is for a country to transition from a situation of war to one of peace.

## **DEFINITION OF *NATION-STATE***

Much of contemporary IR theory is tied to the nation-state, more commonly known as a country, as the primary actor. Furthermore, as noted in chapter 2,

there are assumptions made about the ways in which this actor behaves and reacts to other nation-states that can help explain major concepts such as why countries go to war or how countries seek to influence the behavior of one another. Realism and structural realism explicitly address the nation-state as the critical actor in IR. Liberalism similarly focuses on the nation-state as a primary actor, but it looks within the state as well in order to get a more complete picture of the state's behavior. Constructivism focuses on the nation-state, but as an entity affected and constrained by the social and political structures within which it interacts. The critiques of these theories are often tied to flaws that are perceived as coming from the use of the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis.

Given the central role of the concept *nation-state*, it is important to begin this discussion with a definition. When we look at a nation-state, we are looking at two separate yet interrelated concepts, both of which have emerged as especially relevant in the international system today. *Nation* denotes a group of people with a common history, background, and values who, in theory, accept the primacy of the state. The *state*, in turn, represents the formal trappings of the political system, such as the government and defined borders, and it in turn accepts certain responsibilities for the people who live within those borders. Hence, a nation-state is an entity that we usually think of as a country, made up of groups of individuals who live within a defined border under a single government. Even though there might be different groups of people with their own cultures and ideas within the state, they form a single society that has certain values and beliefs in common.

Along with the emergence of the nation-state came another core principle: that of *nationalism*. Nationalism ties the identification of the group with a common past, language, history, customs, practices, and so on. Author Fareed Zakaria sees the concept this way:

When I write of nationalism, I am describing a broader phenomenon—the assertion of *identity*. The nation-state is a relatively new invention, often no more than a hundred years old. Much older are the religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups that live within the nation-states. And these bonds have stayed strong, in fact grown, as economic interdependence has deepened. (emphasis added)<sup>1</sup>

Hence, Zakaria believes that the globalization of the world today has contributed directly to the growth of nationalism, or to the importance of “core identities” as he calls them, which has replaced loyalty to the nation-state as a whole.

This is one of the contributors to conflict, as different nations seek recognition or *self-determination*, the belief that each group of people should be allowed to determine who is responsible for leading or governing them. This in turn can lead to the disintegration of the nation-state into various parts, peacefully or, more often, as a result of civil conflict (ethnic, religious, tribal, etc.) as different groups within the country seek to establish their independence and autonomy separate from the larger state structure and establish a state of their own.

Another concept that is important in this discussion is the notion of *legitimacy*, which grows from the idea articulated in the seventeenth century by philosopher John Locke that political power ultimately rests with the people rather than the leader. According to Locke, the political leader derives his or her power from “the consent of the governed,” which became part of the *social contract*. It is this acceptance that grants legitimacy to a government.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, one of the problems with the nation-state as a central concept of IR is that there are often many nations or groups of people who live within a state and do not necessarily recognize the legitimacy of that single state. This suggests some of the weaknesses in focusing on the nation-state as the basis for IR. As we will see in chapter 5, the problem becomes more acute when we look at non-state actors and stateless peoples. An example of this can be seen with a group such as the Palestinians, who are in effect a “stateless people.” That is, they have some of the trappings of statehood, including a governmental structure and a single dominant nation, but they do not have a defined state. Therefore, there is no logical place for them to fit within the levels of analysis, yet they cannot be discounted as unimportant players internationally. The Kurds, who straddle a number of different countries (Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, primarily), are another example of a single group that seeks its own state. In fact, in September 2017, Iraqi Kurds held a referendum on independence for that group. Despite overwhelming results in favor of independence, this will not equate to statehood for a host of political reasons. However, it raises yet another important issue: how to account for such groups, especially as they seek independence and statehood. This is one of the dilemmas facing students of IR today.

Despite some of these structural issues, understanding the nation-state and the central role it plays in international relations is critical to understanding IR theory. As we saw in chapter 1 and our overview of globalization, the current international system has evolved over time from one in which empires interacted based on trade and economics to the emergence of the nation-state and the quest for colonies. This resulted in another stage of globalization as the world started

to get smaller, to the truly globalized and interdependent world that we know today. Included in the changing structure of the current international system are the concepts of integration and disintegration. *Integration* suggests the merging of ideas and policies so that individual sovereign states start to blend into a unified whole. Although each state keeps its individual identity, it is also part of a single larger bloc. An example of this is the European Union (EU), which as of this writing was composed of twenty-seven sovereign states, each with its own government and political system, that agreed to merge into a single entity with a parliament and a president, which arrives at a single set of policies on a number of issues. Although the countries agreed to join and develop policies together, only some (seventeen) have adopted the euro as a common currency, while others (such as the United Kingdom when it was a member, Denmark, and Sweden) chose not to do so. How can twenty-seven states each remain sovereign and still be part of a larger bloc with a single set of policies? The answer is that they cannot always do so. The “Brexit” vote of June 2016, in which a small majority (52 percent to 48 percent) of the people of the United Kingdom voted to withdraw from the EU, makes this question especially relevant and illustrates what happens when the sovereignty of one member state appears to conflict with the decisions made by the whole.<sup>3</sup>

The end of the Cold War has witnessed examples of the *disintegration* of single sovereign states to create any number of others. In this case, the notion of disintegration refers to the breakup of a single nation-state into two or more entities that each seek statehood. Some of this has been done peacefully; for example, in 1993, the country of Czechoslovakia split into two countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, in what was known as “the Velvet Divorce” because of the relative absence of bloodshed. In 1991, the Soviet Union broke up into fifteen nations, and although the initial disintegration was relatively peaceful, periodic uprisings continue in Chechnya, with ongoing conflict among a number of other republics. At the other extreme, the country of Yugoslavia was racked by civil war and ethnic violence from 1991 until 1996, and violence escalated again in 1999 over the status of the autonomous Serb province of Kosovo which subsequently declared its independence. Kosovo’s situation remains contentious, with some countries in the international system, including the United States, recognizing it as an independent sovereign nation. However, other countries (Serbia and those allied with it, including Russia) do not. As of March 2020, ninety-seven out of 193 United Nations members and twenty-two out of twenty-seven EU members recognized Kosovo’s sovereignty, and although Serbia still officially does not, the

two have entered into negotiations regarding normalization of relations. This case also stands as an example of the formal processes associated with official international recognition and statehood.

The real underlying question here is, why do some countries choose to integrate with others, thereby forming a larger bloc, while other countries break apart? And can a country join a bloc, like the EU, and still retain its sovereignty? To answer such questions, we need to have a better understanding of the nation-state as a concept. It is important to note that as we explore some of these questions, our focus is on the nation-state itself, not on the individual leaders or the impact of the policy decisions on the people within the state. That will come later.

## HISTORY OF THE NATION-STATE

The approach to understanding the nation-state level and the basic concepts that are inherent in it (such as sovereignty) are derived from the 1648 Treaty (or Peace) of Westphalia. Here the treaty itself serves as an important resource, and it is easily accessible online.<sup>4</sup> What is critical about the document is that it outlines the concept of the *sovereign nation-state* and reminds all states of the importance of recognizing the sanctity of national borders. Since the time of that treaty, we have seen not only the emergence of the modern sovereign nation-state, which is the primary actor in the international system, but also the emergence of nonstate actors, which have also come to play a major role in international relations. Our focus here is on the nation-state; nonstate actors will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

As we look back in history prior to 1648, we see a world that was made up not only of city-states but also empires. The Greek city-states that Thucydides wrote about in his *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*, which we talked about in chapter 2, were at the height of their power around 400 BCE. These city-states were characterized by relatively small populations with limited territory, usually found behind city walls. Although they existed in close proximity, each was independent. Inevitably, some became more powerful than others. Over time, Sparta and Athens emerged as the two major city-states, thereby creating a *bipolar system* in which power was roughly balanced between the two. Under the leadership of Athens, many of the Greek city-states united in what became known as the Delian League, an early idea of *collective security* that brought the Greek city-states together so that they could defend themselves from the Persian Empire, which had been trying to expand into Greek territory.

Relations between Athens and Sparta deteriorated, ultimately leading to armed conflict between them. A truce was reached after six years, with each recognizing the power of the other and acknowledging domination over their respective spheres of influence. This truce was short-lived, however, and its failure led to the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War, which was documented by Thucydides, as noted in chapter 2.

Why is this ancient history important? The creation of the Delian League, designed to protect against the perceived aggression of Persia, was one of the earliest documented examples of what was later known as collective security. What took place during the Peloponnesian War was also an example of realist politics and the balance of power, both of which we will return to later in this chapter. And since so much of what happened then has been repeated since that time, it is an important lesson about the behavior of states.

Following the period of the domination of the Greek city-states, we really see the emergence of the age of empires. An *empire* (as opposed to a nation-state or a city-state) can be defined as an entity composed of separate units, all of which are under the domination of one single power (often the emperor) that asserts political and economic supremacy over the others, which formally or informally accept this relationship. Thus, the separate units or groups have some independence, but they remain under the domination of a supra-entity. One of the major goals of an empire, like any system, was to ensure that it perpetuated itself and continued to expand its domain and therefore its wealth. Because of its size, often the ruler of the empire had to depend upon local officials to carry out his or her bidding.

There were a number of empires throughout history, including those in Europe, such as the Holy Roman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian, and in Eurasia, such as the Persian and later the Ottoman. In Asia, the Chinese empire was in place from 221 BCE to 1911 (with some periods of disruption) and was characterized by centralized rule with allegiance paid to the emperor in Beijing. The Chinese empire was especially enduring.

The end of the Roman Empire in approximately 500 CE led to what became known as the Middle Ages in Europe. During this time, we see the growth of the power of the Christian church, which melded political power and religion to solidify its empire. In Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we also start seeing a flourishing of municipalities that functioned like the old Greek city-states. Venice, Florence, Paris, Oxford, and so on each became established centers of law and behavior, focused primarily on universities. Many became the

center of important trade patterns and commerce, as well as diplomacy. Eventually this also led to a clash between secular rule and the church, and by the late Middle Ages, we start seeing the rise of what we now refer to as *nationalism*, specifically, commitment to a central identity or consciousness rather than loyalty to the ruler or state. We also see the emergence of strong monarchs who reigned over their domain, sometimes with the support of the church and sometimes in opposition to it, such as Henry VIII in England. This was also the start of the age of exploration and colonization, as states looked for ways to expand their wealth and fortunes by going outside the limited territory of Europe, leading to the early era of globalization. And in a Marxist interpretation of events, this was also the start of the exploitation of colonies by the major powers of the time.

