

Strategies for Peace

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Through the lens of realism, peace is a macro-level, top-down outcome that is primarily governed by state behavior. The spectrum of peace concepts associated with realism primarily relates to peacemaking and peacekeeping. Leading proponents of realism do not grapple with peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is a postconflict process that transitions a society from war to peace, which includes a variety of subelements, including development of infrastructure, sustainable economy, public health system, institution building, rule of law and human rights, humanitarian aid, peacekeeping, security and disarmament, education, and justice and reconciliation forums.¹ Realist theories do not explore the internal dynamics of state building. Instead, they focus on war prevention and war termination. While peacebuilding is valuable, it presumes the peacemaking phase already occurred and requires simultaneous peacekeeping to enable the peacebuilding activities to take hold. To make the difference more muddled, the primary provider of peacekeepers, the United Nations (UN), does not differentiate between peacemakers and peacekeepers in its doctrine.²

This chapter does not advocate for one particular brand of realism as the supreme analytical tool. Instead, it presents a synthesis of theories across International Relations to explore the various factors that shape how states and nonstate actors approach peace. No one theory is “the best” at explaining peacekeeping and peacemaking. Rather, each theory provides a piece of the puzzle that explains peace as a dependent variable. This chapter begins by defining realism and integrating the various subtheories of realism to provide a framework to explain when actors choose cooperation over conflict. It frames the discussion in the context of realist strategies for maintaining peace and resolving conflicts. Despite its explanatory

* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and not necessarily those of the US Air Force Academy, the US Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the US government.

¹ Pamina Firchow and Harry Anastasiou, eds., *Practical Approaches to Peacebuilding: Putting Theory to Work* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2016), 7–8.

² Malte Brosig and Norman Sempijja, “Does Peacekeeping Reduce Violence? Assessing Comprehensive Security of Contemporary Peace Operations in Africa,” *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 7, no. 1 (2018): 14.

power, realism is inherently limited in its capability to explain how a state or actor perceives relative values of competing security interests.

This chapter next compares realism to the other approaches analyzed in this model, including liberalism, constructivism, cosmopolitanism, feminism, critical peacebuilding studies, and Critical Islamic Studies. To be truly effective, realism should be combined with a constructivist lens. National security interests, values, and perceptions are socially constructed and vary significantly by state, actor, and political regime.³ At the same time, I argue that, as they form and evolve, these constructed ideas of national security interests, values, and so forth are also influenced by other theoretical approaches. The synergistic cross-paradigmatic approach I propose explains how the various theories shape actor behavior, within the structure provided by realism. The chapter concludes by highlighting the outstanding shortfalls that remain in any peacebuilding approach.

REALISM AND THE STRATEGIC DECISION TO USE FORCE

Within any realist paradigm, the state seeks to protect its security and interests. States value peace when they perceive that it is in their interest. Peace occurs and lasts when potential adversaries perceive that avoiding conflict is in their best interests. When competing states have conflicting interests, it creates the conditions that increase the probability of war.

A state's preference for peaceful cooperation over violent conflict is strategic. From a peace studies perspective, state and nonstate actor strategic goals can be sorted into three categories: peacekeepers, peacebreakers, and peacemakers. For those that choose peacekeeping and peacemaking, peace is a strategic objective. Peace is an objective either to hold or to achieve. While it may seem counterintuitive to discuss peace in the context of strategy, "the logic of strategy pervades the upkeep of peace as much as the making of war."⁴

Regardless of the physical effects from using the various instruments of power, all strategic action intends to influence the adversary (and often partners) psychologically. The psychological tools of strategy (compel, deter, dissuade, persuade)⁵ are simplified in Table 1.1, which depicts the strategic theories that states and organizations employ to achieve their strategic goals. Each way is an alternative approach to shaping others' perceived costs and benefits of action or inaction. While distinct, actors often employ multiple ways simultaneously.

³ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Japp de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

⁴ Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), xi.

⁵ This typology is derived from Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Fredericksburg, VA: Yale University, 1966), 71; Edward Luttwak, *Strategy*, 218; Thomas Drohan, *A New Strategy for Complex Warfare: Combined Effects in East Asia* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2016).

TABLE 1.1 *Influence methods*

	Prevent action	Cause action
Coercion (threats or destructive effects)	deterrence	compellence
Cooperation (rewards or constructive effects)	dissuasion or assurance	persuasion

Source: Mike Fowler, “The Ways of War: Constructing a Compellence Strategy,” in *Contemporary Military Strategy*, ed. Burke, Fowler, and McCaskey (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018), 55.

