

**INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN AN ERA OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE: THE
ENDURING QUALITY OF WALTZIAN STRUCTURAL REALISM**

**by
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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that the enclosed work, entitled *International politics in an era of democratic peace: the enduring quality of Waltzian structural realism*, is my own work and that I have acknowledged all my sources.

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CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF WAR AND PEACE IN AN ERA OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND OUTLINE

1.1 Introduction and significance

In the history of the battle of ideas, few contenders have drawn and redrawn their intellectual swords more fiercely than the realist and liberal scholar of international politics. For realist scholars, old and new, the prospect of nations or states unshackling themselves from the bondage of power and interest, and subsequently of conflict and war, remains a chimera. On their part, liberals, especially those of an overly idealist orientation, without much difficulty conceive of a world in which harmony, cooperation and peace are the natural condition of man (Waltz, 2008a:3). In the world of the former, an essential continuity is discernible; in the latter, the world is amenable to the twin features of change and peace, the achievement of which rests solely on the condition that the actors that compose it are of a certain kind and creed (Hoffmann, 1995:161). Democracy or liberalism, or some combination of both, accordingly enables (liberal) democratic states to resolve their conflicts peacefully and provides a promise of perpetual peace. Within the liberal canon, this idealist variant remains an alluring proposition, owing in large measure to international-political changes at the close of the twentieth century. With the Soviet Union removed from the centre of international politics, liberal democratic values and institutions and, as a corollary, the liberal approach increasingly held sway (cf. Fukuyama, [1989] 1998). Liberal theory, it seemed, had been vindicated.

Preceding these developments, however, and in a sense laying the conceptual foundations of the impending liberal ascendancy, was the philosophical (re)discovery of the Kantian proposition of democratic peace. The proposition advanced and the finding thus reached, eloquently penned down by Michael Doyle [1983] (1996), pointed towards the explanatory value of a Kantian inspired liberal international theory in accounting for (liberal) democratic peace. For Doyle (1986; 1996), as for other scholars labouring in defence of the democratic peace *theory* (i.e., the

empirical observation of the absence of war between (liberal) democratic states), the causes of (liberal) democratic peace lay inside states, specifically in the attributes, actions and interactions of the units comprising the international-political system.¹ Some adherents of democratic peace theory point in this regard to the pacifying effects of democratic institutions and values as the overriding causal mechanism; others highlight liberalism as the cause of democratic peace. Although in some respects conceptually interrelated, democracy and liberalism do not necessarily coincide (Owen, 1997a:15), a proposition neatly captured by the title of Fareed Zakaria's essay "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy" (Zakaria, 1997). That this conceptual confusion has marred the validity of the empirical record is a point well-worth noting, as is the proposition that the liberal peace may be distinct from the democratic peace (Chan, 1997:64; Lynn-Jones, 1996:ix).² Regardless of one's position in this causal (more properly, correlational) duel, the crux of the matter is this: that international-political outcomes result from the attributes, actions and interactions of the behaving units (i.e., states), whether these units are organised internally along liberal or democratic lines or both. It is, in effect, another way of saying that "good states produce good outcomes [and] bad states, bad ones" (Waltz, 2004:3).³

¹ I use the term 'theory' reluctantly here, and do so only on account of the fact that 'democratic peace *theory*' is conventionally used in the literature. For reasons that will be elaborated later on, a more apt phrase would be the democratic peace *proposition* or the democratic peace *thesis* (Layne 1996:157; Waltz, 2000a:6). For an overview of key works on the democratic peace, cf. Doyle, 1986; 1996; Russett, 1995a; 1995b; 1995c; 1995d; 1996; Owen, 1996; 1997a; 1997b; Farber and Gowa, 1996; Layne, 1996; 2001; Oren, 1996; Spiro, 1996a; 1996b Rosato, 2003; 2005.

² The argument advanced here has bearing on both. Owen (1997a:15), however, draws clear boundaries between the two phenomena arguing that democracy and liberalism are not of necessity mutually cohering concepts. For an excellent analysis of the restrictions of the concept 'democracy', cf. Strauss (2008).

³ The primacy of the state in international politics and, by implication, the concurrent state-centric view has come under intense scrutiny. States, it is said, has declined in power vis-à-vis other actors. What can one say? For one thing, the decline of the state is grossly exaggerated (Waltz, 1999; 2000b). That such charges have been raised is, moreover, both unsurprising and nothing new. They display a basic failure to understand what is implied by the concept 'sovereignty' and, more importantly, how system structure is defined in Waltz's structural realist theory (cf. Waltz, 1979:97). Moreover, not only does the allure of statehood remain progressively high, but there is at present very little interest in or a search for a plausible replacement of the state (Mearsheimer, 2002:26). In terms of, notably, development and industrial policy, there is strong evidence that the preservation of the state is crucial (Fukuyama, 2013). Scholars, furthermore, often argue that the neglect of non-state actors in world politics is unwarranted and, furthermore, that intergovernmental organisations (think in this regard of the United Nations Security Council and the World Trade Organisation) sufficiently constrain state behaviour. Both charges are old and odd ones. Waltzian structural realism freely admits that non-state actors play a fundamental part in world politics; the theory, however, is written in terms of the principle units of the system (i.e. those who make the rules under which *all* actors live), with states constituting the pre-eminent units of the international-political system. Intergovernmental organisation,

Within this conception of man and state, and the international-political world in which they operate, the distinction between the internal and external realms of politics, and the qualitative difference of politics within each realm, breaks down or, more disconcertingly, never existed. We have returned, so to speak, to a conception of international politics, and the causes of war and peace, as all at one level (for a critique of this position, see Waltz, 2001; 1979:12). At the international-political level, accordingly, no causes exist to account for the warlike behaviour of states or, conversely, their peaceful interaction. The advent of peace among a select few denotes, were one to take this line of reasoning seriously, that internally these states have obtained a level of moral rectitude unparalleled in human history. (For critical reflection on the intersection, or lack thereof, between *inter alia* American (domestic and foreign) policy and morality, cf. Blum, 2006.)⁴ To this fortuitous state of moral propriety is to be attributed the enlightening virtues of liberal thought. It is perhaps an unremarkable feat to note that the notion of an essential nexus between (liberal) democracy and peace is not particularly modern, neither is the notion that international outcomes are wholly determined by the attributes and interactions of states (Waltz, 1986:336). Both notions have a long lineage in liberal thought (Waltz, 1959:59, 64) and, within international-political studies in general, both have endured remarkably well.

As a philosophical and empirical challenge to realist thought, the democratic peace ostensibly offers much in the way of rekindling hopes of a more peaceful world. Peace appears to be the defining feature of international politics – at least for some states – with the emergence of global peace to be expected by 2113 (Doyle, 1996:57).⁵ Accordingly, we can expect the spread of democracy to the Arab world to

moreover, are primarily reflections of state power and questions can be raised about the extent to which they operate independent from their principle members (cf. Mearsheimer, 1994; 1995)

⁴ It is striking to note the ease with which the immorality of United States (US) policy escapes the collective American memory. Hence in a recent op-ed contribution to *The New York Times*, former US president Jimmy Carter urged the Obama administration to follow policies that will *recapture* America's position as the "global champion of human rights" (Carter, 2012). That such a proposition is unwittingly speckled with irony is lost sight of by its proponent.

⁵ The promise of (permanent) peace, we observe from history, is unfortunately one that has too often come to naught. The 1928 Pact of Paris (also known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact), in particular, was accompanied by statesmen solemnly rejecting the resort to war as a means of settling any future dispute (Kennedy, 1989:278). More than 60 states accepted the pact – and, impressively, so did all the great powers of that period (Dugard, 2011:495). There is, moreover, an inherent "normalcy bias" here, i.e. just because something (in this case, the ostensible absence of war between (liberal)

coincide with the widening of the zone of peace.⁶ Such lofty expectations should not be seen as resurgent idealism, for democratic peace theory ostensibly invalidates both the empirical and explanatory validity of realist thought and, concomitantly, the pessimism of the realist worldview. Those (non-Western) states concerned with the realist notion of the long shadow of the future could possibly experience the richness of democratic peace were they to finally embrace (liberal) democracy. That non-Western reflection on the necessities of state conduct, broadly constructed in the guise of Western conceptions of *Realpolitik* (consider the Hindu philosopher and statesmen, Kautilya, as well as the work from Han Fei and Shang Yang in ancient China), has been part and parcel of the theory and praxis of such states is a point that is often forgotten (for consideration of the *Realpolitik* underpinnings of post-independence Indian foreign policy, see Solomon, 2012; Blanton & Kegley, 2017:25). Indeed, as Modelski (1964:550) aptly points out in drawing a comparison between Kautilya and Machiavelli, the oft-cited idea of an essentially Western appropriation of *Realpolitik* is erroneous. Within the non-Western world, concrete traces of realist political thought can be found. Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, written about 300 BC, warned that it ought to be "the position of the potential conqueror [to] enhance his power at the expense of the rest", with a prince or king instructed to "maintain his power and enlarge it" (Modelski, 1964:550).