But as we also saw earlier, the growth of the city-states contributed to competition and eventually conflict between and among many of these states, especially regarding the role of religion and political power within the area that was known as the Holy Roman Empire. Eventually this led to the Thirty Years' War, which lasted from 1618 to 1648. The war "devastated Europe; the armies plundered the central European landscapes, fought battles, and survived by ravaging the civilian population. But the treaty that ended the conflict had a profound effect on the practice of international relations."<sup>5</sup>

### **Treaty of Westphalia**

The Thirty Years' War ended with the signing of the Treaty (or Peace) of Westphalia in 1648. This treaty established some of the basic principles that govern international relations today, as well as firmly establishing the nation-state as the primary actor in the international system with certain responsibilities and powers. The treaty established the European political system that we are familiar with and redrew the map of Europe so that a core group of states became dominant, primarily Austria, Russia, Prussia, England, France, and the northern area that would become Belgium and the Netherlands, although the borders of some of the specific countries have since changed and new ones have been created. It ended the Holy Roman Empire and replaced it with a system of sovereign states with the monarch as the primary political leader with authority over his people, supplanting the role of the church. Thus, as a result of this treaty, secular rule superseded the rule of the church. This in turn led to the notion that each national leader has the right to maintain his own military in order to protect himself and his territory. This also contributed to the growth of centralized control of the political system, since each monarch now had an army to support it, not only as

protection from external threats but to maintain internal order, collect taxes, and so on. In fact, the monarch had a monopoly on the use of force for both domestic and external purposes.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the individual state and the monarch or leader of the state became more powerful, with that power backed up by the use of force.

### **Concept of Sovereignty**

Along with the legacy of the modern nation-state, the Treaty of Westphalia also gave us some of the major concepts that govern the relationship between and among nation-states. Paramount among those is the concept of *sovereignty*. Although the language is difficult, the intent of parts of the treaty are clear regarding sovereignty:

LXIV. And to prevent for the future any Differences arising in the Politick State, all and every one of the Electors, Princes and States of the Roman Empire, are so establish'd and confirm'd in their antient Rights, Prerogatives, Libertys, Privileges, free exercise of Territorial Right, as well Eccleisastick, as Politick Lordships, Regales, by virtue of this present Transaction: *that they never can or ought to be molested therein by whomever upon any manner of pretence.* (emphasis added)<sup>7</sup>

In this section (LXIV) and following ones the treaty defines what is meant by the concept of sovereignty, specifically, that within its territory, the political leader is the supreme ruler and that others cannot interfere.

K. J. Holsti, in his classic text on IR, notes that:

the principle [of sovereignty] underlies relations between all states today. . . . The principle of sovereignty is relatively simple: Within a specified territory, no external power . . . has the right to exercise legal jurisdiction or political authority. This establishes the exclusive domestic authority of a government. That authority is based on a monopoly over the *legitimate* use of force. (emphasis added)<sup>8</sup>

Holsti then notes in a corollary to his definition that “no state has the right to interfere in the domestic affairs of another state. This prohibitive injunction has been breached frequently, but it is assumed and observed most of the time by most states.”<sup>9</sup>

Although, as Holsti notes, there have been frequent violations of this norm, on the whole it provides the basic framework for relations between and among nation-states (i.e., international relations). Yet it is the breaching of this concept that provides for some interesting questions and discussion. For example, are



there times when one country has the right, even the obligation, to intervene in the affairs of another sovereign state—for example, to stop genocide or other human rights abuses? This is known as the *Responsibility to Protect* and was endorsed as a concept at the United Nations World Summit in 2005 to prevent future atrocities such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other war crimes that took place in Rwanda and Bosnia among others. What about the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003? Was this a justifiable violation of the sovereignty of that country, since evidence showed that Iraq had no role in the 9/11 attacks, which was one of the alleged reasons for the invasion? These types of questions can both help us understand the behavior of a country and provide the grist for important discussions that will contribute to a better understanding of the application of IR theories.

Further, as an article in *The Wall Street Journal* about Brexit makes clear, sovereignty does not always mean that you get your way. The analysis raises an important point: “Sovereignty may mean the constitutional independence to make decisions accountable only to your own people and without reference to others. But sovereignty isn’t the same as equality; and in international affairs, other nations’ objectives must be taken into account.”<sup>10</sup> The points raised in the article are important and directly relevant to understanding the concept of sovereignty in the world today. Using Brexit as an example, the article notes that “power matters,” and that relationships between and among countries are not symmetrical. The article concludes by stating that “In trade negotiations, countries may be equally sovereign but they are not necessarily sovereign equals.”<sup>11</sup> While countries have the right and responsibility to make their own decisions, which is the essence of sovereignty, it does not mean that other countries will respect those decisions, especially if they run counter to the other country’s perceived interests.

The important point to remember is that the current international system dominated by nation-states grew from events that took place almost four hundred years ago. Although some specifics have changed as new countries were created and as different political systems, such as democracies, evolved to replace the monarchy that was then the norm, the basic structure and concepts governing the nation-state and its actions in the international system remain in place. And questions such as the sanctity of sovereignty and if and/or when it should be violated remain very much a part of the discourse of international politics today.

## BALANCE OF POWER AND ALLIANCES

We have just been looking at the evolution of the nation-state from a historical perspective in order to understand how the current international system and the reliance on the nation-state as the primary actor evolved. Now we are going to move from the historical perspective to the present time and focus on the nation-state system today, specifically looking at concepts such as balance of power and the role of alliances. Both of these concepts have come to play a prominent role in contemporary IR.

We initially alluded to the concept of balance of power in the previous discussion about the Delian League and the ways in which the Greek city-states united as a way of protecting themselves from Persia, which was a larger and more powerful empire. (We also saw this in chapter 2 in the excerpt from the “Melian Dialogue,” which explicitly references the idea of enlisting allies.) The idea was that if the Greek city-states worked together, they could counter the power of Persia and deter it from trying to attack. Or, if Persia did decide to attack, they would work together to respond. In effect, what they did was try to balance the power of one of the *hegemons*, or major powers, of the time. According to realist theory, if unchecked, countries will seek to increase their power. So the dilemma facing countries is how to make sure that the power of the hegemon is balanced.

Interestingly, the concept of balance of power is steeped in realist thought. Yet the concept of alliances, which was applied often in the Cold War period, has a serious liberal and constructivist core. Again we see an apparent contradiction here. On the one hand, realist theory assumes that countries will always seek to maximize their power, “interest defined as power,” in Morgenthau’s terms. Therefore, countries will do whatever they need to, including making temporary alliances with other countries, if that will help them maximize their own power. To the realists, then, entering into alliances is a pragmatic policy decision that enables nation-states to get something they need (more power) that is greater than what they could achieve on their own. On the other hand, the liberal theorists would say that alliances bring countries with common interests together in order to pursue policies that are in their collective best interest. Thus, they *all* benefit from working together. Similarly, the constructivists would place alliances into a broader structural framework of the international system and would offer the policy decision for countries to join together as a response to structural constraints and realities. With this quick overview, we will now look at the idea of balance of power and the concept of alliances from a variety of theoretical

perspectives in more detail as another way of understanding the behavior of nation-states in the international system.

### **Balance of Power**

The realist perspective portrays world politics as a struggle for power in anarchy by competitive rivals acting for their own self-interests (and *not* for moral principles and global ideals such as improving the security and welfare of *all* throughout the globe). International politics to realism is a war of all against all, to increase national power and national security by preparing for war and seeking advantages over rivals such as by acquiring superior military capabilities. (emphasis in original)<sup>12</sup>

Inherent in this is the idea not only of acquiring power, but of balancing the power of hegemons in order to ensure the country's own security. Or that's the way it's supposed to work, in theory.

The classical balance-of-power system is generally traced back to approximately 1815 and the Congress of Vienna, which contributed to the changing role and power of the major countries in Europe. During that time, there were a number of powerful states that were emerging. The belief was that the only way to balance or constrain their power, and therefore to ensure security, was for a number of countries to join together and align against another country, thereby countering its power. In effect, this was an updated version of what we saw earlier in the case of the Greek city-states. So, for example, Britain and Russia joined together to counter the perceived growing power of France. The idea was that *if countries joined together, their combined power would offset the power of any one dominant nation and thereby hold it in check*. In doing so, the stability of the system would be ensured, as evidenced by an absence of conflict.

Britain was often seen as playing the role of balancer because of its economic and military (naval) strength. That means that it shifted its allegiances to make sure that there was a general perception of balance among the states of Europe. Not only did this allow Britain to maintain an important position internationally, but Britain's military power also ensured that other states did not interfere in European conflicts, at least not in Europe proper. Instead, the European countries in effect divided up the rest of the world, and after the Spanish-American War, the United States became an important player as well.<sup>13</sup> Thus, we see the major countries each with its own sphere of influence.

Most political scientists see the classic balance-of-power system as coming to an end at the start of the twentieth century, when Britain broke from its role as balancer to join Japan in its war against Russia (the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905). This was the first time a major European country had aligned with an Asian country against another European ally (in this case, Russia). This is an indicator of how much smaller the world was getting, but also of the difference in the ways in which countries were perceiving their role: internationally and not just regionally.

It was the outbreak of World War I that really ended the balance-of-power system that had dominated European politics for about a hundred years to that point. The war also pointed out the dangers in this system. Some see World War I as the result of a struggle between competitive alliances “made all the more dangerous by the German position. . . . Germany still sought additional territory,” even if that meant redrawing the map of Europe.<sup>14</sup> With the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in Sarajevo in 1914, Germany encouraged Austria to fight Serbia. But by that time, since virtually all of Europe was involved with one alliance or another, once one country went to war, the whole continent was in effect brought into the war. And therein lies one of the dangers of alliances.

By the end of World War I, under the leadership of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, the quintessential liberal thinker who believed that war could best be averted if all countries worked together (collectively), the idea of the League of Nations was born. Even though it proved to be unsuccessful, it served as a model for the United Nations that followed, and the concept of collective security remained an important one.