Typically, cooperation is used with partners and coercion is used against adversaries. However, these methods are not mutually exclusive. Influence is not limited to adversaries. Countries seek to influence their partners, neutral countries, the international community, their domestic populations, and their own governments and militaries.

Coercion is the threat or use of force to shape adversary behavior. Luttwak notes that the paradoxical logic of strategy often requires the threat and use of force in order to maintain or create conditions for peace. This parallels the old Roman adage “if you want peace, prepare for war.” Throughout the Cold War and into the post-9/11 era, preparation for war took on new meaning as states expended significant resources on security cooperation efforts to prepare their partners for wars, proxy wars, insurgencies, counterinsurgencies, counternarcotics, and a variety of other national security tasks.

Within the lens of neorealism, the anarchy of the international system incentivizes states to protect themselves by (1) maximizing the state’s power (aka offensive realism) or (2) cooperating with other states to create a balance of power (aka defensive realism). The term *offensive realism* is misleading, as it suggests a pro-war attitude. Ironically, proponents of offensive realism tended to be opposed to the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These arguments were not based on an altruistic belief or value in peace. Rather, small wars and occupations were perceived as a power drain. Instead of maximizing the state’s power, these efforts decreased the available power to deal with an existential threat – which should be the primary security goal of the state.⁶ This also means that the offensive realist does not see a national security interest in peacemaking or peacebuilding in other states. Instead of being perceived as an effort to improve overall global political, economic, and security levels, these activities diffuse state power. The offensive realist takes great pains to keep the peace as long as that peace maintains the state’s position of power. Even during times of peace, “the realist view of peaceful change as an adjustment to the changed relations of power; and since the party which is able to bring most power

⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 18–22.

to bear normally emerges successful from operations of peaceful change, we shall do our best to make ourselves as powerful as we can.”⁷

In another ironic twist of semantics, defensive realists are more likely to be in favor of military force to carry out peacemaking or peacebuilding missions. These operations might use force in order to create the conditions for peace. Conceptually, they are more likely to favor state regime change since the change could result in an adjustment of the regional or global balance of power in the intervening state’s favor. While security is the goal of the defensive realist, the acquisition of power is a necessary prerequisite to having the capability and capacity to maintain or create peace.

Defensive realism seeks to create security through the creation of powerful alliances and coalitions. The term *balance of power* is somewhat misleading, since it implies that states seek to equally balance the power between two sides. In practice, states cooperate in order to create an imbalance in their side’s favor (or to reduce the imbalance in the adversary’s favor).⁸ A brief exploration of US alliances and partners is illustrative of this point. Through the NATO alliance and various collective defense arrangements, the United States has legal obligations to defend fifty-five countries.⁹ Beyond these, the United States has an additional twenty-one security partners, which get special consideration for arms exports and military cooperation. Some of these special relationships include legal obligations short of military defense, such as Israel, Taiwan, Sweden, and Finland. Others are designated major non-NATO allies,¹⁰ comprehensive partnerships,¹¹ or defense cooperation agreements.¹²

State security cooperation goes far beyond mutual defense agreements. Cooperation involves rewards or constructive effects. Typical constructive effects include military equipment and training, intelligence sharing, high-level visits, troop deployments, and civil works projects.

The United States provides security-related financial aid to fifty partners. From 2010 to 2014, the State Department distributed \$28 billion in foreign military financing across one hundred countries, about half of which are not included in the previously mentioned alliances or partnerships (e.g., Yemen, Uganda,

⁷ Edward H. Carr, “Realism and Idealism.” In *Conflict after the Cold War*, ed. Betts (New York: Pearson Education, 2005), 85.

⁸ For a detailed explanation on balancing, see Kenneth Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War,” *International Security* 25 (2000): 5–41.

⁹ Twenty-eight member-countries of NATO; additional CDAs with Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Korea, and twenty-one countries in Latin America under the Rio Treaty.

¹⁰ Including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, and Tunisia.

¹¹ Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

¹² Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Liberia, Qatar, and Singapore. The United States–Saudi Arabia partnership is called a Technical Cooperation Agreement, though it still includes a security component.

Bangladesh).¹³ In sum, the United States has expressed security interests in 65 percent (126/196) of the world's countries through political, legal, and financial commitments.