Democratic-peace inspired visions of global peace have unsurprisingly made their way to the corridors of political office-bearers. By reducing state and international security to the internal ideological bearings of other states, democratic peace theory legitimises an interventionist discourse (Layne, 1996a:198). At the hands of American political incumbents, the influence and dangers of the logic emanating

democracies) has never occurred, the (false) belief exists that it will never occur (On the notion of normalcy bias, cf. Omer & Alon, 1994:273).

⁶ Unfortunately, and as the recent Egyptian example illustrates, the spread of Western-style elections has not coincided with westernisation, i.e., *liberal* democracy (Huntington, 1996). Across the so-called Arab Spring we have generally seen the victory not of liberalism but of religious political ideology (Friedman, 2012; Sweis, 2012). We can, moreover, expect that democratisation processes in various Arab countries will intensify, not dampen, hostility towards Western states (the US in particular) given the proclivity of such regimes to be more responsive to (the overwhelmingly anti-American) will of the people (Jones, 2013). In any event, even if one were to concede that democracy is on the rise (which, unfortunately, it is not (cf. Diamond, 2016)), one must note that within the Western world, most especially within the confines of the European financial and immigration crises, the theory and practice of democratic government is subjected to intense pressures (Sen, 2012; Macdonald & Barkin, 2016). For reflection on the peace-inducing effects (domestic and international) to be expected in the wake of the Arab Spring or, more specifically, the lack thereof, cf. Coetzee (2013).

from democratic peace theory have been conspicuous. Think for instance of some of the more recent American political office-bearers, each promulgating in some shape or form the idea of democratic peace: Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, William Jefferson Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, and George W. Bush (Dunne, 2005:190; Walt, 1998:39; Rice, 2005; Bush, 2005; Ish-Shalom, 2007; 2008). With this in mind, Stephen Walt (2016) notes that the outright predominance of liberal policies in American post-Cold War foreign policy has created all manner and sorts of quagmires, ranging from the American intervention in Iraq (2003), the folly of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) expansion, the Israel-Palestine issue to the Iran nuclear question, all of which might have been averted in the face of the adoption of realist policies. One can add, scathingly, that democratic peace theory also lies at the heart of many bungled peace-building programmes across the developing world (Navari, 2013:42).

That attempts at utilising the democratic peace theory as the basis for policy are bound to fail is a proposition that is not overly difficult to sustain. Pertinent shortcomings in respect of the practical and the theoretical realms nicely illustrate this point. As a practical issue, questions can be raised about the universality of liberal values and institutions and their transposition to the non-Western world (Huntington, 1996). It is worth pointing out that, though hardly unique, the proclamation of the universality of certain ideas and institutions is an extremely dangerous affair. One merely needs to consider that during the height of the “new imperialism” at the close of the nineteenth century *all* the great powers of the day boldly asserted that “[w]e are the pick and flower of nations...above all things qualified for governing others” and each prophetically announced *their* state’s manifest destiny (Gilbert Murray quoted in Kennedy, 1989:211). The Americans, notably, flavoured their surge in economic power during this period of rapid change with the claim “to a special moral endowment among the peoples of the earth” (Kennedy, 1989:246).

Theoretical concerns predominate however. The first of these relate to the nature of the theoretical enterprise. As with scientific theories in general, the relation between reality and theory as a parsimonious instrument in service of explaining and apprehending it is always elusive (Waltz, 1979:124). Simplicity and elegance are the

great hallmarks of theories; complexity that of reality (Waltz, 2004:3). Yet, noting this, one is struck by the relentless efforts on the part of adherents of democratic peace theory to bring their explanatory frameworks ever closer to reality. As a peculiar problem of theory-construction, such efforts are however counterproductive, for the attempt to approximate theory to reality has the effect of thrusting one back to the level of description (cf. Waltz, 1979:ch. 1).

The second and much larger theoretical concern is this: the prominence of democratic peace theory is matched only by the equally notorious observation of the lack of theoretical validation for liberal explanations of democratic peace. In essence, such explanations have not been all that convincing. For one thing, consensus surrounding the causal factors responsible for democratic peace has eluded its adherents (Lynn-Jones, 2008:23). To illustrate this point, one need only consider the marked variety of the causal mechanisms postulated by liberal scholars to account for democratic peace (see Rosato, 2003). Both critics and proponents of democratic peace theory have recognised the poverty of liberal accounts. From the realist camp, Sebastian Rosato (2005:471) stresses the failure of liberal accounts to provide a convincing causal link between (liberal) democracy and peace. More damagingly, Doyle forthrightly concedes that, while the empirical foundation of democratic peace theory is robust, the explanations advanced to account for this finding “need additional testing” (Doyle, 2005:466). The imperative of subjecting theories to demanding tests, and engaging in processes of refinement where such theories patently fall short, has to be met if theoretical progress is to obtain. To subject such theories to additional testing will however be exceedingly difficult, for to test a theory requires that one has something worthwhile to test. Unfortunately, the empirical finding of the absence of war between (liberal) democratic states constitutes merely “a suggestive correlation” or “a purported fact” in search of an explanation or theory (Waltz, 2001:x; Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:381).

Unsurprisingly, these shortcomings have been rejected by scholars and practitioners steadfastly wedded to the logic of democratic peace theory. Within the hearts and minds of scholars and practitioners of international relations, the debate over the causal forces responsible for democratic peace has, it seems, been won. Of what value then is further engagement with this debate? In answering such a question,

one is compelled to concede that the significance of and stakes involved in this debate are exceptionally high. Democratic-peace inspired praxis is likely to founder in the face of a flawed theoretical conception of the empirical record (Layne, 2001:800). For the sake of political praxis, it is therefore vitally important that questions of the validity of democratic peace theory are judiciously approached. The more important rationale, especially within the context of the aims of this study, lies however within the theoretical realm. As Kenneth Waltz (2000a:13) notes: “[i]f the democratic peace thesis is right, structural realist theory is wrong”. Democratic peace theory would not only invalidate structural realist theory but, more trenchantly, the idea of theory undergirding Waltzian structural realism. In particular, the theoretical gains to be achieved in the face of the validation of democratic peace, exhaustively listed, are these: the primacy of reductionist (inside-out) theories of international politics as compared to systemic theories (cf. Waltz, 1979:ch. 4); the validation of the notion that our scholarly focus ought to be directed towards the attributes and interactions of behaving units (i.e., the behavioural logic of inquiry) while leaving aside questions of the situations (or structure) in which they act and the relations in which they stand (Waltz, 1979:61, 64); acceptance of the notion that unit-level changes directly correspond with changes in international-political outcomes; and importantly, the degeneration of Waltzian structural realism.

The argument to be developed here critically questions the validity of democratic peace theory and argues for the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism. This will be done in a manner that both confirms and point towards certain (ostensible) shortcomings of Waltz’s theory of international politics. By doing this, the premise is not to remain steadfastly wedded to what some have deemed a conservative theoretical project, but rather to acknowledge the grossly distorted treatment of Waltz’s work within disciplinary discourse (see Wæver, 2009), and the richness that could be gleaned from a more thorough engagement with both his theory and his idea of theory. In more than one respect, this endeavour goes against the current and erstwhile vogue in international-political studies, i.e., the tendency to overlook the importance of the international-political framework in which states act.

1.2 The continuity of thought-patterns in international politics: framing the research problem

The argument developed so far, holds that the internal qualities of (liberal) democratic states are ostensibly of greater importance in accounting for democratic peace than the conditions under which they act and the relations in which they stand. Structure, it is said, is of little value in explaining liberal pacification. A proper explanation should accordingly be directed at the level of the parts, while leaving aside such questions as how the organisation of the whole affects the actions and interactions of the constituent parts. The exclusive focus of international-political studies must then fall on “finding out who is doing what to produce the outcomes” (Waltz, 1979:62). Structure and its effects then become matters of little concern. Within this conception of international politics, the striking continuity of international politics – as depicted in realist thought – ceases to exist.

One must resist impulsively entertaining such notions if resistance has merit. Does it? A point well-worth noting is that the advent of peace in international politics generally coincides with the illusory belief in the decline in the significance of power politics and, concurrently, the lessening of anarchy (Waltz, 1993:78; 1979:114).⁷ By failing to recognise this, it becomes overly easy to fall prey to the error of deducing from the absence of manifest force the conclusion that power ceases to be present (Waltz, 2001:116). In such instances, one is inclined to elevate the ostensible moral and rational considerations, while remaining – as Reinhold Niebuhr (1960:xxxiii) cogently warned against – “oblivious to the covert types of coercion and force which are used in the conflict”. Yet it is difficult to cast blame on scholars of international politics for such indulgence, for democratic peace theory appears to be an alluring prospect. This is of course not the same as saying that democracy or liberalism causes democratic peace. To concede this argument, i.e., to say that democratic peace theory invalidates structural realism, requires of us to examine the content

⁷ A prime example of such thinking is American Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson’s 1929-decision to disband the Black Chamber – America’s first peacetime cryptanalytic organization – on the premise that “gentlemen do not read each others [sic] mail” and, more importantly, amid a widespread aversion among the American people to the ideas of war (quoted in Kennedy, 1989:328). Yet, as we shall see later on, such measures are (and were) not only damaging to national security, but are readily discarded when states are pressed hard enough by the uncertainty of the international environment in which they coexist.

and form of liberal arguments. Proponents of the democratic peace offer two explanatory frameworks⁸: institutional and normative. The former denotes that the institutional constraints (*viz.*, the existence of checks and balances and the possibility of electoral punishment) suffice to explain democratic peace. The latter framework stresses liberal values and norms, and their externalisation in cases of war-threatening crises, in accounting for the democratic peace. Among proponents of democratic peace, the relative explanatory merits of both institutional and normative frameworks remain a matter of contention (Buena de Mesquita *et al.*, 1999; Doyle, 1996; Owen 1996; and Russett, 1995a; 1995b; 1995c).