In effect, the idea of collective security was premised on the notion that “if one country behaved aggressively . . . other states had a legal right to enforce international law against aggression by taking collective action to stop it.”<sup>15</sup> Rather than focusing on the realist idea that countries would seek to maximize their own power, this approach was steeped in the liberal notion that cooperation was in all countries’ best interest and therefore that countries would work together to pursue their goals. But this only works if countries behave as anticipated. When the United States, which was one of the most powerful countries at that time, did not join the League of Nations, it undermined the entire concept. When Japan went into Manchuria in 1931, the League was powerless to stop it because any action required unanimous approval, which was virtually impossible to achieve. Similarly, when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1936, although both countries were members

of the League of Nations, that organization proved unable either to control Italy or protect Ethiopia. Hence, one of the lessons was that collective security would work only if the countries involved all bought in and were willing to take a stand.

Clearly, the notion of *collective defense* did not stop the outbreak of World War II. However, the weaknesses of the collective defense concept that were exposed through the failures of the League and then the outbreak of World War II gave way to a system of *collective security*, which was a modification of the earlier concept. One distinction that can be drawn between the two concepts is that “collective security is based on international law-enforcement obligations whereas collective defense is merely a form of balance-of-power politics.”<sup>16</sup> However, often the two concepts are used interchangeably.

### **Collective Security, Alliances, and the Cold War**

This updated notion of balance of power was embodied in Article 51 of the UN Charter and Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Treaty; it became especially important during the Cold War. Much of the Cold War was premised on the need to maintain a rough balance of power between the United States and its allies, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other. The perception at the time was that if there were a rough approximation of balance, then neither side would be willing to attack the other, and therefore peace (or a balance of terror, as it was often known) would be maintained. The balance was tied to each country’s capabilities, especially its nuclear arsenal, and its ability to inflict grave damage on the other side should an attack occur. The assumption here was that both countries not only had the weapons (*capability*) but also the willingness to use those weapons should it become necessary (*credibility*). It was the combination of these two factors—having the weapons and the perceived willingness to use them—that ensured that balance was maintained and that neither side would attack the other.

It is also important to note that much of this balance was tied to the idea of *perceptions*, specifically the perception that the two sides were roughly balanced in number of weapons as well as willingness to use them. (The role of perceptions in international relations was addressed previously, in chapter 2.) While it was possible to get a rough count of things like number of aircraft or submarines deployed, it was the perception that their weapons arsenals were roughly balanced and that they would be used against the other side that became especially critical. Or, in the world of international relations, perceptions become reality as they are translated into policy decision.

Throughout the Cold War (from roughly 1945 until the Soviet Union ended in 1991), much of international relations was tied to the need to maintain this perceived balance of power between the two major blocs, each anchored by a single nuclear nation-state (the United States or the USSR). In addition to asserting dominance by building up their respective nuclear arsenals and alliances, both countries also engaged in arms control negotiations, which is a cooperative strategy. In this case, the goal was for the two sides to agree on a level of weapons that would ensure that there would be stability and predictability, rather than relying on relations based on an increasing arms buildup. Such a buildup would only contribute to insecurity (the security dilemma, referred to in chapter 2) rather than making countries feel safer.

**BOX 3.1****COLLECTIVE SECURITY**

The notion of collective security was embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, where Article 51 explicitly states, “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations.”<sup>1</sup>

It is similarly embedded in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty that created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.<sup>2</sup>

**NOTES**

1. “Charter of the United Nations,” Article 51, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>.
2. “The North Atlantic Treaty,” Article 5, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm).

Now that the Cold War is over, one can ask whether alliances remain important. Clearly they do, because countries still enter into alliances, albeit for more than just security or defense reasons, although those continue to remain important. But countries now recognize that aligning or uniting with other countries can bring them more benefits than just security; increased trade and other economic benefits have contributed to various alliance relationships. Thus, nations continue to work together and to enter into formal relationships for any number of reasons.

Why do we need to understand alliances in the context of the framework of the nation-state? As noted earlier, alliances are part of understanding the ways in which nation-states behave. In addition, they straddle a number of important theoretical perspectives, and they have played an important role in the international system in virtually all of modern times.

### **UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL INTEREST**

In theory, all interactions between and among nation-states are designed to further the *national interest*. This means that there needs to be an understanding of what is in the national interest and how to protect and preserve it. In this discussion, it is important to remember that defining national interest is done by an individual leader or members of the government (within the nation-state level). Yet it is the policies of the nation-state as a whole that become the focus for our understanding of national interest and the types of actions states engage in to further that national interest.

Generally, a nation-state begins with a clear statement of its own goals, that is, what is in its perceived “national interest.” National interest might be protecting the country from external aggression (security), enhancing trade with other countries (economics), or cleaning up the environment and protecting the population from the spread of disease (human security). From that starting point, there are a range of possible options open to countries as they seek to protect the national interest. Because these all deal with one country’s relationship to other countries, these are called *foreign policy orientations*. The particular option chosen should reflect the country’s needs at that particular time. What that means in theory is that the national leader(s) understand what the country’s priorities are and how those priorities and needs can best be met through its interactions with other countries. The goal, then, would be to formulate policies that help a country move toward achieving its defined national interest through its interactions with other countries and actors in the international system.

Clearly, these needs and priorities can change as both domestic and international circumstances change, which means that countries are constantly evaluating and adapting their policies while always bearing in mind what is in the national interest.

### Foreign Policy Orientations

Countries have various foreign policy orientations or options that are available to them. All involve making a decision within the country that requires or affects its interaction with another nation-state or actor beyond its borders.<sup>17</sup> Theoretically, the option chosen should reflect what is in the country's national interest within the context of the time during which the policy is formulated.

One option for a country is to pursue a policy of *isolationism*, the desire to turn inward and to minimize political or military involvement with other countries. Or, put another way, isolationism is a policy decision to remove the country from the international system. Often the only exception to this policy is in trading or economic relationships; even the most isolationist country, such as North Korea, recognizes the need to trade and interact economically with a small number of countries beyond its own borders, albeit in a limited way. A complement to this is the policy of *unilateralism*, the policy that the United States engaged in from its founding until the First World War. Similar to isolationism, unilateralism advocates a policy of political and military detachment from other countries, but unilateralism explicitly acknowledges the need to interact with other countries in a range of areas, such as economics and trade. Thus, this policy of unilateralism gave the United States the freedom to engage openly with other countries economically while keeping it out of formal alliances or agreements that could have dragged it into foreign wars.

A country can choose to be *neutral*, which means it does not commit its military forces or engage in a military or security alliance with other countries. This does not mean that a neutral country is removed from the international system; rather, neutral nations are often quite engaged because the status of neutrality gives them certain rights and responsibilities in the eyes of the international system. For example, Switzerland, a neutral nation, has become an international banking center as well as the location for many international negotiations.

Or, depending on its national interest, a country can choose to become *engaged* internationally. This too can take on a number of characteristics, depending on the country and the international circumstances. For example, countries can choose to enter into military alliances or security arrangements of various



types. These can be bilateral (between two countries) or multilateral (among three or more). Often the goal underlying the creation of these alliances is the belief that countries acting together can wield more power internationally than any country can if it were acting alone. NATO is one example of a multilateral alliance; it was created in 1949, early in the Cold War period, to unite the countries of Western Europe with the United States as a way to deter Soviet aggression. It remains in place today and has expanded its mandate to include missions outside its formal area, including the war in Afghanistan. Being part of an alliance or multilateral organization requires a constant balancing act as the goals of each individual member state must be weighed against the priorities and policies of the whole group. The Brexit vote is an example of what happens when the policy goals of a country and the larger organization are perceived to be at odds with one another. We will return to this point again in chapter 5.

In general, a country will choose which foreign policy to pursue in order to best assure its own national interest and security. However, countries also have to determine how best to respond to any particular set of actions taken by other countries in the international system. Again, they may choose to act unilaterally, bilaterally, or multilaterally. In most cases, however, the greater the number of countries acting together, the more effective a policy decision will be, although the more difficult it might be to reach agreement.

Here we need to inject our understanding of the theoretical perspectives as they apply to the nation-states and their foreign policy orientations. Realist thinkers will address foreign policy defined in terms of power. President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, who served first as Nixon's national security adviser and then as secretary of state, are both seen as quintessential realist decision makers who used the threat—or application—of military force to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals when they deemed it necessary. But they were also masters at knowing how to play one actor (the Soviet Union) against another (China) to the advantage of the United States. In that case, they used the United States as a balancer nation to exact concessions from both sides.

The foreign policies advocated by Woodrow Wilson are clear examples of the application of liberal thinking to foreign policy decisions. Wilson's advocacy for an organization, the League of Nations, that would thwart expansionist tendencies of other countries was steeped in classic liberal ideals of cooperation. President George W. Bush, with his belief in the importance of spreading the values of freedom and democracy, is another more recent example of this way of thinking. In this case, the emphasis was not as much on cooperation as it was

on perpetuating liberal values that, in theory, should result in a more peaceful world. This is known as the “democratic peace,” and the idea will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

These cases are illustrations of the ways in which a leader applies a particular theoretical perspective that results in the policies of a particular nation-state regarding other states—that is, international relations.

### **Negotiation as a Tool of Foreign Policy**

When we talk about the nation-state, one of the critical questions is, how do nation-states talk to one another? That is, how do they communicate in order to avoid a conflict or to resolve one that is under way? That is the role of *diplomacy* and *negotiation*, two important tools that are used by nation-states in the international system.

Diplomacy and negotiation represent alternatives to the use of force in the settlement of potential or actual disputes between countries. Negotiation between and among the various parties is often used to help avoid a conflict before it starts or escalates, or to resolve a conflict once it is under way. International negotiation is a phased process predicated on expectations of reciprocity, compromise, and the search for mutually beneficial outcomes. All parties to a negotiation must prepare their positions carefully, looking for a balance between national (domestic) considerations tied to national interest and political realities.

Negotiation is one tool of foreign policy available to countries as a way of addressing their concerns. According to realist IR theory, countries will behave in a way that maximizes their national interest. But the notion of negotiation, which is premised on the idea that countries can and will cooperate because all will benefit from doing so, is steeped in liberal thinking.

Generally, when entering into any negotiation, a country will begin by ensuring that its core values are maintained. Those values are the ones that guarantee continuity, and a country’s security—military and economic—and are often not negotiable. A country’s national interest, however, might also include protecting its heritage and its history, its culture and traditions. What we are seeing increasingly in the post-Cold War world, however, is that there are variations within a country as to what these are or how they are interpreted. Hence, ethnic or religious conflict can result when different groups within a country have conflicting interpretations of what its national interest is or how it can be defined and protected.