Security cooperation can improve a partner country's capability to maintain peace in its own country or to conduct peacebuilding as part of a regional effort or international organization. When done well, security cooperation efforts will also develop infrastructure necessary to sustain peace efforts and good governance to oversee it. However, security cooperation does not necessarily have a peaceful intent. It can be used to extend a state's coercive capabilities through its partners. Rewards can be used to facilitate third-party basing for offensive operations or to encourage active participation in combat.

In practice, the choice between peace and violence is not dichotomous. The threat or use of force is a strategic decision among a spectrum of options across instruments of power. Force is the appropriate instrument of power to achieve objectives under one of two conditions: (1) when it is considered the most likely instrument to achieve a particular objective over alternative methods and (2) when other instruments of power fail. In either case, this is a key decision point, because using force typically incurs higher risks and costs than alternative options, such as political pronouncements, diplomacy, or economic actions.

For each actor, the efficacy of the use of force is dependent upon that actor's objectives. From the realist paradigm, objectives are rationally designed to protect security and interests. To paraphrase Thucydides, rationale security choices are driven by emotions such as fear, duty, honor, and nationalism. These factors drive a group's analysis of their strategic position: actors perceive that the status quo (or an anticipated near-term change in the status quo) is (or is not) conducive to their security and/or in their best interest.

Peacebreakers

The primary challenge with maintaining peace is that not all states and actors perceive that peace is in their interest. Understanding the factors that drive states and nonstate actors to use force to break the status quo is a key factor in understanding the opportunities for and limits of peacekeeping and peacemaking. Thucydides argued that "strong states do what they want; weak states suffer what they must."¹⁴ The strong want to maintain the status quo. In order to maximize their future strategic choices, the strong are incentivized to prevent the weak from becoming stronger and to maximize their own power in order ensure their future ability to do

¹³ US State Department, "Foreign Military Financing Account Summary," www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/c14560.htm.

¹⁴ Thucydides, translated by Rex Warner, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954), 360.

what they want.¹⁵ Conversely, the weak want to become stronger in order to minimize potential intimidation from the strong.

There are a variety of approaches the weak can use to reduce the gap between themselves and their stronger opponent. For the offensive realist, a state should seek to maximize its power as derived from its geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character, national morale, and the quality of diplomacy and government.¹⁶ The variety of factors makes measurement of power differentials a complex undertaking. Power is contextual, relational, fungible, and situation dependent.¹⁷

For the defensive realist, this power can be achieved collectively through cooperation with like-minded states. Diplomatic power can be created through alliances or partnerships. A weak actor can create an alliance with a strong actor or a group of other weak actors to balance against a strong opponent. Examples of this type of balancing include theocratic Shia Iran's partnerships with Sunni Sudan and atheist North Korea as well as Russia's support for Syria and its efforts to keep pro-Russian governments in former Soviet countries. Increased tensions over the Senkaku and the Spratly Islands has resulted in countries in the region requesting additional US defense cooperation in an effort to balance against China.

Arguably, an actor's diplomatic power derives from their informational, economic, and military power. The power of ideas can be compelling. Whether they center on modernization, capitalism, or religious radicalization and extremist violence, ideas have the potential to recruit followers and attract partners. Charismatic speakers and social media amplify the transmission of these ideas.

Economic power is the foundation of power since diplomatic, information, and military activities rely upon financing to effectively function. Conceptually, military force can be used to gain additional economic power through natural resources and industrial capacity. For example, the capture of diamond mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be an essential step in providing the funds necessary to sustain a rebellion.

The desire to seize geography is not always about economic gain. Sometimes, it can be about creating a defensive barrier of the homeland by creating buffer zones. The most prominent buffer zone creators are Israel (e.g., the Sinai Desert and the Golan Heights) and Russia (e.g., Eastern Poland during World War II, the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War, and contemporary efforts to ensure pro-Russian governments along its borders in Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltics). In other cases, it is about access. Military positions can enable the protection of economic interests beyond their territorial sovereignty. Russian occupation of Crimea gives them

¹⁵ For the seminal discussion on power, see Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 29–30.

¹⁶ Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, xviii.

¹⁷ David Baldwin, "Power and International Relations." In *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Calrnsaes et al. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2013), 279–290.

continued access to the Black Sea, and Chinese security personnel in Sudan ensure the uninterrupted flow of a vital natural resource.

Even within the military domain, there is complexity in measuring differences in power. Military power is not a simple numerical advantage. Today, three alternative approaches to building military power are in vogue: quality, unconventional, and weapons of mass destruction.