Realist scholars have convincingly illustrated the folly of institutional theories of democratic peace. They argue that institutional theories lead one to expect that (liberal) democratic states would be more peaceful in general. This proposition garners little support empirically (Spiro, 1996a:207; Quackenbush & Rudy, 2009; for a similar argument emanating from liberal scholars of democratic peace, see Owen, 1996:120 and Russett, 2010:106). From the liberal viewpoint, then, the validation of democratic peace theory seemed to gravitate more towards the explanatory merit of normative arguments of democratic peace. Yet within the liberal camp, the explanatory merits of the normative argument were challenged. Owen (1996:121) faults normative arguments for their failure to consider the effect of perceptions on state conduct, with the result that many of the states considered democratic by modern researchers, failed to perceive each other as such during war-threatening crises. For Owen (1996; 1997a), accordingly, (liberal) democracies will only avoid war with each other if they perceive each other as such.

Owing to this shortcoming, and the apparent invalidation of the institutional counterpart, Owen (1996) contends that democratic peace results from the interaction of normative and institutional arguments framed in conjunction with the necessity of liberal states perceiving each other as such. Despite some differences, Owen's argument has much in common with Doyle's Kantian inspired liberal theory of democratic peace. Doyle (1996:10) highlights a threefold set of imperatives as constitutive of democratic peace: (i) a republican constitution typified by juridical

⁸ I use the word 'frameworks' instead of 'theories' here to avoid repetition of the error of associating theory with anything that goes beyond mere description (*cf.* Waltz, 1979:Ch. 1; 1997; 2011).

equality, some form of representation and the separation of legislative and executive power; (ii) a commitment to and preservation of individual liberties; and (iii) transnational (economic) interdependence. The interdependence of these forces, Doyle contends, serves the dual purpose of explaining both the pacific nature of liberal relations and, conversely, the war-proneness of their relations with non-liberal states. This interaction of normative and institutional arguments accounts for much of the perceived plausibility of liberal accounts of democratic peace.

For the realist scholar of international politics there is very little substance in what proponents of democratic peace theory are saying. Realists have put forward salient arguments to show why both the empirical record and the explanatory frameworks in support of democratic peace fall short. In respect of the empirical record, one would do well to consider the stakes involved: the absence of war between (liberal) democracies, liberals contend, is “the closest thing we have to an iron law in social science” (Snyder, 2004:57). Liberals see no wars or, where they do, argue that such wars can easily be accounted for without invalidating democratic peace theory (cf. Doyle, 1996:10, 13). Realists, on the contrary, see many: the Anglo-American War of 1812, the American Civil War (1861), the Spanish-American War (1898), the Second Philippines War (1899), the Anglo-Boer War (1899) and World War I (Layne, 2001:801-802; Waltz, 1993:78. For arguments on the inclusion of the Second Philippines War as an example of democratic war, although not necessarily from a realist perspective, consult Henderson, 2002).⁹ Indeed, through processes of replication of leading democratic-peace studies, Henderson (2002:14) has arrived at the conclusion that the empirical argument underpinning democratic peace theory is highly problematic. If we were to extend the empirical record to include (democratic) wars in antiquity, the empirical finding of democratic peace lacks even more credibility (Gat, 2005:80-83). Accordingly, some commentators have forthrightly declared that democracies waged war against one another in antiquity (Larison, 2012).

Unsurprisingly, liberal scholars reject these charges. Their response is generally framed in these terms: that a particular state was not (liberal) democratic enough at

⁹ The list is in fact much longer. We will add to these examples in Chapter 5 of this study.

the time of war; that the battle deaths were not sufficiently high to constitute war; that with reference to antiquity, the particular warring parties failed to meet modern conceptions of democracy and liberalism; or that instances of, say, covert intervention by one democracy against another falls outside the theory's scope. These arguments carry little weight. Consider, for instance, the frequently cited liberal notion that the Anglo-American War of 1812 falls outside the scope of democratic peace theory as Britain, at the time of war, was not fully democratic. Yet, as Waltz (in Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:378-379) notes, the "two most democratic countries in the world", the paragons of liberal ideology in the nineteenth century world of international politics, fought a war. Moreover, prior to Andrew Jackson's presidential victory in 1828, electoral suffrage and political incumbency in the US were restricted to property qualifications. Such restrictions were only removed after 1815. The US of 1812 was, accordingly, not singularly more democratic than Britain (Layne, 2001:801). A case for the American Civil War as an example of democracies waging war is also not difficult to make (cf. Layne, 1996a:193; Waltz, 1993:78).

Similar arguments can be made in respect of democratic peace theory's treatment of Germany during World War I. Liberal scholars contend that World War I does not invalidate democratic peace theory owing to Germany's authoritarian foreign policy processes (Doyle, 1996:13). Yet, the marked similarity of the foreign policy processes of Wilhelmine Germany to that of Britain and France, both of which are deemed 'democratic' by adherents of democratic peace theory, is striking (Layne 1996a:194; 2001:805). In such cases, the liberal exclusion of such instances as democratic wars is predicated on their playing "definitional games with the term democracy" (Layne, 2001:801; Oren, 1996:267).¹⁰ In fact, as D'Anieri (2017:126) correctly points out, Doyle's unwillingness to label Wilhelmine Germany as democratic during World War I blatantly violates his own classification scheme. At yet another level, this case proves disastrous for liberal scholars. For Owen (1996), World War I is not particularly troublesome as Britain, France and the US did not

¹⁰ Spiro (1996b:352) is more forthright, arguing that the "argument for the Liberal Peace completely depends upon this selective choice of definitions". Flexibility in definitions is, we should point out, an important indicator in assessments of the falsity of research findings. As Ioannidis (2005:0698) cautions, "[t]he greater the flexibility in designs, definitions, outcomes, and analytical modes in a scientific field, the less likely the research findings are to be true".

perceive Germany as democratic. Contra Owen's argument, Oren (1996) shows that, in the case of US perceptions of Wilhelmine Germany before and during World War I, states' perceptions of each other were shaped by international-political circumstances more than any objective conception of the constitutive properties of a democratic state. In this case, as in others (see Rosato, 2003), perceptions of each other were driven by exogenous factors. Thus, Azar Gat (2007) concludes that the choice of alliance partners for various liberal democratic states before and during World Wars I and II resulted more from balance-of-power politics than internal ideological factors. This, as Waltz (2000a:7) notes, in effect "gives the game away" – the absence of war is accordingly premised on the idea that states "of the right kind" are peaceful.¹¹ The emphasis on perceptions is unfortunately a weak criterion.

Compounding the difficulties of the liberal case is the notion that (liberal) democratic states, when faced with war-threatening crises, have refrained from war owing to realist factors relating to military and strategic considerations (Layne, 1996a; 2001).¹² These conclusions have generally been endorsed by leading diplomatic historians (cf. Adams, 1925; Bailey, 1980; Bourne; 1967; Kennedy, 1981; LaFeber, 1998). Furthermore, in these cases and in more recent ones (compare recent British behaviour vis-à-vis Argentina in respect of the Falklands Islands), liberal states have continued to resort to military threats and military build-ups in their relations with each other (Layne, 2001:803; Watson & Haynes, 2012). Such conduct undermines the apparent live-and-let live spirit at the core of normative arguments of democratic

¹¹ We can extend this line of argumentation further by noting that current US perceptions of the democratic credentials of states continue to be gauged through the prism of US national interest. The 2006 democratic elections in Palestine, won by an anti-Western Islamist party and rejected by Western governments on such grounds, is a striking example. In fact, it appears to be the case that a key reason for US support for the elections was the conviction that its horse (i.e., anyone but an anti-Western Islamist party) would win the race (Turner, 2006:743, 749). In fact, President George W. Bush personally sanctioned a tripartite meeting between himself, the Israelis and members of Fatah (the secular Palestinian political party) to consider ways of foiling the Islamist party's victory (Thomas, 2012:586). Along similar lines, Western states seemed to welcome the coup d'état by current Egyptian president Abdul Fattah al-Sisi of the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood leaders in 2013 (Klein, 2015). The behaviour has several historical precedents. In his 1981 visit to Manila, then vice-president George H.W. Bush openly endorsed the behaviour of Ferdinand Marcos, the country's dictator, by remarking that "[w]e [the US] love your adherence to democratic principle" (Diamond, 2016:155).