Negotiations can be among allies or adversaries. Generally, negotiating with allies is easier because the countries start with common values. But this does

not necessarily mean they will be easy. For example, the United States alienated some of its NATO allies by its decision to invade Iraq in March 2003, and no negotiations or discussion could get France or Germany to agree with the U.S. position. In that sense, sometimes negotiating with an enemy or adversary might be a more straightforward task. For example, the bilateral arms control negotiations that took place throughout the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union—political and military adversaries—were seen as having a positive outcome. Even when the two sides didn't reach an agreement, the very process of negotiating ensured ongoing communication, which meant that they were talking to one another. The belief was that the more they communicated, the less likely the two sides were to go to war. In that case, the *process* of negotiating had a beneficial impact regardless of whether an agreement was reached.

Thus, another lesson of negotiation as a tool of communicating between and among nation-states is to understand what the negotiation is really about. Is it about the product, or getting a defined outcome, or the process—specifically, making sure that there is ongoing communication, which is especially important when the negotiation is between or among adversaries?

Negotiations can be used to avoid a conflict by having states discuss areas of disagreement to see if they can arrive at a compromise, or at least a point at which they can agree to disagree. Examples of this might range from trade disputes to trying to keep North Korea or Iran from building a nuclear weapon. Or they can be used to reinforce a positive relationship, such as the 2008 agreement between India and the United States facilitating nuclear cooperation. This agreement went beyond just providing assistance from the United States to India to aid its civilian nuclear energy program. It also strengthened the ties between the two countries, which had often had an uneasy relationship. This was seen as important to both countries politically. Countries have a range of policy options available to them that can be placed along a continuum from positive (rewards) to negative (punishment) (see figure 2.2). In all cases, the country decides which particular course of action to pursue by weighing the relative costs and benefits. A government, acting rationally, would be most likely to choose the option that promises to give it the desired outcome at the least possible cost.

Thus, *negotiation* is a tool of foreign policy that can be and is used at all points along the continuum. In “normal” (i.e., noncrisis) situations, negotiations can be quite routine and might involve nothing more than determining the ways in which two or more countries can implement an ongoing agreement. However, in times of crisis, negotiations can be used to help manage the situation and

avoid armed conflict. Even during times of war, negotiations can be involved as a way to bring the conflict to a halt, to dictate the terms of a cease-fire, and to determine what happens after the conflict ends, points that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The specifics of crisis decision making will be addressed in chapter 4.

One of the major challenges facing any government involved in a negotiation, however, is separating out the diplomatic from the political. *Diplomacy* is the formal process of interaction between countries and is usually carried out by diplomats who are asked to *implement* a government's policy or policies. This is different from the work of politicians or government bureaucrats, many of whom are also engaged in negotiations of various types but whose main job is to *formulate* policy (rather than carry it out). Both of these play an important role in the world of international negotiations, although the functions are different.

One of the other challenges in any negotiation lies in understanding the culture and perspective of the country or countries with which you are negotiating. Different countries have different negotiating styles, and these must be considered in formulating a position and in determining how to approach another country.<sup>18</sup> In addition, there is a strategy involved with any negotiation: whether to begin the negotiation or wait for another country to initiate it and then to respond, how much to reveal about your own position and at what point, how much you are willing to compromise in order to reach an agreement, and, most important, what your own desired outcome of the negotiation is. These must be determined by each country in advance of the negotiation so that it will know how to begin and/or how to respond to another country's overtures.

That said, ideally all countries approach negotiations by bargaining in good faith. This means that they have a sincere desire to compromise so that an agreement can be reached. But there are cases where that has proven to be impossible. For example, the country of Cyprus has been divided into two parts, Greek (south) and Turkish (north), since 1974, with the United Nations patrolling the border, known as the "Green Zone." Despite many attempts at negotiations to unite the island, they have all failed thus far, in part because neither side would make any concessions. So the island remains divided and in a state of low-level conflict, thereby making it an intractable problem that could not be solved by negotiating. What the negotiations were able to do, however, was to make clear what the issues are and to have in place ongoing procedures that can help ensure that the conflict does not escalate into a case of armed violence.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, negotiations are important ways for countries to communicate either bilaterally or among a group (multilaterally) in order for them to pursue policies that are in their national interest. Before we move beyond this section and our understanding of negotiations, two other points are important to stress. First is that negotiations should always be used to further national interest, which suggests that the nation-state has clearly defined priorities and sees negotiations as an important and cooperative way for it to achieve that end. The second point ties directly to the first, and that is that negotiation is a foreign policy tool. Those who negotiate are often diplomats who do not necessarily make policy but help implement it. This is a fine distinction but an important one.

If negotiation is one foreign policy tool that countries can use to try to avert conflict, then why do so many countries seem to go to war? And what is war, anyway?

## WAR AND PEACE

In order to understand IR and the nation-state level of analysis, it is essential to understand and tackle big questions. Among the biggest questions that we explore in IR are issues of war and peace. Wars tend to be between states (interstate) or, increasingly, within states (intrastate), such as civil war. We are going to look at the concepts of war and peace, beginning with definitions of each, and then move into the particular cases of intrastate wars, which are often tied to questions of nationalism and self-determination and thereby threaten the traditional concept of the nation-state.

### What Is War?

Different theoretical approaches and most political scientists have their own definition of war. One definition of war is “organized armed conflict between or among states (*interstate war*) or within a given state or society (*civil war*)” (italics in original).<sup>20</sup> Another definition of war is “a condition arising within states (civil war) or between states (interstate war) when actors appear to use violent means to destroy their opponents or coerce them into submission.”<sup>21</sup> A third defines “general war” (as opposed to more limited types of war) as “armed conflict involving massive loss of life and widespread destruction, usually with many participants, including multiple major powers.”<sup>22</sup> In a recent book, British historian Margaret MacMillan notes that “War in its essence is organized violence, but different societies fight different sorts of wars.”<sup>23</sup> She uses a range of examples to illustrate the role that war has played in different societies and

how they, in turn, have engaged with war. She also makes an important point that echoes what others have said about the relationship between war and the nation-state. “The strong nation-states of today with their centralized governments and organized bureaucracies are the products of centuries of war.”<sup>24</sup> And commemorating those become very much a part of a nation’s traditions.

Morgenthau, the great realist thinker, makes the point that “both domestic and international politics are a *struggle for power*, modified only by the different conditions under which this struggle takes place in the domestic and international spheres.” He also notes that “most societies condemn killing as a means of attaining power within society, but all societies encourage the killing of enemies in the struggle for power which is called *war*” (emphasis added).<sup>25</sup> In his classic book *Man, the State, and War*, Kenneth Waltz, a neorealist, writes that “the locus of the important causes of war is found in *the nature and behavior of man*. Wars result from selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity” (emphasis added).<sup>26</sup> Here Waltz equates state behavior with human behavior: both can sometimes behave badly. But if the natural state of the international system is anarchy, which is what most realists think, then there is nothing that can stop the bad behavior of either states or people from prevailing, resulting in war. In another piece written many years later, Waltz draws on the work of Immanuel Kant when he says, “The natural state is the state of war. Under the conditions of international politics, war recurs; the sure way to abolish war, then, is to abolish international politics.”<sup>27</sup> Hence, Waltz notes, “to explain war is easier than to understand the conditions of peace. If one asks what might cause war, the simple answer is ‘anything.’”<sup>28</sup>

You can arrive at your own definition that would probably be as descriptive or even explanatory. But generally *war* as a concept involves acts of armed conflict or violence involving two or more parties designed to achieve a specific objective. The objective could be political, economic (over and for resources), competition for the acquisition of territory, or even ascendancy of ideas—all of these or none of these. So, while there are certain traits that are common to the definition or categorization of war, there are countless possible objectives or reasons for it—or, as Waltz notes, the cause can be “anything.”

Before we continue this discussion, it is also important to make a distinction among the following concepts: *conflict*, *armed conflict*, and *war*. The realists would say that *conflict* is an inevitable part of any interaction, which is often a struggle for power. But it is also important to note that not all conflicts lead to armed violence. So too in IR there is often conflict between and among states,

or even among different individuals or groups of people within states. But most are resolved peacefully, without escalating to violence, armed conflict, or, on a larger scale, war.

This leads to a question often asked by political scientists and historians who study war: is (or was) war inevitable? One response to that question is that while it is not inevitable, generally it is also something that does not happen overnight.<sup>29</sup> For example, historian Paul Kennedy notes that the underlying conflict between Britain and Germany that contributed to World War I had been going on for fifteen or twenty years. That point is elaborated on by Graham Allison, who writes about how the underlying conflict between those two countries was really about competition for hegemonic status in Europe, which could not ultimately be resolved without the two going to war.<sup>30</sup> The reality is that generally warning signs pointing to the outbreak of armed conflict exist prior to the time that war actually breaks out. They are just easier to see in retrospect than they were at the time.

Carl von Clausewitz, the Prussian general, military theorist, and author, developed a major theory of war and the use of force. He served in both the Russian and Prussian military fighting against France in the Napoleonic Wars, which ended in the defeat of France in 1815. His most famous piece, *On War*, was published in 1832, one year after his death. He opens the book with his definition of war, which grows out of his basic philosophy and understanding of international relations. He is very clear that the conduct of war is under the purview of the military, but the decision to go to war is a political one. In other words, in his formulation, war is another way nations engage with one another; it is a means to achieve a policy option that has not been accomplished in any other way. It is not an end! Put another way, war should not be a policy goal but an action only of last resort when all else has failed.

As a general, Clausewitz had his own understanding of war and its relationship to policy (the decision to go to war) and strategy (the conduct of war). According to him, a country is justified in going to war when other policy options fail. But there are other ways to approach the decision to go to war that are tied to moral values. In other words, when is war the *right* thing to do? Is it ever the correct and moral decision? These are important questions that continue to be asked today.

That aspect of war and the decision to go to war is embedded in theology and not necessarily just in politics.

**BOX 3.2****CLAUSEWITZ ON WAR**

Carl von Clausewitz's most famous piece, *On War*, was published in 1832, one year after his death. He opens the book with his definition of war, seeking to distill it to its simplest and most basic form: "War is nothing but a duel on an extensive scale . . . [where] each strives by physical force to compel the other to submit to his will: each endeavors to throw his adversary, and thus render him incapable of further resistance. *War therefore is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will*" (emphasis in original).<sup>1</sup>

Writing as a military officer and theorist, Clausewitz is very clear that *the conduct of war is a military opinion, but the decision to go to war is a political one*: "War is a mere continuation of policy by other means. . . . War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means."<sup>2</sup> In other words, in his formulation war is another way nations engage with one another; it is a means to achieve a foreign policy option that has not been accomplished in any other way. Put another way, war should not be a policy goal, but an action only of last resort when all other policy options have failed.