Quality includes building a high-tech and/or high-skilled force to gain a local, competitive advantage over a strong adversary. Over the last ten years, China has invested in smaller numbers of high-quality arms, such as advanced surface-to-air missiles, stealth fighters, nuclear subs, and aircraft carriers. Of course, quality is still expensive. Smaller budgets may choose an unconventional approach to develop capabilities that strong conventional forces are not optimized to counter. Contemporary examples include guerrilla warfare, terrorist attacks, computer network attacks, and social medial psychological operations. Finally, a military buildup can also include the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Joining the nuclear club can be the ultimate trump card to deter stronger opponents. While the United States' qualitative and quantitative military advantage over North Korea is tremendous, the sheer destructive power of a single (functional and deliverable) nuclear weapon is enough to make the acquisition of WMD a major change in the status quo.

Regardless of the method, the strong are theoretically opposed to the strengthening of the weak. While the strong often take steps to strengthen their partners or allies, the strengthening of an opponent reduces their comparative advantage. A smaller relative advantage reduces their potential options in the future to ensure the achievement or security of their national interests.

Peacekeepers and Peacemakers

Through the realist lens, the powerful are incentivized to maintain the status quo. The powerful will seek to keep the peace as long as their relative advantage over their potential adversaries is not diminished. Peacekeepers use their influence to maintain the peace. While certainly some individuals are driven by altruistic visions of creating world peace, the realist paradigm perceives efforts to keep and create peace as self-interested behavior.

Security concerns about the status quo are driven by perceptions of changes in threat capability and/or intent.¹⁸ Whether the perception stems from fear or raw calculation, they want to maintain the relative comparative advantage that they have over their potential future adversaries. "Driven by an interest in survival, states are acutely sensitive to any erosion of their relative capabilities, which are the ultimate basis for their security and independence in an anarchical, self-help

¹⁸ Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

international context.”¹⁹ For example, the power transition model argues that countries may go to war if they are going from first-power to second-power status.²⁰ Countries will also be sensitive to erosion in the capabilities of their allies and coalition partners since this may upset the regional and/or global relative balance of power in favor of another state or nonstate actor.

Maintenance of the status quo requires the use of influence methods to impact the strategic decision-making processes of other actors. Table 1.1 depicts the various ways that influence can employ means to achieve the desired end. Specifically, the influence model depicts four alternative ways to influence the perceived costs and benefits of the status quo and conflict: deterrence, compellence, dissuasion/assurance, and persuasion. Influence methods can be employed by both state and nonstate actors. While the structures of the state provide formal avenues of interstate engagement, contemporary communications technology provides a wide dynamic of messaging opportunities for nonstate actors.

Peacekeepers tend to focus on the preventive side of the influence model: deterrence and assurance. Deterrence increases the potential costs of war for the opponent. Ideally, the calculated costs of war are raised so sufficiently that they outweigh any potential benefits of using force or employing another means to change the power status quo. Assurance, on the other hand, focuses on reducing the costs of the status quo. Defense cooperation, prepositioning of forces, and formal alliances can be used to assure allies against potential threats, mitigating their perceived costs of maintaining the status quo.

On the opposite end of the influence spectrum, peacemakers use compellence and persuasion to induce a change in behavior. These methods could be used to convince an adversary or ally to come to peace terms. Compellence and persuasion have many uses beyond convincing another actor to return to the status quo ante. Compellence may be used to disrupt the status quo and gain an advantage over an adversary. Persuasion can be used for changing a local or regional status quo. It is not unusual for partners to request some type of quid pro quo for their cooperation in providing basing rights or fly-over diplomatic clearances or in conducting combined operations.

Within the context of creating peace, compellence decreases the benefits of continuing conflict, while persuasion increases the benefits of returning to the status quo ante. In the absence of open conflict, an actor may choose to employ preemptive or preventive measures to encourage a return to the status quo ante. For example, compellence may convince a country to halt a nuclear weaponization program. Air strikes on the program might convince them that continued development is unlikely to result in a successful conclusion. Alternatively, persuasion could

¹⁹ Joseph M. Grieco, “Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation.” In Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 127.

²⁰ Samuel Huntington, “Arms Races: Prerequisites and Results.” In *Conflict after the Cold War*, ed. Betts (New York: Pearson Education, 2005), 361–381.

also be employed in this same case. However, the rewards would need to be sufficient such that they outweighed the strategic “need” for nuclear weapons.