¹² The cases are the 1861 Anglo-American dispute over the *Trent* affair; Anglo-French relations between 1830 and 1848; the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuela boundary during 1895-1896; the Anglo-French crisis in 1898; and the Ruhr crisis between France and Germany in 1923. Note, however, that Layne (1996:158) has pointed towards eight more cases that could vindicate his argument.

peace (Rosato, 2003:590). To be added to such conduct, especially in respect of American behaviour during the Cold War, is the numerous interventions of democratic states in the affairs of other democracies with the goal of upholding or destabilising such regimes (Jervis, 2002:4). Indeed, with this in mind, one cannot otherwise but recognise that the list is rather extensive. For now it would suffice to say that, generally speaking, a period of 60 years of American foreign policy has produced more than 50 attempts to overthrow foreign governments and, more disconcertingly, the US has been implicated in the suppression of “more than 30 populist-nationalist movements struggling against intolerable regimes” (Blum, 2006:1-2; for reflection on the continuation of such behaviour in more recent years, consult Blum, 2012).

Against this backdrop, the picture that subsequently emerges is this: (liberal) democratic states have not only waged war against each other and, excessively, against non-liberal states, but they have also remained at peace with some (liberal) democratic states and non-liberal states¹³. To this statement must be added the fact that, since World War II, peace has endured remarkably well among the (liberal) democracies of, particularly, (West) Germany, France, Great Britain and the US. How can we account for this variance in behaviour? To account for this, to explain both the peace- and war-proneness of (liberal) democratic states, systems theories become exceedingly useful. In important ways, the argument to be developed in this study will point towards the enduring value of systemic approaches to and systems theories of international politics, in particular Waltzian structural realism. What is meant by these terms? A systems approach to international politics, and the theories that result from it, can best be understood through comparison with reductionist theories. A reductionist theory is a theory about the behaviour of the parts: “the whole is understood by knowing the attributes and the interactions of its parts”

¹³ Obvious examples include the relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia (Adams, 2011) as well as US military support of Turkish repression of its Kurdish population (Chomsky, 1999:8). Less conspicuous ones include the unconditional provision of US military aid to Egypt (at least since 1978) and Jordan (Diamond, 2010:101; Alterman & Malka, 2012:119). Already in 1959 Nitze (1959:7) aptly pointed out that “[w]e [the US] tolerate and even assist governments which are hardly responsive to the will of their people, and for very good reason”. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (hereafter: 9/11), this has taken the form of the US meddling in Middle Eastern affairs in the name of countering Islamic fundamentalism, while concurrently supporting Islamic hardliners and authoritarian states elsewhere (Turner, 2006:743). As Inbar (2012:23) aptly concludes, “Realpolitik can create partnerships between strange bedfellows”.

(Waltz, 1979:18, 60). The logic is pre-eminently the behavioural one. Systems approaches and systems theories, as against this, show how the organisation of a realm affects the attributes, actions and interactions of the parts. Within a properly defined systems theory part of the explanation for international-political outcomes lies in the system's structure (Waltz, 1979:73). The theory shows then how the structure of a system produces a similarity in behaviour and outcomes irrespective of changes in the attributes and intentions of the parts.

The question that emerges from this is of what use are systems theories of international politics and Waltzian structural realism in particular if certain states appear to have unshackled themselves from the bondage of structure? To answer this question in the negative, to say that systems theories of international politics are of little value, is to restrict our focus not only to a very short span of history but, more importantly, to deny ourselves the benefit of a more encompassing picture of international politics. This is common to democratic peace theory. Were we to take a longer view of history and, crucially, probe (liberal) democratic behaviour *inter se* and in respect of non-liberal states, we would find not confirmatory evidence of inside-out explanations of international politics, but that of the constraining effects of the environment in which states act and of the relations in which they stand. To some extent, Layne's (1996a; 2001) studies point towards this. Two problems are prevalent, however. Firstly, explanations such as these are often couched in structural realist terms without saying enough in respect of how structure works its effects. These studies tend to provide a realist picture of international politics, while failing to draw clear lines between Waltzian structural realism and, say, Morgenthau's classical realism. The distinction is of course marked, with the conception of causes running in opposite directions. Secondly, explanation of the period following World War II remains a matter requiring our attention. Both problems, this study contends, can be overcome through a more thorough engagement with the nuances of Waltzian structural realism. In essence, the enduring quality and, at times, the (ostensible) limitations of Waltzian structural realism can be shown across a large swathe of the historical landscape and in respect of both liberal war and peace.

Waltzian structural realism leads us to expect that structure pushes and shoves states to act in markedly similar (though not identical) ways, and that the behaviour and outcomes of states vary in accordance with different international-political systems. Across different international systems, and in some more than in others, the likelihood of war endures. Bipolar systems are for instance less war-prone than multipolar systems. By resorting to this logic, by showing how structures both dispose and constrain behaviour, one can account for a great deal of the behaviour – pacific and otherwise – of (liberal) democratic states. One can illustrate why war and peace between (liberal) democratic states have occurred and may recur, why these states have been particularly belligerent in their conduct with non-liberal states, and why they have at times actively circumvented fellow democratic states in support of authoritarian regimes. This is in part what this study intends to do.

In particular, to illustrate the effects of structure on the peace-proneness of (liberal) democratic states, one only needs to reflect on how the changed structure of international politics following World War II altered the behaviour and interactions of European states. The shift from multipolarity to bipolarity created at once a condition that facilitated a greater and wider sense of cooperation among the West European states (Waltz, 1979:70). In effect, the protection afforded by the American superpower had the effect of lessening the security concerns of the Western European states allowing for greater attention to other factors previously subordinate to security considerations. Thus economic cooperation and the move towards greater integration could proceed. Yet there are definite limits to how far Waltzian structural realism can be pushed to explain in particular the post-1945 peacefulness among certain (liberal) democratic states. In particular, one thinks of the relations between Great Britain, France, (West) Germany and the US and that, among them, the threat of resorting to war – conventional or otherwise – has almost ceased to exist.¹⁴ Structure accounts for part of this. To account however for the peaceable nature of the relations between these states require, this study contends, that greater attention be paid to that other revolutionary development following World War II, namely the development of nuclear weapons. That the general peace-inducing

¹⁴ Notable exclusions do exist, with the Franco-American rift over Iraq (2003) constituting a prime example. At times, the French posture became quite heated. In January 2006, speaking about the French nuclear deterrent, President Jacques Chirac in effect reminded President Bush of the realities of a nuclear world and the credibility of the French nuclear deterrent (Rosenthal, 2006).

forces inherent in nuclear armaments have been exhaustively described is a point that needs little elaboration (Waltz, 1981; 1988; 1990; 2008b; Mearsheimer, 1990). One needs say nothing more at this stage, except that nuclear weapons have provided an unprecedented level of security to their possessors, owing in large measure to the concomitant fear of nuclear retaliation among their possessors (Waltz, 2000c:54).

The effects of nuclear weapons, though widely recognised in respect of war and peace, have not yet been carefully considered in respect of our current stock of international relations theory. In particular, scholarly inquiry about the extent to which they alter some of the more basic arguments of international relations theory – most concretely, Waltzian structural realism – has not been forthcoming. Waltz himself has failed to systematically explore how these weapons have altered the logic of some of the arguments of his structural realist theory. He does however concede that the “introduction of nuclear weapons shows that, like structural changes, unit-level changes may also have system-wide effects” (Waltz, 2004:5). Thus, the extent to which nuclear weapons – a unit-level change – have altered the effects generated by an anarchic structure is not thoroughly appreciated by Waltz. Consider, for instance, some of the basic arguments of his structural realist theory: “So long as one leaves the structure unaffected it is not possible for changes in the intentions and the actions of particular actors to produce desirable outcomes or to avoid undesirable ones”; and “[i]n anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquillity, profit and power” (Waltz, 1979:108, 126). Nuclear weapons diminish concerns over survival. This implies in simple terms that the logic of anarchy is diminished. With the survival-question of far less concern than in a conventional world, states have greater manoeuvring space to pursue and cooperate on economic and other issues.

Within the purview of the democratic peace, this notion helps explain why the post-1945 period has been remarkably peaceful for certain (liberal) democratic states. But if both structure, particularly bipolarity, and nuclear weapons account for this behaviour, how can we know which cause brings what effect? Empirically, we cannot. As a theoretical question, we can say that answers to this question do not lie in the properties of either structure or nuclear weapons but in both. Particularly, and

as Waltz (2004:5) indicated, “[b]ipolarity offers a promise of peace; nuclear weapons reinforce the promise and make it a near guarantee”. In effect, (liberal) democratic states could move ever closer to one another for the interaction of structure and nuclear weapons that has afforded them very little choice. Yet, the structure-weapons combination does not wholly remove the effects of structure – military and economic competition persists (Waltz, 1986:328).