**NOTES**

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited by Anatol Rapoport (Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1968), 101.
2. Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

**Types of Wars**

Prior to the start of the Cold War, most wars were interstate, that is, they were between two or more states fought for a host of reasons such as competition for territory, access to resources, etc. That pattern has changed considerably since the Second World War and especially the end of the Cold War for a host of reasons. For example, as countries fought in World War II against the forces of dictatorship and autocracy and for freedom and democracy, many of the countries that had been the colonies of the major powers also wanted their freedom. Often this was achieved as a result of war, such as the colonial wars fought by Algeria



and Indo China, both French colonies, against France. Hence, the period of the 1950s and 1960s saw a proliferation of these so-called wars of national liberation as former colonies in Asia and Africa sought, and won, their freedom.

But the post–Cold War period has also seen an increase in intrastate or civil wars (i.e., wars fought within a country as one group was pitted against another). We see these in the ethnic conflicts that took place in Rwanda (1994), former Yugoslavia especially Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991 through 1995), and Darfur (2003), to name but a few. In fact, data have shown that intrastate conflicts have grown considerably after World War II in general, but especially since 2000.<sup>31</sup> Here we might want to ask why that is the case. While the Cold War was still ongoing, there was always the fear that any conflict could escalate, bringing the United States and Soviet Union into a situation of direct confrontation. Thus, wars were limited in scope and when the two countries did get involved, it was generally indirectly through other countries (i.e., “proxy wars”). This helped maintain the perception of international stability. However, absent the Cold War, there was little to hold countries in check anymore. The emergence of nationalist leaders fomented dissent and ultimately conflict within their own country knowing that there was little danger that the conflict would spread or that the international system would do anything to stop them. And that was the case. In addition, the growth of militants of various types (e.g., political and religious), also fomented civil war, many of which, such as the one in Syria, continue with no end in sight at this time.

As MacMillan notes about these types of wars, “Civil wars so often take on the character and cruelty of a crusade because they are about the nature of society itself. The other side is seen as having betrayed the community by refusing to agree to shared values and a common vision and so extremes of violence and cruelty become permissible, even necessary, to restore the damaged polity.” MacMillan also explains why it is so difficult to end these conflicts and arrive at a situation of peace when she writes that “Each side in a civil war is struggling for legitimacy and dominance in a space that was once shared.”<sup>32</sup> One aspect of this type of struggle that cannot be discounted is the blurring of the lines between combatant and civilians, thereby making these wars more encompassing and also dangerous.

### **Just War Doctrine**

It is virtually impossible to study war, and especially war as an instrument of policy, without talking about *just war doctrine*. Given what we have been talking about regarding war, the question becomes whether going to war is ever a rational

decision for a country to make and, if so, under what set of circumstances? At what point *should* a country resort to war (a normative question)? When is it justified? How does a country know that all other policy options, as advocated by Clausewitz, have been exhausted and war remains the only one left? In answering these questions, countries have long been guided (at least in theory) by the concept of *just war*, another idea that must be placed into historical context.

The classical idea of just war is normative in scope and is steeped in Western and Christian doctrine and morality. Just war doctrine, interpreted most broadly, pertains to the moral criteria that states *should* use when justifying armed aggression or war against another state. The precepts of just war doctrine are most often attributed to St. Augustine, who wrote in the fourth century about the apparent contradictions between Christian morality and beliefs (“Thou shall not kill”) and the violations of that commandment by the state authorizing killing in its name. In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas outlined his concept of what has become known as traditional just war theory in his *Summa Theologica*. In this, he discusses not only the justification for war but also the kinds of activities and behaviors that are permissible in the course of war.

Those ideas in turn led to the work of Hugo Grotius, a Dutch reformer who wrote during the Thirty Years’ War. His *Law of War and Peace*, originally published in Latin in 1625, outlined the moral and basic principles that we now think of as the laws of war. These can be further broken down into component parts that distinguish between “the rules that govern the justice of war, that is, when a country can go to war (*jus ad bellum*), from those that govern just and fair conduct in war (*jus in bellum*), and the responsibility and accountability of warring parties after the war ends (*jus post bellum*).”<sup>33</sup> These precepts have led to a series of accepted principles known collectively as just war.

Many of the ideas of conflict, and especially of combat, that grew from our modern understanding of just war doctrine, such as protecting civilians, were embodied in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its various protocols.<sup>34</sup> But it is also clear that many of the distinctions outlined clearly in just war doctrine have broken down with the advent of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the occurrence of civil conflicts of various types. Furthermore, although the United Nations has taken a stand at various times when there have been violations, the international system really has no mechanism to enforce the principles, nor to punish states that violate them. Rather, it is up to the states and the governments to determine when—or whether—a war is just.

**BOX 3.3****BASIC PRECEPTS OF JUST WAR DOCTRINE***Jus ad bellum* (justice of war):

- War can only be waged as a last resort, after all other alternatives have been exhausted.
- War can only be waged by a legitimate government or authority.
- War can only be undertaken to correct a wrong, and never for revenge; or it can be waged to restore justice after an injury has been inflicted.
- War must have a reasonable chance of succeeding.
- War can be used to defend a stable political order or a morally just cause against a real threat.

*Jus in bellum* (conduct of war):

- Negotiations to end the conflict must be continuous.
- Civilians are never legitimate targets of war. Population, especially non-combatants, should be protected.
- The damage incurred by the war must be in proportion to the injury suffered.

*Jus post bellum* (after the war):

- The ultimate goal of the war is to reestablish peace. “The peace established after the war must be preferable to the peace that would have prevailed if the war had not been fought.”<sup>1</sup>

**NOTE**

1. “Principles of the Just War,” <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pol116/justwar.htm>.

This highlights one of the failings of current international law. For example, when U.S. President George H. W. Bush authorized the use of U.S. troops in response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, a U.S. ally, in 1991, he made it clear that this was an act of aggression that “would not stand.” A range of diplomatic options were tried to resolve the situation through the United Nations, and only

after those failed and Iraq still did not withdraw from Kuwait was military action deemed necessary.<sup>35</sup> The U.S. ability to pull together a “coalition of the willing” to help fight the war suggests that other countries agreed with the necessity of the use of military force.

This example stands in contrast to the circumstances surrounding the invasion of Iraq authorized by U.S. President George W. Bush in 2003. In this case, the evidence that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction, which justified the invasion, was ambiguous at best. Some of the U.S. NATO allies, most notably France and Germany, opposed the decision, causing a rift in the alliance. And the decision to use military force was made in defiance of the United Nations. Hence, in this case there were none of the moral imperatives that were present in the case of the first Gulf War. Nonetheless, the war went forward, and the international community was virtually powerless to prevent it.

### **Feminist Theory and War**

As you might expect, feminist theorists address issues of war and peace in great detail. Charles Tilly in his book *Coercion, Capital, and European States* reminds us that the modern nation-state was born from war and that the military was integral to the continued success of and even existence of the state.<sup>36</sup> But according to feminist IR scholars, it is the militaristic essence of the state that builds into it a gendered perspective, especially because of the connection between masculinity and war. It is in this discussion that we can really get a clear understanding of the feminist perspective and how it changes the discussion in IR.

Governments often garner support for war by appealing to masculine characteristics but resorting to symbolism associated with women, such as the need to fight for the “motherland.”<sup>37</sup> Women, as members of the society, are directly affected by war but are generally excluded from the decision to go to war. One of the obligations of citizenship is often to serve your country by fighting for it; however, in most countries women are excluded from serving as combatants in the military, thereby depriving them of full rights of citizenship. Especially in the civil and ethnic conflicts that have proliferated since the end of the Cold War, not only are women increasingly likely to be killed as more civilians are targeted, but war takes other tolls on them: they are often displaced by war; they are violated physically, psychologically, and emotionally; and the social structure that they inhabit is totally disrupted. There is a high incidence of sexual violence against women, as rape has become one of the weapons of war. Furthermore, even if the women themselves are not literally wounded by the violence, many

will have lost family members—husbands, sons, fathers—during the war. Thus, war has a direct effect on women as individuals and as members of the society of a nation at war.

There are other impacts of war on women. Any society in war goes through economic and social disruptions and dislocation. What we often see is women having to take on new roles and responsibilities during war to keep the society going. But they then have to give them up and return to secondary status after the war ends and the men return home. At that point, society returns to the “natural” order, which displaces women once again.

The effects of war are often felt by women long after the conflict ends. For example, there is a direct correlation between conflict and domestic violence against women. Incidents of domestic violence increase during but especially after war, which is a consequence of a militarized society. Because that violence takes place at home, which is seen as private space, it is not always perceived as a consequence of conflict or war, but feminist authors have documented the relationship.<sup>38</sup>

War destroys the natural environment, resulting in environmental degradation that has health consequences for the whole population but especially women and children long after the conflict ends. And of course, if the government is spending money to fund a war, it is not supporting the social services that many women depend on—that is, “guns versus butter.” Thus, while the decision to go to war, the conduct of it, and often the reconstruction of society after the war ends is often left to men as decision makers, the impact of all these decisions is felt by women.

The impact of war or violence is felt especially by women during civil conflict or war that takes place within the state which pits one group against another within a nation. Thus, the growth of ethnic, religious, tribal, and nationalist conflicts within a state means that those who had lived together within a culture and society turn on one another; former friends can quickly become enemies, and even family members who are from different ethnic or religious groups can become adversaries.<sup>39</sup> Not only does this put women into positions where they must choose sides, but it can also give them the greatest opportunities to become politically active as they work for conflict resolution and peace, or as combatants supporting one side or the other.

Because civil conflicts take place close to home, they offer women greater opportunities to make a difference, whether at the national or, more likely, the grassroots or community level. Although the fact that women have been active in working for

causes pertaining to peace is not a new phenomenon, civil conflicts can accelerate this process, often drawing on women's traditional roles as wives and mothers as the basis for commonality that allows women to be active participants. And the literature has also documented the fact that women not only work for peace but are also engaged as combatants during civil and ethnic conflict in which, like men, they feel it is their responsibility to fight for a cause they believe in.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, understanding women's roles and their relationship to war and conflict adds another and broader dimension to our understanding of the reasons countries go to war, how it pertains to their national interests, who is affected by war, and how wars end—all important questions in IR.