Persuasion has become a popular tool for addressing internal conflicts. The provision of international aid and training can be a bargaining tool to encourage actors to reduce human rights abuses, democratize, or provide services to the population. Arguably, if a country is able to provide internal security to protect the population, follow the rule of law with low levels of corruption, provide for the basic needs of the population, and foster a sustainable democracy and sustainable economy, the population will have low motivation for conflict.²¹ Unfortunately, the elite that benefit from the status quo are likely to resist such structural changes that benefit the majority.

When Does Influence Fail?

There are a variety of explanations of why influence methods fail, which can be grouped into four categories: inadequate communication, lack of credibility, lack of feasibility, and inaccurate cost-benefit analysis.

Poor communication results in inadequate signaling from one actor to influence another. This could occur due to a failure to understand the target’s intentions.²² Ambiguous or conflicting messaging complicates the target’s ability to comprehend the threat or reward. For example, US State Department warnings to Saddam Hussein in 1990 may have been sufficiently ambiguous that they failed to deter Saddam from invading Kuwait.²³ Meanwhile, US messages about removing dictatorships around the world negated attempts to reassure Iraq that the United States respected Iraq’s sovereignty.²⁴ In both cases, poor communication failed to change the target’s cost-benefit analysis.

Even if the communication is clear, however, the target actor might not consider it credible. Past behavior of failing to follow through reduces credibility.²⁵ Actions that require the approval of the UN or similar security organizations are especially vulnerable to credibility problems due to the potential of a veto. In the case of Assad’s suspected use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Civil War, UN intervention was never credible since the Russians would veto any measure that hurt Assad’s regime or helped the opposition. Finally, the target actor may consider the influence attempt to lack credibility, because the issue is of peripheral interest (vice a core national

²¹ Daniel Serwer and Patricia Thomson, “A Framework for Success.” In *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, ed. Crocker et al. (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 371.

²² Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Fredericksburg, VA: Yale University, 1966), 54.

²³ John Mearsheimer, “An Unnecessary War,” *Foreign Policy* 134 (2003): 50–59.

²⁴ Janice Gross Stein, “Deterrence and Compellence in the Gulf, 1990–1991: A Failed or Impossible Task?” *International Security* 17, no. 2 (1992): 162.

²⁵ Schelling, *Arms*, 75.

security interest) to the originating actor.²⁶ If the target does not believe the threat is credible, the threat will have minimal impact on the target's cost-benefit analysis.

Even if a credible threat is clearly communicated, the target actor may determine that it is not feasible. This could be due to a lack of capability.²⁷ An actor may not have sufficient means to effectively achieve the end-state. Despite its impressive global military capabilities, the United States had no significant military forces in the Middle East prior to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. This regional capability gap gave Saddam Hussein the perception that the United States could not feasibly respond in sufficient time to prevent his occupation of Kuwait.

Aggressors can also exploit loopholes that complicate the legal and political feasibility of a military response. Unlike a military invasion, the use of irregular warfare, cyberattacks, and covert operations provide a semblance of plausible denial. This is a particularly effective technique when the military response requires agreement within a security organization such as NATO, EU, or UN.

Finally, there could be a disparity in the cost-benefit calculations of the influencer versus the target of the influence. Estimating a target's costs and benefits is challenging because it involves many variables. Those that want to influence often underestimate the opponent's benefits and overestimate their costs.²⁸ Arguably, in 1990 Saddam Hussein may have seen US threats as clear, credible, and feasible, and yet still invaded. If Saddam perceived that there was a US-supported regional conspiracy that threatened his hold on power, an invasion of Kuwait might disrupt that conspiracy and improve the odds of regime survival.²⁹

Costs and benefit are based on an actor's beliefs, goals, regime type, and mindset.³⁰ Beliefs and goals are constructed from values/norms, ideology, and identity which are contextual and change over time. People have multiple identities, which makes prediction of their future actions problematic. Additionally, the strategic decision maker often receives a variety of inputs including domestic politics, organizational behavior, bureaucratic politics, Diasporas, the media, and lobbyists. While security interests might be universal, the prioritization and relative value of varying interests is socially constructed.

This complicates the ability to calculate an adversary's costs and benefits. Security and interests may be rational. However, those that place a premium on measuring rationality quantitatively can be at risk of mirror imaging. This leads to incorrect assumptions and analysis on the leverage points that influence the adversary's

²⁶ Daryl Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

²⁷ Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁸ Byman and Waxman, *Dynamics*.