To carry this logic beyond bipolarity requires of us to recognise the limits of structural theory. In a world with only one great power left standing, international politics becomes domesticated for the dominant power. Moreover, and as American behaviour has shown, the vice of a unipolar world is the desultory use and abuse of power by the dominant power (Waltz, 2008c:xii).¹⁵ To drive this point home, consider the fact that since 1989 the US has been engaged in war for two out of every three years (Mearsheimer, 2011a:16-17). As before, one is then left to account for the pacific nature of a select group of (liberal) democratic states. The question is how this can be achieved. Much of what has already been stated applies here. While the external constraints on the dominant power are relatively few, this cannot be said of the other (liberal) democratic states constitutive of the select group of pacific states. The security of France, Great Britain and Germany, especially at the conventional level, continues to be undergirded by and dependent on American military power (Drozdiak, 1999). In fact, following the end of the Cold War, nearly all NATO members have consistently fell short of spending two percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence, knowing full well that the Americans are shouldering their security burdens (Urchick, 2016a; Erlanger, 2013)¹⁶. This dependence, coupled with their own nuclear deterrent, accounts for a great deal of the pacific nature of the relations between these states. Underpinning this peace is accordingly not common values – though one does not wish to exclude it entirely – but European acquiescence in American military primacy. The absence of war between these states and the lack of military threats between them are then strongly conditioned by the European dependence on American power. Economic and

¹⁵ This appears to support Mearsheimer’s proposition, contra Waltz, that states seek power not security. As Waltz (2004:6) notes however, “[r]ealist theory, properly viewed, is neither offensive nor defensive”. States pursue a variety of goals, with these changing as their situations change.

¹⁶ The American public is seemingly becoming increasingly reluctant to shoulder this burden, with 57% of Americans now supporting the notion that the US should “deal with its own problems and let others deal with theirs the best they can” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2016:70).

military competition, as with bipolarity, continues though (see, for instance, Coetzee, 2013 and Hendrich, 2012).

With the above in mind, the arguments advanced here will point towards the enduring usefulness of Waltzian structural realism in accounting for international-political events. Theoretically, liberal accounts of international politics have failed to provide vindication for both reductionist theories of international politics and the behavioural logic of inquiry. The behaviour of (liberal) democratic states suggests the continued utility of systems theories of international politics: (liberal) democratic relations *inter se* and, conversely, their relations with non-liberal states have been marked by both war and peace. Moreover, in instances where (liberal) democratic states came to the brink of war, their behaviour conformed to patterns common to great-power behaviour throughout the ages: they have threatened each other militarily, engaged in military build-ups and played diplomatic hardball. Across different historical periods, the effects of structure differ but the conclusion to be reached remains constant: that the external behaviour of states is constrained in decisive ways by the structure to which their interactions give rise to. At the core of this study is therefore an attempt to illustrate how different international-political systems and, after 1945, nuclear weapons suffice in accounting for both war and peace among (liberal) democratic states and, conversely, (liberal) democratic war and peace with non-liberal states.

1.3 Aims and objectives

International politics continues to be a realm of repetition: of behaviour, of logic of inquiry, and of the same sorts of criticisms and theoretical errors. If we were to cast aside the political rhetoric of democratic peace and all the theoretical baggage that goes along with it, we would find in the world of international politics not discernible patterns of change but a marked continuity. To discern this picture is however exceedingly difficult as inquiry into international-political events remains deeply wedded to the behavioural logic of inquiry and all that is implied by it. Today, as before, our attention and theoretical concerns fall on the behaving units while leaving aside the framework in which they act. Structure, it is believed, accounts for very little – or not at all – of international-political outcomes. The aim of this study, while

focused towards the explication of democratic peace theory, extends beyond it. It aims to show the primacy of Waltzian structural realism in an international-political world of democratic peace, a world in which the behavioural logic of inquiry and reductionist theories has ostensibly invalidated structural realism. Across different historical periods with each marked by a different international system, and in respect of liberal war and peace, the utility of structural realism and, where relevant, nuclear weaponry will be shown.

More specifically, the study has the following objectives, namely to:

- Illustrate what is implied in theory as a general instrument of explanation, its development and ways of testing;
- draw a distinction between behavioural and systemic approaches to international politics and, concomitantly, reductionist and systemic theories of international politics;
- investigate and critically question the nature of theory underpinning (liberal) democratic conceptions of democratic peace;
- provide an account of the logic of democratic peace theory by referring to both liberal and mixed dyads;
- show the necessity for and utility of systemic theories of international politics, in particular Waltzian structural realism, in accounting for (liberal) democratic war and peace;
- critically elaborate on the peace-inducing effects of nuclear weaponry and how these weapons reinforce some of the basic arguments of Waltz's structural realist theory;
- point towards the structurally induced logic of a re-emergence of (liberal) democratic war in a world without nuclear weapons; and
- illustrate the usefulness of Waltzian structural realism in understanding contemporary international-political events.

1.4 Methodological considerations

The argument to be developed here holds that part of the explanation of international-political outcomes result from the structure of the international-political system. In saying this, the argument breaks in marked ways with the dominant

behavioural paradigm in international-political studies. Causes, accordingly, run in one direction: from the actions and interactions of states to the results their actions produce (Waltz, 1997:913). Systemic theories, as against this, show how the interaction of states creates a structure that in turn affects their behaviour in marked ways (Waltz, 1997:913). Causes, in this paradigm, “runs from structures to states *and* from states to structures” (Waltz, 1997:913; emphasis in original). To show how systemic theories might be useful in explaining democratic peace will require the adoption of an explanatory research goal and a deductive approach.

A deductive approach to research denotes a process by which an internally consistent theory, constructed at a sufficient level of generality and abstractness, is used to explain real-world events (Manheim & Rich, 1981:19). Explanatory studies postulate a cause-effect relationship and illustrate why this relationship obtains. In our case, an argument will be made for the effect of structure and, at times, nuclear weapons on state behaviour. In drawing attention to structural effects, one must insist on recognising that structural causes are *not* the only causes at play neither are they determinate in the sense of arguing that A causes B (see Waltz, 1979:74 in this regard). Rather, causes at the structural level create the framework in which states conduct their activities. At times, moreover, states may act in ways contrary to what structural realist theory may lead us to expect: “One may behave as one likes to. Patterns of behaviour nevertheless emerge, and they derive from the structural constraints of the system” (Waltz, 1979:92).

The search for validation of Waltzian structural realism will be a daunting task. This admission stems partly from difficulties relating to theory testing, while a good deal also derives from the complexity of our subject matter. Which routes in respect of theory testing might usefully serve our purpose? By drawing expectations from Waltzian structural realism and liberal accounts of democratic peace, and comparing such expectations with features of the ‘real’ world, the validation of Waltzian structural realism might best proceed. A large swathe of history will accordingly be part and parcel of this study, stretching from at least the Anglo-American War of 1812 (and, where applicable, events preceding this date) to the present and including both liberal war and peace *inter se* and in relation to non-liberal states. While looking at history in search of validation of Waltzian structural realism, the

study will be less concerned with reporting on every case-specific detail than with providing a theoretically informed picture of how the totality of this historical period fits within the parameters of Waltz's theory. The rationale behind this is straightforward: since diplomatic historians have written extensively on the period since 1812 and have generally reached consensus on findings, it makes no sense to replicate their analyses of cases of war or peace. These scholars are at any rate more equipped to comment on detailed matters of historical import. Instead, the more pressing concern is to show how a great number of cases serve to (in)validate Waltzian structural realism by comparing expectations drawn from the theoretical world with the conclusions emanating from cases of war and peace. In doing this, the study will posit two competing pictures of international politics – one liberal and the other Waltzian structural realist – and illustrate the extent to which the expectations drawn from each are borne out within and across different international systems (i.e., multipolarity, bipolarity and unipolarity). By drawing on historical analyses and through probing the theoretically informed reasons for action, the study will be qualitative in nature.

1.5 The structure of the study

The study consists of seven chapters and is structured around four overarching themes: the idea of theory in international-political studies; Waltzian structural realism and the conception of theory underpinning Waltz's work; the challenge posed by democratic peace theory; and the intersection between Waltzian structural realism and international-political behaviour. Much of Chapter 1 has already, though in a cursory manner, grappled with these themes. The remainder of this work will provide more detail to the framework briefly sketched here. The study begins with an examination of the nature of theory, its development and ways of testing. Reflection on theory is a necessary and worthwhile endeavour, even more so if one recognises the fundamental importance of theory to science. Science cannot proceed without theory. Yet recognising the import of theory to science is unfortunately only half the battle; getting to grips with what a theory is and what it entails is the more difficult task, one which scholars of international politics have consistently failed to undertake. Moreover, critical questions will be raised here in respect of the extent to which liberal accounts of democratic peace could in philosophy-of-science terms be

deemed theory. Following from this, a distinction will be drawn between behavioural and systemic approaches to international politics and, as a corollary, reductionist and systemic theories of international politics. In this chapter, the groundwork will be laid for an explanation of the necessity of adopting a systems approach to international politics.