### ISSUES OF PEACE AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

We have talked a lot about issues of war and conflict, including when and whether countries are justified in going to war. We have also talked about negotiations as an instrument of policy and particularly how difficult it is to end a conflict, especially one that is considered intractable, such as the Israel-Palestine situation that is often in the news or the case of Cyprus, the island nation that has been divided into two parts since 1974.

Yet, if conflict is an inevitable component of international politics, as the realists argue, then one can justifiably ask where the concept of peace fits in the framework. The liberals would argue for the importance of cooperation in pursuit of the greater good, such as peace. Constructivists focus on normative structures and the beliefs of the value system of the elites to lead the nation onto the right path, which is assumed to be peace. But the realists make little accommodation for understanding peace within their theoretical framework.

What we are going to explore here are the large issues of how conflict can be resolved to create conditions of peace, and then what are the various steps related to the reconstruction of society after a conflict ends in order to ensure that the country does move toward "peace."

#### What Is Peace?

When we talk about war, we also need to talk about peace. It is important to define the various terms as we use them—as we did with the definition of *war*, we will start with what we mean by the concept of *peace*. At the most simplistic level, the term *peace* can be defined in the negative—that is, the absence of war. However, in order to get a full understanding of the term, we need to broaden the definition considerably. At a workshop on peace through human rights and international

understanding held in Ireland in October 1986, the workshop record summarized the results of a discussion group built around the question of “What is peace?” as follows: “Peace does not mean a lack of conflict—conflict cannot be avoided, but can be resolved. Conflict arises from a fear of losing that in which one has a vested interest. Removal of fear [i.e., creation of trust] brings peace.”<sup>41</sup> The UN-sponsored Third World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, arrived at a definition of peace that includes “not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities at the national and international levels but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society.”<sup>42</sup> And a range of feminist authors “define peace as the elimination of insecurity and danger” and as “relations between peoples based on ‘trust, cooperation and recognition of the interdependence and importance of the common good and mutual interests of all peoples.’”<sup>43</sup>

What all these definitions have in common is the broad understanding that peace must be seen as more than the absence of violent conflict and that it should also address broad issues such as equality, social justice, and ensuring basic freedoms and fundamental rights for all people in society. Thus, the concept of peace pertains not only to a situation characterized by an absence of hostility, but in a more positive sense, it is a situation of trust, a sense of security, and cooperation among peoples. It is this larger understanding of the concept of peace that has allowed the concept to be seen as a “feminine” or “feminized” notion, which is all too often dismissed as unrealistic and unattainable in the “real world.”

Peace can be achieved through *peacemaking*, which can be defined as “the process of diplomacy, mediation, negotiation or other forms of peaceful settlement that arranges an end to a dispute and resolves the issues that led to conflict.”<sup>44</sup> This definition obviously involves two separate but interrelated pieces. First is ending the dispute, and one of the important points, going back to just war doctrine, is that negotiations to end a war should be under way during the war. But the second part, which in many ways is the more critical, pertains to resolving the issues that contributed to the conflict in the first place. It is in the latter case that the role of women becomes most important. While men often look at peacemaking as ending the fighting, including disarming the belligerents, women strive for addressing the underlying issues that contributed to the conflict initially, also known as “structural violence.”<sup>45</sup>

As articulated by Johann Galtung, the concept refers to the idea that:

violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal life choices. . . . *Resources* are unevenly distributed, as when income distributions are heavily skewed,

literacy/education unevenly distributed, medical services existent only in some districts and for some groups only, and so on. Above all, *the power to decide over the distribution of resources* is unevenly distributed. (emphasis in original)<sup>46</sup>

The point that Galtung is making is that as long as there is an unequal distribution of resources and unequal access to the power that distributes those resources, then there will always be an element of conflict within the society. So although the society might not exist in a situation of armed violence or conflict, it is really not “at peace.” As a result of this structural violence, in general, when working for peace, women see it as an opportunity to address those inequalities that will help remove some of the factors that contributed to the conflict in the first place.

In addition to peacemaking, we can look at a number of other concepts directly related that pertain to finding ways to make sure that peace is maintained and future conflict avoided. Here we have two more concepts. One is *peace building*, which pertains to “postconflict actions, predominantly diplomatic and economic, that strengthen and rebuild governmental infrastructure and institutions in order to avoid renewed recourse to armed conflict.”<sup>47</sup>

The third concept that is important to understand is that of *peacekeeping*, which involves active efforts by third parties, such as the United Nations, to keep the warring parties apart so that they do not resort to hostilities. Often, peacekeeping forces can be inserted during the process of negotiating an end to a conflict. However, the danger here is that once they are in place, if an agreement cannot be reached, the forces remain. The United Nations is currently involved with twelve peacekeeping operations around the world.<sup>48</sup> But having a peacekeeping operation in place is no guarantee that there will continue to be peace.

### Ending a War?

Often, the future of a country following a conflict depends on how the war ended. This is especially critical in cases of civil/national/ethnic conflict, where groups within a single nation-state are at war with one another. The challenge then becomes how to knit the society back together, if that is at all possible, in order to once again establish a stable nation-state. Part of that will depend on how the war ends.

Political scientist Monica Duffy Toft identified a number of ways wars might end, and the different ways in which wars end have implications for what follows the war. According to Toft, “The most common type of ending is when one side wins so you have a military victory.”<sup>49</sup> This is not unlike Japan’s surrender after World War II when the United States prepared for the military victory by



**BOX 3.4****THE NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S COALITION**

The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) stands as one example of the ways in which women have worked together not only to help bring about peace (i.e., an end to violence) but also to address the underlying causes of that violence within the society. The NIWC was created in 1996 as a cross-community party, founded on three core principles: inclusion, equality, and human rights.<sup>1</sup> But what is more important, it was created specifically to help give women a voice in the process of negotiating an end to the violence in Northern Ireland known as "the troubles." One of the things that set the NIWC apart in the negotiations was the belief that "solving the political problems are only one part of addressing the broader issues plaguing Northern Ireland and especially those within the society who have suffered the most, primarily women."<sup>2</sup> Hence, while the other groups involved with the negotiations believed that getting the groups to put down arms (decommissioning) would lead to peace, the members of the NIWC wanted to address the structural issues that led to the divisions within the society and to the violence.

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, which brought an end to the violence, was signed in April 1998. Once the agreement was signed and the troubles that had plagued the country since the early 1960s ended, the NIWC was no longer able to win any local elections. The NIWC held its final meeting on May 11, 2006, and then disbanded.

**NOTES**

1. Kate Fearon, *Women's Work: The Story of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition* (Belfast, NI: The Blackstaff Press, 1999), 13.
2. Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams, *Women, the State and War* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 183.

sending in an occupation force under General MacArthur. Ultimately, the U.S. occupation force was able to leave, and the groundwork was in place for a stable democratic Japan.

A second way in which a war ends is a negotiated settlement, when the two parties agree to end hostilities and form a new government. A negotiated settlement ended the war in Bosnia after the major political leaders came together

in Dayton, Ohio, under U.S. direction. As a result of the agreement, Bosnia-Herzegovina was divided into two parts, the Serb Republic and the Muslim-Croat Federation, two entities that exist together within a single state. The way to end that conflict and deal with the ethnic divisions that created it was to divide the country into two parts, each representing one of the nations or ethnic groups.

A third way a conflict or war might end would be a cease-fire or stalemate. In that case, “the violence ends but the war itself, we don’t talk about it having ended, because it could re-ignite at any moment.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, the result is a temporary cessation of hostilities, although that situation could last for a very long time. An example of a cease-fire or stalemate can be seen in Korea, where the Korean War ended in 1953 with an armistice that drew a line between North and South. That armistice largely brought a halt to the armed conflict, with the demilitarized zone dividing the two belligerents patrolled by UN forces to this day. In that case, no one won, and no side lost; rather, the status quo was codified. The divided island of Cyprus is another example of this, where the Green Zone that divides the Turkish north from the Greek south remains in place today. Despite the talk in both of these cases of how there will one day be a unified Korea or a unified Cyprus, the real question remains, how might that be possible?

In 2008, the PRI radio show *Marketplace* did a series on “how wars end.”<sup>51</sup> What this show concluded was fascinating for it reminds us of the importance of preparing for peace or, conversely, how *not* preparing for peace contributes to future conflict. For example, it looked at the case of Iraq after the U.S. invasion in March 2003 and the subsequent fall of Saddam Hussein and his regime. Baghdad fell to U.S. troops, and President George W. Bush declared victory. Since “regime change” was one of the reasons given for the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the war should have been over then, with an authoritarian government replaced by one that claimed to be democratically elected. But, as we can see, many years later with the situation in Iraq still unstable, that was not the case. To that we can ask why.

One answer given is that the focus of the United States was on the conflict and not on what would happen after the United States “won.”<sup>52</sup> This means not only preparing for a new government but preparing to win over the population in the country that was at war. Rather than accepting defeat, the Sunni forces initiated an insurgency that has bedeviled the United States for years. The lesson here is in the importance of preparing for the peace during the war. And preparing for peace involves much more than simply signing an agreement or withdrawing forces. Or, put another way, “peace” does not come about simply by signing an agreement to end the armed conflict.<sup>53</sup>

**BOX 3.5****ENDING AMERICA'S LONGEST WAR:  
AFGHANISTAN<sup>1</sup>**

On September 12, 2001, the leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate approved George W. Bush's request to authorize U.S. military forces to be used against the Taliban in Afghanistan. The justification was intelligence data that was gathered that linked the 9/11 hijackers to the terrorist group al-Qaeda, based in Afghanistan; the Taliban government in Afghanistan supported and harbored the terrorists. On October 7, 2001, the United States launched ground and air strikes against Afghanistan.

Like other military operations, this was supposed to be a relatively easy military victory for the United States: defeat the Taliban and replace them with a pro-Western democratic government. However, like so many other operations, this proved to be far more complicated. Despite the goals of ousting the Taliban, confronting al-Qaeda, mounting a serious North Atlantic Treaty Organization mission, and rebuilding the country, the war in Afghanistan did not go as planned. Rather, attention to Afghanistan proved secondary to another questionable war with Iraq, which the Bush administration launched in March 2003. While U.S. attention and resources were diverted to Iraq, the war in Afghanistan continued and ending it—when and how to do so—became an issue for the Obama, Trump, and then the Biden administrations. It was Biden who finally decided that America's longest war in Afghanistan had to end.