²⁹ F. Gregory Cause III, "Iraq's Decisions to Go to War, 1980 and 1990," *Middle East Journal* 56, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 49.

³⁰ Alexander George, "The Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries," *Comparative Strategy* 22, no. 5 (2003): 478–479.

strategic decision-making process. In a corollary to Thucydides, some believe that weakness invites aggression.³¹ This paradigm incentivizes the weak to strengthen to avoid subjugation by the strong. Weak and rising actors have an incentive to improve their relative power. Some argue this change is inevitable as maintaining the status quo eventually becomes too expensive as the stronger states' competitive advantages are learned by everyone else.³²

Estimates of actor behavior, interests, relative capability, morale, and resilience typically assume that actors have all of the key information and calculate costs and benefits correctly.³³ Yet, this analysis can be distorted by stress, fear, humiliation, and revenge. This distortion can lead states to convince themselves that the benefits of aggression outweigh the costs despite evidence to the contrary.³⁴ These benefits come in both tangible and intangible forms.

Tangible benefits tend to focus upon economic gain or a comparative advantage for future conflict. Some use of conflict for economic gain is purely monetary such as piracy and battles over conflict diamonds. Alternatively, the benefits may be the attainment of diminishing resources. The seizure of natural resources, industrial capacity, or access to trade routes changes relative power. Arguably, these changes result in changes to GDP, which impacts potential military expenditures.

Tangible benefits are often measurable and readily incorporated into a cost-benefit analysis. This calculation becomes immensely more complex when the benefit is an abstract, intangible concept. Ideals such as duty, honor, and glory certainly played a role in historical conflicts. The instantiation of these ideas has morphed over time. Contemporary examples include humanitarian operations and the concept of Responsibility to Protect. Extreme versions of duty, honor, and glory include the exportation of a political or religious ideology (or a combination of the two). From nationalism to fascism to communism to democratization to Islamism, the last hundred years has been replete with examples of attempts to spread ideological beliefs through force.

Ideological benefits can be difficult to coerce or codify. Promises of a future utopia or millenarian second apocalypse are especially complicated. Regardless of the cost, the seemingly infinite benefits of success negate the usefulness of coercion. Some extreme ideological groups are expansionist, believing that since their ideology is perfection, the rest of the world should share their ideology. In that case, cooperation also seems unlikely to be effective. Alternatively, states can use some

³¹ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*.

³² Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 112.

³³ For valuable insights, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), and Joshua Rovner, *Fixing the Facts: National Security and the Politics of Intelligence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

³⁴ Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

type of counterideology campaign to reduce the benefits of conflict. However, this expertise may not reside within the military forces.

PEACE THROUGH SOFT POWER: REALISM AND INTEGRATING
THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

Realists value peace, some since it facilitates economic growth. Others appreciate peace because it maintains their current power advantage over adversaries. In this context, peace might not be the desired end-state, but an interim objective toward some greater reward. Regardless, peace is only one of a variety of competing security interests. The challenge with realism is its inability to explain how a state or actor perceives relative values of competing security interests. The theories of Liberalism, Constructivism, Cosmopolitanism, and Critical Islamic Studies provide alternative lenses to analyze peace norms and interests. Yet individually, none of them is compelling. Each of these theories presents a way to modify societal norms. Liberalism creates peace by building common political and economic identities. Cosmopolitanism seeks to create peace through shared ethical norms against war and in favor of positive peace concepts such as equality and justice. Critical Islamic Studies advocates for peace by building a norm of shared love for all humankind.

While each of the theories proposes a unique approach, they all rely upon the application of soft power. While soft power can be highly effective, it is difficult to wield. As an organization's strategic approach, soft power is difficult to control in direction, effect, and amplitude. In most cases, soft power is extremely slow. It takes time to change norms. States and nonstate actors have only a limited ability to accelerate normative change to their advantage. Soft power theories rely upon the assurance method to improve the probability of strategic decision makers choosing nonviolent options for pursuing their objectives.

Liberalism is slightly different in that it combines soft power with traditional uses of economic and political power. In Kantian Liberalism, free trade and democracy are supposed to lead to peace. Free trade provides rewards to maintain the status quo. In a sense, the offer is a method of economic assurance by reducing the economic costs of the status quo. The economic rewards of additional trade are only provided through maintenance of the status quo. At the intrastate level, Cosmopolitanism theory can be applied in the form of institution building. Again, the improvement of these institutions reduces the costs of maintaining the status quo.