Chapter 3 will provide an exposition of Waltz's structural realist theory of international politics. The chapter will endeavour to provide a critical foundation for Waltz's departure from earlier realist thinkers, most notably the writings of Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr. The chapter will however mainly focus on providing a well-formulated exposition (i.e. stated with enough precision and clarity) of structural realist theory. This will be done by providing a systematic analysis of both *Theory of International Politics* (1979) and an engagement with works predating this publication, in particular Waltz's seminal 1959 publication, *Man, the State and War* (2001). Chapter 4 will endeavour to provide an account of the evolution of the democratic peace research programme, as well as the central arguments and expectations underpinning, on the one hand, democratic peace theory and, on the other hand, Waltzian structural realism. The chapter will furthermore seek to provide both a theoretical *and* historical critique of democratic peace theory, reflecting in particular on various historical examples ranging from Ancient Greece to the advent of the (liberal) democratic era. Chapters 5 and 6 will focus attention on the relationship between the expectations drawn from our theories and real-world events. Each chapter will seek to deal with the effects emanating from different international-political systems (multipolarity and bipolarity in Chapter 5 as against unipolarity and beyond in Chapter 6) and lead us to ask whether and how our theoretically conceived expectations conform to real-world events in a manner that will serve to vindicate Waltz's theory of international politics. The study will, in Chapter 7, provide an overarching conclusion and point towards areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO¹⁷

THE IDEA OF THEORY IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The range of propositions variously described as theoretical is so broad that it would almost seem that any fairly general statement about world politics that is not palpably absurd would qualify. This is perhaps as it should be.

William T.R. Fox (Fox, 1959:xii)

There isn't much theorizing going on in international politics. And the word "theory" is so loosely used that people begin to think that anything that is not directly empirical or factual must be theory, and that is certainly a misconception.

Kenneth N. Waltz (Waltz, 2011)

2.1 Introduction

Scholars and practitioners of international politics seem to believe that the best theory is one that is most practical, i.e., most fully representative of, and directly applicable to, reality. The move towards equating theory with application or, more concretely, the failure to discern between the distinctive features of a theory and that which falls outside of it, has been a problem that has bedevilled erstwhile and contemporary commentators of international politics. Thus we have at times heard complaints that our theories are not inclusive enough, that in the construction of theories we should take greater care in incorporating more of the real world (Reus-Smit, 2012:532). Our theories, it is then suggested, "should be just as complex as our evidence suggests" (King, Keohane and Verba, quoted in Waltz, 1997:914; cf. also Waltz, 2004:2-3).¹⁸ Not only do such beliefs jar with the logic of some of the most admired theories of the natural *and* social sciences, but they also tend to reveal

¹⁷ Parts of this chapter were published in Coetzee and Solomon (2014).

¹⁸ One of the great and persistent tragedies of our discipline is the widespread belief that abstract theorising and practical relevance are mutually exclusive (for critique of this notion, cf. Reus-Smit, 2012). In light of the particular concerns and subject of this study, Stephen Walt, one of Waltz's many graduate students, notes that the latter's teaching was fervently bent on bringing the idea home that theory and practice are "inextricably intertwined" and that Waltz's work demonstrated that "you could be a theorist and social scientist without joining the 'cult of irrelevance' that afflicts so much of academia" (Walt, 2013; Stuster, 2013). In fact, as Desch (2013) further elaborates, Waltz's great legacy is perhaps his "demonstration of the power of theory in helping us make sense of a complicated world".

a great deal concerning disciplinary understanding, or more aptly phrased, misunderstanding of the nature of theory. Yet levelling such a blow in respect of the discipline's conception of theory runs the risk of ignoring what appears to be the rapid increase in propositions deemed to be theoretical in nature. Accordingly, over the last three decades or so, we have witnessed the wide-ranging proliferation of theories of international relations¹⁹ and, concomitantly, the encouragement of students – almost by default – to conduct their research efforts within some theoretical framework or other. Moreover, among students of international politics very little disagreement appears to exist concerning the necessity of theory in making intelligible the world of international politics, with some stressing that such a premise “comes close to being a consensus in the discipline” (Wæver, 2010:315). Thus Steve Smith (2010:8) notes that any engagement with and/or understanding of the world of international politics cannot otherwise but be couched in some theory or other.

The increased recognition of the need for theory in scientific inquiry, and the encouragement that disciplinary praxis should match it, has fostered the belief that international-political studies are exceedingly theoretical. The belief is largely a false one, most especially if the term ‘theory’ is meant to denote something extending beyond mere description and, concomitantly, if theory is to be understood in philosophy-of-science terms. The latter conception of theory, deeply ingrained within the thought-pattern of Waltz and to be elaborated on later, is largely at odds with the conception(s) of theory permeating through the discipline of International Relations (IR) – and all the more so if we focus our attention less on the intentions and rhetoric of scholars and more on their actual conduct (cf. Wæver, 2009 on this matter). We can and should therefore freely admit that different conceptions of theory abound. Incidentally, the situation is not unique to our discipline, neither is it particularly novel. Already in 1959, William T.R. Fox pointed towards the existence of at least four kinds of theory, to wit, normative, empirical, scientific, and rational (Fox, 1959:ix). In more recent times, Smith (2010:9) has noted that the proliferation of theories of international relations has coincided with different theories using “the word ‘theory’ in

¹⁹ This situation can be contrasted with the relative dearth of theories of international relations in the 1950s and 1960s. Morton Kaplan (1961:6) notes for instance that the field of international relations during this period was in “great demand” of theoretical accounts of the field and that the “theory of international politics may indeed be awaiting its Galilean revolution”.

specific ways”.²⁰ The important point to recognise, and one that should be stressed at the outset, is therefore that it ought not to be the intention of our discipline, nor is it the intention of this study, to impose a rigid formalism on the meaning of the term ‘theory’. There is no established procedure currently in existence, neither can there ever be, by which one conception of theory is deemed to be *the* correct one (Abend, 2008:176, 182, 184). Indeed, in commenting on this issue, Waltz has made his position rather clear: “There are all kinds of theory...One can’t legislate. People use ‘theory’ in all sorts of different ways. All I claim is that I do make clear how I use that term. And my usage has a good pedigree in the natural sciences, economics and much of the philosophy-of-science literature” (quoted in Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:384).

While we cannot legislate on the meaning of theory, we need however to be willing to lay bare, and critically investigate, the explanatory achievements of different conceptions of theory. Even if we accept the premise, as this study does, that different theories of international relations hold different conceptions of ‘theory’, we would still like to know how good these conceptions are, i.e., we would like to know how well they compare with the conception of theory as advanced by those individuals who have spent a great deal of time reflecting on such matters. Consequently, the claim that this study does make, is that we need to appreciate the distinctive benefits and fruits (explanatory and otherwise) accruing from a particular conception of theory discernible in much of the philosophy-of-science literature and, by extension, how a great deal of confusion in our discipline stems from the basic failure to grasp the nature of, and Waltz’s indebtedness to, this philosophy-of-science conception of theory.²¹ Indeed, in respect of the nature of theory, Wæver (2009:217) notes that Waltz has been “consistently misinterpreted”, while Waltz (2004:2) stresses that “[c]onfusion begins with misunderstanding how theories are made and failure to comprehend what they can and cannot do”. The situation is,

²⁰ On their part, Kurki and Wight (2010:27-29) identify five different types of theory: explanatory theory, critical theory, normative theory, constitutive theory, and theory as a lens through which we gain understanding of the world.

²¹ We should be mindful, however, of overstating the level of consensus within the philosophy of science concerning the nature of theory. Although consensus has remained aloof (Nagel, 1979:83; Van Evera, 1997:7), we can note that a great deal of the philosophy-of-science literature, as well as the theory and praxis of eminent (erstwhile and contemporary) natural scientists (cf. Weinberg, 1994), lends credence to the particular conception of theory to be elaborated on in subsequent pages (see also Waltz, 2009:501).

interestingly enough, not unique to our discipline. In the discipline of sociology, similarly, we are told that the word ‘theory’ is “rife with lexical ambiguities”, with the attendant result being “pseudo-disagreements, conceptual muddles, and even downright miscommunication” (Abend, 2008:184). We will, as a matter of course, give more attention to these issues as the chapter unfolds.

The failure to grasp the nature of theory stems from various sources and manifests itself in different ways. One of these sources, perhaps the most basic one, has its roots in the enduring legacy of the positivist tradition within the theory and, unwittingly, praxis of the discipline (cf. Wæver, 2009; Waltz, 1997). Accordingly, constructing theories and devising tests for them are seen to be relatively simple matters (Waltz, 1997:913). Yet in other fields of inquiry, this is hardly the case. In the natural sciences and elsewhere, constructing theories are deemed exceedingly difficult and the ways in which they emerge are left without precise instruction (Waltz, 1997:913). Furthermore, beyond the superficial recognition of the theory-laden nature of international politics, we tend to find that scholarly reflection on the nature of theory is generally not deemed a worthwhile endeavour. Scholars working on theory have surprisingly little to say about what a theory is, what it can and cannot do, and the procedures by which it should be tested (Waltz, 2003). It appears to be the case, however, that this latter failure derives from a still bigger one, namely the failure of scholars working on theory to meaningfully engage with and lay bare the essentials of those theorists’ work on which they comment or against which they construct their own theoretical frameworks. Thus we find for instance, in what many consider a standard introductory text to international relations theory, Kurki and Wight (2010:23, 28) injudiciously placing Waltz within the parameters of the positivist tradition, whilst simultaneously reducing the primary aim of his theory to that of prediction.²² That both statements run counter to Waltz’s thought should be a source of grave concern, yet in many respects it merely forms part of the cavalier manner in which the question of the nature of theory and, by extension, Waltz’s conception of

²² See also Elman’s and Jensen’s (2013:19) erroneous claim that “Waltz predicts that multipolar systems will be *less stable* than bipolar systems” (emphasis added).

theory, are treated within the discipline (cf. Waltz, 1979; 1997; and, for an explicit rejection of the positivist label, Pond and Waltz, 1994:198²³).