An article in the *Los Angeles Times* on July 6, 2021, begins this way: "As the last U.S. combat troops prepare to leave Afghanistan, the question arises: When is the war really over?" And it answers that rhetorical question as follows: "For Afghans the answer is clear but grim: no time soon. An emboldened Taliban insurgency *is making battlefield gains*, and prospective peace talks are stalled. Some fear that once foreign forces are gone, Afghanistan will dive deeper into civil war."<sup>2</sup> The end of U.S. troop involvement in Afghanistan does not equal an end to that war. The case of Afghanistan can clearly illustrate the challenges of bringing a war to an end.

One of the stated foreign policy goals of candidate and then-President Trump was to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan. In December 2018, Trump ordered the withdrawal of about seven thousand troops from Afghanistan, about half the total number deployed, after first ordering that all troops be withdrawn. Withdrawal of all U.S. forces was one of the Taliban's main demands regarding any negotiations, and this seemed to signal that the United States would be willing to meet that condition.

In July 2018, the administration opened direct negotiations with the Taliban while excluding the elected government of Afghanistan from the talks. In February 2020, Washington and the Taliban reached an agreement. Called the "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan," the agreement was the result of eighteen months and nine rounds of talks between the United States and the Taliban and was preceded by a seven-day "reduction in violence" "that was seen as *a test* of the Taliban's ability to control its forces."<sup>3</sup> The agreement outlines four goals, with the last two dependent on the first two: (1) Afghanistan will not be used as a base for attacks against the United States or its allies and, specifically, the Taliban will not threaten the United States and it would prevent any armed groups from using Afghanistan to do the same; (2) the United States is committed to withdrawing all its forces and those of its allies as well as all civilian personnel from Afghanistan within fourteen months of signing the agreement, and depending on a show of good faith on the part of the Taliban; (3) negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government were to begin, starting with the release of a designated number of prisoners on both sides, leading ultimately to a complete release of all prisoners; and (4) "The agenda for intra-Afghan negotiations will include discussion of how to implement a permanent and comprehensive cease-fire, and a political roadmap for the future of Afghanistan. Pending successful negotiations and an agreed-upon settlement, the United States has agreed to seek economic cooperation from allies and UN member states for Afghan reconstruction efforts and has pledged no further domestic interference in Afghanistan."<sup>4</sup> As part of the February 2020 agreement, the Trump administration agreed to a May 2021 withdrawal of U.S. troops, point number 2, assuming other conditions are met.

Going into the talks, each side had a different goal. For the United States, the highest priority was to find a way to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, finally ending America's longest war. The Taliban's main

goal was to make sure that all foreign troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan, thereby giving them greater influence, and to advocate for an Afghanistan ruled by Islamic law. For the Afghan government, which was brought into the talks with the Taliban in September 2020 when the negotiations were well under way, the main goal was to reach a cease-fire with the Taliban and to do so in a way that could result in some power-sharing agreement, something that the Taliban also advocated for. The Taliban agreed to begin talks with the Afghan government as long as the United States committed to a timeline for withdrawing troops from the country.

As U.S. troop withdrawals continue, many Afghani citizens remain concerned about the growing role of the Taliban. Paramount among these is the worry that any compromise with the Taliban will undermine the gains won, especially women's rights and protections of minorities. Since 2001 and the fall of the Taliban, Afghan women have expanded their rights and roles, including greater participation in public life and access to education. The official government delegation does include women, although the Taliban do not have any in their delegation.<sup>5</sup>

On October 8, 2020, President Trump announced that he wanted all U.S. troops home by Christmas, something that seemed increasingly unlikely. On November 17, 2020, after Trump lost the election, Pentagon officials announced that they would halve the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan over the next two months from about five thousand to twenty-five hundred and from three thousand to twenty-five hundred in Iraq. Senior U.S. military officials continued to raise concerns about the Taliban's commitment to their part of the agreement. U.S. members of Congress from both parties also expressed concern about withdrawing U.S. forces too quickly, absent an indication of good faith on the part of the Taliban.<sup>6</sup>

When he became president, Biden made it very clear that he wanted U.S. troops out of Afghanistan, although not on the terms agreed to by the Trump administration. Rather, Biden announced that all U.S. forces would be out by September 11, 2021, twenty years after the initial attack that led to that war. The fear remains that a premature withdrawal from the country could lead to civil war, increased danger from terrorist attacks, and human rights abuses, especially directed against women. There are also approximately ten thousand NATO personnel from thirty-six countries deployed to Afghanistan, which also must be considered. As of July 2021, the withdrawal of U.S. troops was moving more quickly than

expected. By mid-August 2021, with the withdrawal of American troops and facing a resurgent Taliban, the Afghan government collapsed and the Taliban basically controlled the country.

There are a number of lessons that can be drawn from the case of Afghanistan. The amount of posturing that was done in public on both sides (United States and Taliban) only served to undermine negotiations that are most effective when done in private. The public pronouncements seem to suggest that both sides were also playing to a domestic audience, which was certainly the case when Donald Trump announced in October, going into the November elections, that the troops would be home for Christmas. Another important point that needs to be considered was the decision on the part of the Trump administration to negotiate with the Taliban, rather than the elected government of Afghanistan. Not only did this elevate the position of the Taliban, previously considered a terrorist group, it undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government, which the United States had been fighting to protect. Finally, the agreement had a number of conditions and preconditions, making a “successful” end to the conflict extremely difficult.

As summarized in the *Los Angeles Times* about ending the war, “As America’s war in Afghanistan draws to a close, there will be no surrender and no peace treaty, no final victory and no decisive defeat. Biden says it was enough that U.S. forces dismantled Al Qaeda and *killed Osama bin Laden*, the group’s leader and reputed mastermind of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.”<sup>7</sup>

But that still leaves open the question, what about the people of Afghanistan? What will happen to that country after U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces are gone? And, ultimately, how will this war be remembered?

## NOTES

1. Some of this is taken from Joyce P. Kaufman, *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy*, fifth edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

2. Robert Burns and Lolita C. Baldor, “When is the Afghanistan War Really Over?” *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 2021, [https://enewspaper.latimes.com/infinity/article\\_share.aspx?guid=4b7e3f78-0b92-41fe-a41e-844dcd16b744](https://enewspaper.latimes.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=4b7e3f78-0b92-41fe-a41e-844dcd16b744).

3. “What to Know about the Afghan Peace Negotiations,” Council on Foreign Relations, September 11, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/article/what-know-about-afghan-peace-negotiations>.

4. "What to Know about the Afghan Peace Negotiations."
5. Much of this information was drawn from Sune Engel Rasmussen, "Afghan Peace Talks: What You Need to Know," *Wall Street Journal*, October 22, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/afghan-peace-talks-what-you-need-to-know-11599922157>.
6. Dan Lamothe and Missy Ryan, "As Trump's Term Nears Close, Administration Announces Troop Level Cuts in Afghanistan and Iraq," *Washington Post*, November 17, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/trump-troop-cut-afghanistan-iraq/2020/11/17/ed6f3f80-28fa-11eb-b847-66c66ace1afb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/trump-troop-cut-afghanistan-iraq/2020/11/17/ed6f3f80-28fa-11eb-b847-66c66ace1afb_story.html).
7. Burns and Baldor, "When is the Afghanistan war really over?"

There are any number of examples of how ending a war does not guarantee that peace will follow, nor that there will be a real peace in the way we defined it previously. In fact, the way the war ends might actually pave the way for more conflict. The armistice that ended the war in Korea remains in place, but with ongoing tensions between the North and the South remaining. And the various agreements that have been negotiated to end the conflicts between Israel and its neighbors have not assured peace in the Middle East or security for Israel.

There are important lessons to be learned here, not least of which is that if there is to be a real peace, the groundwork needs to be started during the period of war. And for a nation-state in civil conflict, the reconstruction and rebuilding process will determine whether the state will be able to endure as a stable entity.

### **The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Process**

The end of formal hostilities is one step in transforming a society from a situation of armed conflict to one of peace. "Such post-conflict transformation processes include negotiating the formal peace agreement as well as instituting legal and political reforms; security sector reforms; transitional justice mechanisms; reconciliation measures; and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, (DDR) programs."<sup>54</sup> These interrelated processes are critically important in ensuring the success of a country as it seeks to move from a situation of war or conflict to one of peace. According to the UN, "Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration lays the groundwork for safeguarding and sustaining the communities to which these individuals [ex-combatants] return, while building capacity for long-term peace, security and development."<sup>55</sup> In other words, the DDR processes are critical components of stabilizing war-torn societies and helping to ensure

their long-term development by integrating those who had been part of the conflict, and helping the society move on.

Just as war affects men and women differently, so do these post-conflict transformation processes. Because wars are typically fought by men, most of the DDR programs are geared toward men, including things like how to reintegrate (male) combatants back into society after a war ends. However, for a society to fully recover from the devastation of conflict, all members of society must be involved, thereby recognizing the fact that “gender consciousness” must be part of any DDR program. Unless women are part of the rebuilding process that follows the end of war, it is unlikely that the peace that follows will be successful or enduring.<sup>56</sup>

In order to ensure that women have a formal role in the DDR process, on October 31, 2000, Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted by the UN Security Council. This resolution was the international community’s recognition of the impact of war on women as well as recognizing the contributions that women can make in the processes of conflict resolution, peace negotiations, and peace building, and became the framework for what has become known as the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which is addressed in more detail in Case 3 in chapter 6. In addition to explicitly recognizing the importance of women’s contributions to the peace process, it also acknowledges the importance of including women and girls in DDR programs. While Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions also designed to shore up women’s roles in post-conflict transformation are seen as important steps for women, the reality is that their implementation has been problematic, meaning that women too often continue to remain outside the processes that are necessary for a society to move from war to a situation of peace.

## SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the nation-state level of analysis, beginning with a definition of *nation-state*. It is important to understand the nation-state and the concepts that govern state behavior, such as sovereignty, by putting them into historical context and understanding the evolution of the state. That was the starting point for our discussion of this level of analysis.

Also looking from a historical perspective, we talked about issues of *balance of power*, what that means, and how that concept has been realized using the different theoretical perspectives. Thus, we see the realists who look at all relations in terms of power and, therefore, to the inevitability of conflict, and the liberal



thinkers who look at cooperation as the most effective foreign policy tool. Constructivists look at the ways in which the existing social and political structures affect the relationships among nation-states and ways to alter those structures for more positive ends. And the feminists would admonish us to look not only at the states but also at the impact of the actions of those nation-states.