The promotion of democracy to attain peace leverages both assurance and deterrence. The assurance aspect of democracy promotion is intangible and relies upon the constructivist concept of group identity: democracies perceive other democracies as less threatening, reducing the perceived costs or risks of maintaining the status quo. Democratization also creates a deterrent effect from a domestic politics perspective. In democracies, citizens will be prone to be antiwar because they do not

want to pay the costs of war.³⁵ Due to this inherent internal opposition, democracies have additional costs for going to war. That cost could come in the form of expending informational power to convince the domestic audience that war is justified.³⁶

More recent branches of liberalism provide alternative approaches to assurance. Transnational interactions and international law reduce the threat perception.³⁷ Although the approaches are nuanced, they still focus upon the provision of intangible benefits to reduce the perceived costs of maintaining the status quo. In post war situations, liberal and constructivist approaches are necessary to get society's buy-in to the peace agreement to sustain the long-term peace.³⁸

To be truly effective, realism should be combined with a constructivist lens since national security interests, values, and perceptions are socially constructed and vary significantly by state and political regime. Considering that those constructivist ideas may be influenced by other theories such as Liberalism and Cosmopolitanism, it is important to be aware of how the various theories drive actor behavior.

PITFALLS OF PEACE STRATEGIES BY EXTERNAL ACTORS

Measuring the success of any strategy is complex. This is no less true for measuring peacebuilding strategies. Subjective perspectives on the definition of peace complicate the assessment and measurement process. A lack of war between two states may seem easy to measure. However, traditional measures of war (e.g., correlates of war) largely ignore events such as border skirmishes, nonattributable cyberattacks, and periods of tense escalation. While the Cuban Missile Crisis managed to avoid World War III, it is hardly a desirable state of peace. The dynamic becomes more complex when examining intrastate conflicts. Some insurgencies are obvious. But, what if the attacks are relatively infrequent and small-scale? The ISIS attacks in France are certainly war-like. How do we categorize the 2017 attacks in Las Vegas and New York? Measures of peace must be multilevel and clearly defined.

Differentiation between negative peace and positive peace complicates the ability to assess progress toward peace. Negative peace is the lack of war. Measuring a lack of war is not as simple as it sounds. While the elements of positive peace might be easier to measure, there is no clear consensus on what a positive peace should include. Proponents of positive peace typically espouse the qualities of justice, human rights, economic equality, and good governance. In most cases, negative peace is a necessary condition for positive peace. Reforming such key institutions

³⁵ Immanuel Kant, *To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, trans. Humphrey (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2003).

³⁶ James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 577–592.

³⁷ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, eds., *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³⁸ Norrin Ripsman, *Peacemaking from Above, Peace from Below: Ending Conflict between Regional Rivals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 61.

without a negative peace is problematic. Premature moves to create a positive peace have the potential to create more violence as groups that benefited from those discriminatory policies stand to lose from reform.

To further complicate the dynamic, contemporary wars are rarely didactic. Networks of alliances and partnerships increase a state's responsibility to maintain the status quo. The extensive web of alliances and partnerships is something of a catch-22. On the positive side, it extends deterrence across the web. On the other hand, it increases awareness of and potential response to a potential change in the status quo as weak partners and allies may be more sensitive to local changes in power. If war does occur, the web of alliances and partnerships dramatically increases the potential scope and scale of any conflict.

Partner networks are primarily focused upon preventing anticipated conflicts. Yet, predicting all conflicts is difficult, especially at the intrastate level. When allies and partners are threatened by another state, they may be quick to ask for help in order to protect their sovereignty. When faced with an internal conflict, states may be hesitant to request a foreign power to send troops to conduct combat operations within their sovereign territory. Experts highlight the need for early warning of intrastate conflicts in order for states to take preventive, peacekeeping actions.³⁹ Yet, creating such an early warning system when the state is attempting to keep up appearances of normalcy is challenging.

Additionally, security is a multilevel problem. One-dimension peace at the state level is unlikely to be sustained. Competition can occur between different levels of security. It is not unusual for dictators to prioritize the continuity of their power over the good of their people or state (e.g., North Korea). Within any conflict or potential conflict, there are a variety of players that may have incompatible interests. The list of players is expanded as a significant proportion of "violent conflicts today transcend state territories and are resilient to negotiated settlement."⁴⁰ This is most evident in proxy wars, transnational terrorist groups, and transnational organized crime. It has become fairly common for insurgent groups to have external support.⁴¹ When intervention is necessary, political support must be generated to justify the risk and financial costs. Even regional security organizations and UN peacekeeping forces need troop-contributing countries to buy-in to the mission.