This chapter is informed by one overarching aim: the explication of, and the furnishing of a defensible basis for, the logic and structure of scientific theory and its intersection with Waltz's conception of theory. The chapter is of particular significance, especially if we were to argue, as briefly alluded to above, that a great deal of confusion in our discipline stems from misunderstanding Waltz on the question of theory. We will moreover come to see that there are several well-established benefits implied by this conception of theory. The chapter begins by examining the nature and structure of scientific theories, framed within the parameters of the philosophy of science, and Waltz's indebtedness to this particular conception of theory. Particular attention will be paid to different conceptions of theory, the fundamental differences between theories and laws and, most fundamentally, the central components of theories. We will also engage with the intricacies of Waltz's conception of theory, as well as point out different approaches to theory within international-political studies (viz., reductionist versus systemic approaches). This will be followed by probing the requirements and limitations for testing theories. Arguments will be advanced that, contrary to positivist logic and disciplinary praxis, the empirical validation of theories provides no certainty. Moreover, we will see that the emphasis on dogmatic falsification in testing theories is not only marred by various logical errors, but is in itself "a little used method" among natural scientists (Waltz, 1997:914). In the final section of this chapter, attention will be devoted to the investigation of the nature and state of theorising in international politics. In respect of the latter, we will briefly touch on and provide a critique of the structure of 'theories' of democratic peace.

2.2 The structure of scientific theories and Waltz's theory of theory

Where does one begin in commenting on the nature and structure of scientific theories? Perhaps a fruitful point of departure would be to say a few things on the perceived differences between the natural and social sciences and how these

²³ Ashley (1986:280) forthrightly declares that Waltz's work represents nothing more than "theory of, by, and for positivists".

differences affect the theoretical enterprise. It is widely accepted within the social sciences that the conception of theory advanced within the philosophy-of-science literature, and deeply constitutive of some of the most admired theories in the natural sciences, cannot be reconciled with social scientific inquiry. Accordingly, Bent Flyvbjerg (2001:25) forthrightly declares, “it is therefore not meaningful to speak of “theory” in the study of social phenomena, at least not in the sense that “theory” is used in the natural science”. It would be foolish to assume that a single conception of theory exists within the natural sciences. We can, moreover, freely admit that there are fundamental differences between the subject matters of the natural and social sciences. Yet stating this does not detract from the possibilities and necessities that do exist (Waltz, 1979:68). Irrespective of the differences between the natural and social world, “a basic logical continuity in the operations of scientific intelligence” remains (Nagel, 1979:ix). In respect of theory-construction in particular, while dealing with different subject matters, certain imperatives exist. These imperatives require of theoreticians of both the natural and social worlds to bound and organise the domain of their concern, “to simplify the materials” they deal with, “to concentrate on central tendencies and to single out the strongest propelling forces” (Waltz, 1979:68). The argument is therefore *not* that social science theory can ever replicate the success of theory within, most notably, physics, but that imperatives in theory-construction exist across disciplines (consider, in this regard, Kaplan, 1961:23-24).

2.2.1 Laws versus theories

Those who have spent a great deal of time reflecting on the nature of theory generally depart on the basis of drawing a distinction between the concepts ‘law’ and ‘theory’ (see, especially, Nagel, 1979:79-105; Dilworth, 1989). While definitions of the latter vary, the former is more easily defined. Van Evera (1997:8) notes in this regard that a law can be defined as an “observed regular relationship between two phenomena”. In similar vein, and by way of a more precise definition, Waltz (1979:1) holds that laws “establish relations between variables...If *a*, then *b*, where *a* stands for one or more independent variables and *b* stands for the dependent variable: In form, this is the statement of a law”. Laws are further differentiated on the basis of

those that are deterministic (absolute) and those that are probabilistic.²⁴ Deterministic laws are more often found within the field of the natural sciences and encompass an invariant relation between the variables *a* and *b* (Van Evera, 1997:8; Waltz, 1979:1). Probabilistic laws, as against this, more often fall within the purview of the social sciences (Van Evera, 1997:8). They denote a highly constant, though non-invariant, relation between two or more variables and generally take the form: “If *a*, then *b*, with probability *x*” (Waltz, 1979:1). Whether deterministic or probabilistic, laws deal in repetitions. Their particular status derives not only from a relation found between two or more variables, but from one that is marked by a high degree of repetition (Waltz, 1979:1). This implies that we can expect, with a certain degree of probability, that the future occurrence of *a* will be followed by the occurrence of *b* (Waltz, 1979:1).

With the nature of laws firmly established, the attention can be shifted to the way in which theories are defined. At least two conceptions of theory, and perhaps even more, vie for attention (Reynolds, 1971:10-11; Dilworth, 1989:1; Nagel, 1979:83). One conception of theory, commonly labelled the set-of-laws conception of theory (Reynolds, 1971:10), holds that theories are to be seen “as collections or sets of laws pertaining to a particular behaviour or phenomenon” (Waltz, 1979:2). The differences drawn between theories and laws, and the complexity of the former vis-à-vis the latter, are therefore quantitative in nature – or, as Ernest Nagel frames it, the differences are perceived to be of degree, not kind (Waltz, 1979:2; Nagel, 1979:83). This conception of theory remains an alluring prospect and manifests itself in various ways within our discipline. Stephen van Evera (1997:12), for instance, forthrightly declares that a theory “is nothing more than a set of connected causal laws or hypotheses”. On his part, though perhaps in attenuated form, Hans Morgenthau renders a similar definition. He defines theory as “a system of empirically verifiable, general truths, sought for their own sake” (Morgenthau, 1959:16). The conception of theory underpinning John Mearsheimer work (cf. Mearsheimer, 2011:6-12, 29-54) is, to provide a final example, likewise framed in explicitly empirical terms, with his theory used to “make *predictions* about great-power politics in the twenty-first

²⁴ Although the claim can be made that the very notion of ‘laws’ thrusts one’s argument into the positivist tradition, the charge is unwarranted. Positivists, especially those at the extreme, holds that theory serves no purpose in the apprehension of reality and, consequently, that the latter can be apprehended directly (Waltz, 1997:913).

century” (emphasis added). Such a conception of theory would hardly be problematic were the essential features of theories and laws found to be highly similar, i.e., if theories were indeed little more than collections or sets of laws (Dilworth, 1989:1). Yet we know that this is not the case. Although the criterion informing the distinction between theories and laws is admittedly vague, several well-established markers do exist for distinguishing theories from laws – and the distinction drawn, as will be evident, is a fundamentally important one (Nagel, 1979:83).

Theories and laws fulfil qualitatively different tasks and fall within the parameters of different (i.e. distinct) categories of science (Dilworth, 1989:1). As against the conception of theory as collections or sets of laws, theories serve the function of providing statements that explain laws (Waltz, 1979:5; Dilworth, 1989:2). Laws provide facts of observation; theories invent explanations for them (Waltz, 1979:6). They allow us to understand “the guts” of phenomena, “to create the *capacity to invent explanations*” and, in general, to provide explanations for observed regularities (Stinchcombe, 1987:v, 3, 5; emphasis in original). Because of their explanatory function, and with due regard to their distinctive position within the scientific enterprise, theories are tasked with providing understanding, while the function of laws is the provision of knowledge. Laws lead us towards the discovery of a particular state of affairs; theories, as against this, furnish explanations that lead to understanding as regards to why a particular state of affairs obtains (Dilworth, 1989:6). Although the emphasis on explanation is vitally important, other equally well-developed grounds for distinguishing between laws and theories exist, and which lead to theories being viewed as a distinctive kind of explanation in science from which “highly integrated and comprehensive systems of explanation” emerge (Nagel, 1979:18, 22).