We also talked about some of the “big questions” pertaining to the nation-state level: What is war, and why do countries go to war? What is peace, and how can peace be realized? How do countries communicate, and what options are available to countries as they are determining their foreign policy or their relations with other nations? These are all big and important questions to think about, and they make up an important element of IR.

However, understanding IR means understanding *all* of the critical levels of analysis. In the next chapter, we will start looking within the nation-state at the component parts: the *nation*, and what that means, and the *state*, or the trappings of the government. When we look at the nation, we also have to look at the people, the society, the culture, and ultimately the individuals. By understanding these, we can better understand how and why nations behave as they do, but also why so many nation-states break up or end up in civil, ethnic, or religious conflict. These are all critical pieces of understanding IR.

### FURTHER READINGS

These additional readings are worth exploring and elaborate on some of the points raised in this chapter. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but only illustrative.

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. <https://www.clausewitz.com/readings/OnWar1873/TOC.htm>.

Galtung, Johann. “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research.” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91.

Jones, Anne. “Wars Abroad Continue at Home.” [http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175053/tomgram:\\_\\_ann\\_jones,\\_wars\\_abroad\\_continue\\_at\\_home](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175053/tomgram:__ann_jones,_wars_abroad_continue_at_home).

MacMillan, Margaret. *War: How Conflict Shaped Us*. New York: Random House, 2020.

Snow, Donald. “National Interests and Conflict: Russian Oil and U.S. Russian Relations.” In *Cases in International Relations: Principles and Applications*, seventh edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

“Treaty of Westphalia.” [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/westphal.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp).

**NOTES**

1. Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: Norton, 2009), 38.
2. Locke's belief in the inherent goodness of man stands in marked contrast to the ideas of Thomas Hobbes, outlined in chapter 2, and makes Locke one of the founders of modern liberalism. See John Locke, especially his *Two Treatises of Government* and his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in which he outlines his understanding of human nature and the role of government. Both are widely available.
3. As a result of the Brexit vote, Britain invoked Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon, which binds all EU states to certain rules, including a process for any country that decides to leave the EU. Under the terms of Article 50, the British government had to notify the EU of its intent to leave and then agree to enter into negotiations with the EU regarding the British exit (Brexit). Britain notified the EU of its intention to leave in March 2017, and the talks started in June 2017. The final agreement was reached in December 2020. The agreement outlines the relationship that would follow between the United Kingdom and the EU. Perhaps the most contentious part of the negotiations and the agreement dealt with Northern Ireland, which had had a relatively open border with the neighboring Republic of Ireland. This was resolved through the creation of the Northern Ireland protocol, which allows Northern Ireland to follow many of the existing EU rules. For more on this, see Tom Edgington and Chris Morris, "Brexit: What Is the Northern Ireland Protocol and Why Are There Checks?" BBC News, March 15, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53724381>. For a quick overview on background of Brexit and the process, see Alex Hunt and Brian Wheeler, "Brexit: All You Need to Know about the UK Leaving the EU," BBC News, July 13, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>.
4. Although the treaty is difficult to wade through, it is interesting to see how the modern nation-state and concepts such as sovereignty have their origins here and how its impact is felt to this day. See "Treaty of Westphalia," [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/westphal.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp).
5. Karen A. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, fourth edition (New York: Norton, 2008), 24.
6. In describing the origins of the modern state, Charles Tilly asserts that it was born from war and that the military was integral to the continued success, or even existence, of the state. Specifically, Tilly places "the organization of coercion and preparation for war squarely in the middle of the analysis, arguing . . . that state structure appeared chiefly as a by-product of rulers' efforts to acquire the means of war," and tied to that, "relations among states, especially through war and preparation for war, strongly

affected the entire process of state formation.” Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 14.

7. “Treaty of Westphalia,” [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/westphal.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp).
8. K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, seventh edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 46.
9. Holsti, *International Politics*, 47.
10. Stephen Fidler, “Sovereignty Doesn’t Always Mean Getting Your Way,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 26–27, 2020, print, A8.
11. Fidler, “Sovereignty Doesn’t Always Mean Getting Your Way.”
12. Charles W. Kegley Jr., *World Politics: Trend and Transformation* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 458–59.
13. As I note in *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy*, “The Spanish-American War unambiguously made the United States an imperial power, rivaling the major powers of Europe.” Joyce P. Kaufman, *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy*, fifth edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), 57.
14. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, 32–33.
15. Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations and World Politics: Security, Economy, Identity*, fourth edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2009), 70–71.
16. Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations and World Politics*, 537.
17. For a more detailed discussion of foreign policy orientations, see Kaufman, *A Concise History of U.S. Foreign Policy*, 19–22.
18. For more examples of the ways in which culture affects negotiations, see Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures: International Negotiation in an Interdependent World* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).
19. The most recent talks took place in April 2021 and ended without a resolution but with future talks planned. These followed talks that had collapsed in 2017, again, without a resolution. See Jamey Keaten and Menelaos Hadjicostis, “UN-led Informal Cyprus Talks Stall, New Round Planned,” Associated Press, April 29, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/united-nations-middle-east-cyprus-europe-government-and-politics-1516ce6774ffa486a779b03bdde55289>.
20. Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations and World Politics*, 555.

21. Kegley, *World Politics*, 382.
22. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations*, 218.
23. Margaret MacMillan, *War: How Conflict Shaped Us* (New York: Random House, 2020), xiv.
24. MacMillan, *War: How Conflict Shaped Us*, xiv. This also reiterates a point made by Charles Tilly in footnote 6 of this chapter.
25. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, brief edition (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 37.
26. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 16.
27. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 199.
28. Waltz, *Realism and International Politics*, 199.
29. There are exceptions to that statement, of course. Although there are allegations that Franklin Roosevelt and others in his administration were aware of the possibility of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, that theory has been refuted as discussed in a story on NPR's *Morning Edition*, "No, FDR Did Not Know the Japanese Were Going to Bomb Pearl Harbor," December 6, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/12/06/504449867/no-fdr-did-not-know-the-japanese-were-going-to-bomb-pearl-harbor>. Of course, terrorist attacks, such as 9/11, rely on surprise to have the maximum impact, but that is a different case. That said, most interstate conflicts are preceded by periods of tension and even low levels of armed violence prior to the outbreak of major war.
30. Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017), 83.
31. See, for example, Sebastian von Einsiedel, "Civil War Trends and the Changing Nature of Armed Conflict," United Nations University Centre for Policy Research Occasional Paper 10, March 2017, [https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6156/Civil\\_war\\_trends\\_UPDATED.pdf](https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6156/Civil_war_trends_UPDATED.pdf).
32. MacMillan, *War: How Conflict Shaped Us*, 42.
33. "Just War Theory," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://iep.utm.edu/justwar/>.
34. Although the first Geneva Convention was adopted in 1864, the one that is generally referred to regarding protecting civilians is the fourth Geneva Convention,

adopted in 1949. The principles embodied in this grew from the experiences of World War II; it was the first to deal explicitly with civilians. For a discussion of this and the other Geneva conventions, see “The Geneva Conventions of 1949,” <https://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/overview-geneva-conventions.htm>.

35. For President Bush’s own account of the events, see George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998).

36. See Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, especially chapter 1, “Cities and States in World History,” 1–37.

37. It should be noted that one of the few exceptions to this moniker was Hitler’s Germany during World War II, where the fight was for the “fatherland.”

38. See, for example, Ann Jones, “Wars abroad Continue at Home,” [http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175053/tomgram: \\_\\_ann\\_jones\\_wars\\_abroad\\_continue\\_at\\_home](http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175053/tomgram:__ann_jones_wars_abroad_continue_at_home); Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (London: Zed Books, 1998); and Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams, *Women, the State, and War* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 173–74.

39. Women in ethnically or religiously mixed marriages was one of the variables that we examined in *Women, the State, and War*. Marriage is one way that states gender citizenship, and as we saw in the cases we examined, generally it is the woman who suffers when she marries outside her group. She is often ostracized by her own family for marrying an outsider and is never really accepted by her husband’s family because she is one of “the other.” In some cases, as we saw in the case of the former Yugoslavia, this led directly to violence against women. See Kaufman and Williams, *Women, the State, and War*, 96–103.

40. There are a number of authors who have studied women as combatants. For example, see Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women’s Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2007); Miranda H. Alison, *Women and Political Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams, *Challenging Gender Norms: Women and Political Activism in Times of Conflict* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2013).

41. Workshop summary, “Workshop on Peace through Human Rights and Understanding,” Navan, Ireland, October 12–17, 1986, 13. Accessed at the Women’s Library, London, June 2008.

42. Inger Skjelsbaek, “Gendered Battlefields: A Gender Analysis of Peace and Conflict,” PRIO Report (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1997), 7.

43. Tami Amanda Jacoby, *Women in Zones of Conflict: Power and Resistance in Israel* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 13.
44. Kegley, *World Politics*, 578.
45. Johann Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91. Also see Johann Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage, 1996).
46. Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," 171.
47. Kegley, *World Politics*, 578.
48. UN Peacekeeping Operations, current as of May 2021, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/current-peacekeeping-operations>.
49. Quoted in PRI, "How Wars End," part 1, introduction, October 6, 2008, <https://www.pri.org/series/how-wars-end>.
50. Quoted in PRI, "How Wars End."
51. This was a five-part series, broadcast October 6–10, 2008. The entire series can be found at <https://www.pri.org/series/how-wars-end>.
52. For more detail on this point, see George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005). See also Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2006).
53. In the documentary "Pray the Devil Back to Hell" about the ways in which women were involved with ending the civil war in Liberia, the point that is made is that "peace is a process, not an event." This is an important point that reinforces the idea that peace does not come when an agreement is signed, nor that it is like a switch that can be flipped to bring a society from conflict to peace. Rather, it requires work. "Pray the Devil Back to Hell," released in 2008, Abigail Disney, producer.
54. Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams, *Women, Gender Equity, and Post-Conflict Transformation: Lessons Learned, Implications for the Future*, edited by Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1.
55. "United Nations Peacekeeping: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration," <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration>.
56. For more discussion of the need to address gender in DDR programs, see chapter 6, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs," in Fionnuala Ni Aolain, Dina Francesca Haynes, and Naomi Cahn, *On the Frontlines: Gender, War, and the Post-Conflict Process* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 131–51.