During interventions, peacemaking and peacebuilding operations are often outsourced to units with only a minimal capability of conducting the mission. While European and North American countries may fund peacekeeping operations, they rarely provide significant amounts of manpower and equipment. For some

³⁹ John L. Davies and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., *Preventive Measures: Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998).

⁴⁰ United Nations, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (Washington, DC: World Bank), 13.

⁴¹ Bruce J. Reider, "External Support to Insurgencies," *Small Wars Journal* (October 28, 2014); Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001).

troop-contributing countries, peacekeeping operations are a jobs program. It provides much-needed funding to cover shortfalls in defense spending. Few come with the capability to repair basic infrastructure or provide training in good governance. Moreover, units will also arrive with country-specific rules of engagement that may limit their ability to protect the local population. Peacekeepers are exceptionally good at deterrence. When separating opposing forces, they provide a roadblock toward repeated hostilities. But, using these forces for peacemaking is rare. Unless they have a stake in the outcome, few countries are willing to accept casualties in order to create peace in an active conflict zone.

“Good peacebuilding tends to be expensive” as it requires the provision of security, basic necessities, the establishment of the rule of law and the refinement of what those laws should be, the establishment of a sustainable economy, the establishment of effective and efficient legitimate governance, and a process of reconciliation.⁴² Of these, perhaps the most important is the economy.⁴³ Peace is difficult to sustain when “there are few job opportunities, few schooling opportunities, and many young people needing work.”⁴⁴ State institutions must be able to minimize perceptions of institutional exclusion or discrimination. Yet, changing state institutions is a catch-22. While necessary to sustain peace, changes to these institutions threaten the power base of those that benefited from the previous system. Whether at the state or regional level, attempts to promote human rights, women’s rights, democracy, and justice have repeatedly been met with hostility. In many cases, these activities threaten the current regime’s hold on power. Therefore, transitions from the current system to the desired system increase the probability of near-term internal conflict.

Not all actors and states perceive human rights, the rule of law, and democracy as good things. The Russians, for example, perceive the export of these ideals as a threat to their national security interests.⁴⁵ NGOs that advocate for these rights are perceived as a form of legal, unconventional warfare. This war of ideas can lead to a pro-Western, anti-Russia regime change. For example, at the regional level, NATO and EU expansion were not designed to anger Russia. It was a liberalist approach to expand the group identity. The expansion provided marginal increases in NATO’s military capabilities but was a significant change in geographic proximity of NATO

⁴² Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War & Building Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 337–343.

⁴³ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 57; Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4; Sidney Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 21; Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (New York: NYU Press, 1986), 37; Ekkart Zimmerman, *Political Violence, Crises, and Revolution* (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1983), 284.

⁴⁴ Paul Collier, “Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy.” In *Leashing the Dogs of War*, ed. Crocker et al. (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 206.

⁴⁵ Melissa Hooper, Human Rights First, “Russia’s Bad Example,” (February 2016), at https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Russias_Bad_Example.pdf.

forces to Russia. This expansion had a potential adverse impact on Russian military preparedness in the Black Sea and the ability for Russia to get natural resources. Plus, the expansion ignored the historical significance of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus as buffer zones for Russia.

Peace is not impossible. However, it is hard to foresee a world with no war in the near future. Predicting, preventing, and stopping wars are extremely complex endeavors. The ability to influence another actor's strategic decision-making process requires detailed insights into their perceived costs and benefits of maintaining the status quo versus the costs and benefits of conflict to change the status quo. The peaceful intervenor must address the competing interests of nonstate actors, the state, and external players that have a stake in the outcome of the violence. The ability of a third-party actor to keep or create peace is dependent upon their effectiveness at influencing the decision-making process of the combatants or potential combatants.

Effectively influencing others requires a basic understanding of their strategic decision-making process, which includes their values, perceptions, and interests. Realism theory's ability to interpret competing interests is somewhat limited. Therefore, the analyst should combine the theories of Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, Cosmopolitanism, Critical Peacebuilding Studies, and even Critical Islamic Studies to provide different lenses. Realism provides the structure while the other theories help define the interests. This combination also dictates a response that combined the traditional instruments of power with soft power. Soft power is the long-term answer to a peaceful world. However, the lack of control and the glacial nature of its effect constrain soft power's near-term effects. Hard power is a necessary evil in the short term to both make and keep the peace.