In particular, Ernest Nagel (1979:83-90) advanced three such grounds. In the first instance, the terms occurring in theories and their relation to the world of observation are qualitatively different from those employed in laws. Accordingly, the language of theories is distinct from that of laws. The descriptive (non-logical) terms occurring in laws, unlike those occurring in theories, are “associated with at least one overt procedure” for relating the terms to “some observationally identifiable trait” (Nagel, 1979:93). This means nothing more than to say that for each term in a law, unlike

most if not all of those employed in theories, a specific methodology (procedure) exists by which the term is related to the world of observation. The existence of such procedures has the effect of fixing a definite meaning for terms. Following from this, laws, as against theoretical statements, have “a determinate empirical content”, which can be checked against direct observational evidence obtained by way of the procedures identified for the terms occurring in them (Nagel, 1979:83-84). The situation differs in fundamental respects for theories. Most, if not all the terms employed in theories, obtain their meanings within the context of the theory in which they are embedded (Waltz, 1979:11). No overt procedures exist by which the terms occurring in theories are related to observationally identifiable instances of those terms (Nagel, 1979:85). The terms, and the meanings attached to them, are therefore implicitly defined. Thus we note, for instance, the distinct meanings of the concepts ‘space’, ‘energy’, ‘momentum’ and ‘time’ in differently structured physical theories and, in international politics, how the concepts ‘power’, ‘force’, ‘pole’, ‘structure’ and others have obtained distinct meanings in accordance with the structure of the theory in which they are embedded (Waltz, 1979:11). The consequence of this is rather important: the absence of any overt procedures by which the terms of theories are related to the world of observation, such that no observationally identifiable instances exist for those terms, entail that theories, contra laws, cannot be subjected to direct experimental or observational tests (Nagel, 1979:85; cf. also Waltz, 1979:13).²⁵

In the second instance, and as a logical extension of the above, the development of theories and laws proceed along very different lines. In general, the lines diverge on the basis of “the way in which laws may be discovered and the way in which theories have to be constructed” (Waltz, 1979:7; cf. also Dilworth, 1989:8; Nagel, 1979:85-86). While laws emerge on the basis of induction, theories cannot. Unlike laws, theories cannot proceed by way of induction, given that the basic terms employed in theories are implicitly defined so that no observationally identifiable instances for these terms exist (Nagel, 1979:85-86). The terms occurring in theories, as against those in laws, do not emerge from our data, but are instead invented. Accordingly, in structural realist theory, as in other fields of inquiry, the essential concepts were not

²⁵ For further reflection on the nature of and procedures for testing theories, consider section 2.3.

discovered but invented (consider, for instance, the Physiocrats' contribution to the development of economics and, generally, developments in theoretical physics) (Waltz, 2008d:69; Weinberg, 1994:150; cf. also Waltz, 1979:5). Indeed, as Nagel (1979:86) reminds us, some of the most admired scientists have steadfastly upheld the notion that theories are "free creations of the mind". With this in mind, the physicist John Rader Platt concludes that "the pressure of scientific determinism becomes weak and random as we approach the great unitary syntheses. For they are not only discoveries. They are also artistic creations, shaped by the taste and style of a single hand" (quoted in Waltz, 1959:58; for a more recent confirmation of this position within the philosophy-of-science literature, cf. Dilworth, 1989:9).

As should be evident, such claims neither imply that observational materials may not be suggestive of theories nor that theories can exist independent of observational evidence (Nagel, 1979:86). What they do suggest, however, is that the meanings of the terms employed in theories, as against those in laws, need not be fixed by some or other experimental procedure and that theories may be shown to be "adequate and fruitful" despite the indirect nature of the evidence inferred in support of it (Nagel, 1979:86). Indeed, the history of modern science points towards the existence of various theories (cf. the Copernican theory of the solar system, the corpuscular theory of light and the kinetic theory of gasses) whose acceptance hinged not on newly discovered experimental evidence, but solely on their ability to provide superior (i.e. clearer and more penetrating) explanations of previously established laws (Nagel, 1979:86).

Thus, the Ptolemaic system was replaced by the Copernican theory of the solar system solely on the latter's ability to provide an aesthetically more pleasing theoretical structure (Waltz, 1959:56). In the case of the general theory of relativity, Sir Arthur Eddington noted that, for certain individuals, the existence of fresh experimental evidence predicted by relativity theory and together with the subtle deviations from Newtonian laws accounted for their widespread interest in the theory. Yet, for most, the acceptance of relativity theory hinged less on fresh experimental evidence and more nearly on its explanatory power: "To those who are still hesitating and reluctant to leave the old faith, these deviations will remain the chief centre of interest; but for those who have caught the spirit of the new ideas the

observational predictions form only a minor part of the subject. It is claimed for the theory that it leads to an understanding of the world of physics *clearer* and *more penetrating* than that previously attained” (Eddington quoted in Nagel, 1979:86; emphasis added). In more recent times, theoretical physicists have claimed that theories are invented and judged on the basis of the principle of beauty. Insofar as he has been able to capture the essence of this principle, Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg (1994:149) notes that the ‘beauty’ in physical theories relates to the notions of “simplicity and inevitability – the beauty of perfect structure, the beauty of everything fitting together, of nothing being changeable, of logical rigidity”.

The explanation of laws by theories, such that the former become part and parcel of the ideas postulated by a theory, does not negate the essential requirements that laws are expected to fulfil. In general, it is expected that a law, irrespective of the explanatory worth of the theory of which it forms part, must fulfil two requirements: one, the law must have “a life of its own”, i.e., its meaning must be established independent from the theory of which it forms part; and two, it must be based on observational evidence that will allow it to survive in the case of the demise of the theory (Nagel, 1979:86-87). For our purposes, the important point to note, and one which will be further explored later on, is therefore that the intelligibility of a law needs to be established independent of the meanings attached to it by virtue of it being embedded within, and explained by, a given theory (Nagel, 1979:87). The point is of particular significance, since the failure to establish the independence of a law from the theory which purports to explain it will have the effect of yielding a “fatal circularity”, i.e., a situation in which there remains nothing for the theory to explain (Nagel, 1979:87). As against what holds uniformly for laws, the meanings associated with theoretical notions can only be understood within the context of the theoretical structure in which they are embedded. Theoretical notions obtain their meanings as constitutive elements of the theoretical structure in which they are placed and as the structure of a theory changes so do the meanings associated with the theoretical notions (Nagel, 1979:87). Consequently, adding to a theory that which is deemed to have been omitted or, conversely, subtracting from a theory that which is deemed superfluous, creates a new theory which must be tested in its own right (Waltz, 1997:916; 2008d:75).

In the final instance, while a law is formulated on the basis of a single statement, a theory comprises “a system of several related statements” (Nitze, 1959:88-89). This feature of theories, coupled with the fact that the terms occurring in theories are not fixed by definite observational procedures (such that no observationally identifiable instances exist for these terms), are however only indicative of a far greater benefit that theories have over laws, to wit, their greater generality and – with due regard to their explanatory power – their far greater inclusivity (Nagel, 1979:89). In essence, the range of theories and, by extension, the nature of the subject matters they deal with, are much more extensive than that which falls under the scope of laws. Indeed, it is claimed for a theory that one of its core functions is the inclusion of qualitatively disparate empirical generalisations and laws under the rubric of a single explanatory system, with a secondary function being the derivation of new hypotheses from the theory, which, if confirmed, will yield new laws (Waltz, 1979:6; Nagel, 1979:89-90).

2.2.2 Thoughts on the structure of scientific theories

Although a great deal has been said about the distinctive nature of theories, three questions remain. One, how are theories structured? Two, how should we define the concept ‘theory’? And, three, what is the essential nature of Waltz’s theory of theory? The first of these questions will be addressed here; the next two will be dealt with in the following section. Beyond the simplistic notion that theories consist of a number of abstract concepts, what do we know? In general, the basic components of a theory are three-fold (cf. Nagel, 1979:90-97). A scientific theory, properly formulated, consists, in the first place, of an abstract calculus (i.e., an abstract system of reasoning) which forms the “logical skeleton” of the theory and in which the basic terms of the theory are implicitly defined (Nagel, 1979:90, 91). The term ‘system’ is here of special importance. The fundamental assumptions of a theory form in essence a *system* of abstract postulates by which the basic non-logical terms of the theory obtain their distinctive meanings owing to their placement within this system (Nagel, 1979:91). Accordingly, and as variously argued above, the nature of the terms occurring in theories, whether they be ‘anarchy’, ‘molecule’, ‘force’, ‘pole’ or whatever else, can only be ascertained through an examination of the postulates of a theory and the structure of interrelations of which they form part. And, importantly, it

is these theoretical notions, implicitly defined by the postulates of a theory, that carry out the core business of a theory, to wit, explanation (Nagel, 1979:92).

To be scientifically useful, a theory must, secondly, contain a set of rules by which its implicitly defined terms are related to the world of observation (Nagel, 1979:90, 93). A theory should state why and how these terms are linked to events and phenomena manifest in the world of observation. To do this, to relate the terms occurring in theories to the world of observation (i.e., to derive rules of correspondence²⁶ for them), requires a researcher to engage in logical processes through which empirical statements are deduced from the implicitly defined terms occurring in theories (Stinchcombe, 1987:16). The nature of these rules of correspondence merits further attention. As a point of departure, we note that the language (terms) employed in rules of correspondence do not provide explicit definitions of the terms occurring in theories (Nagel, 1979:97-98). With 'explicit' is meant that the language employed in rules of correspondence and that employed in theories are not logically equivalent – the terms employed in each denote different things. Moreover, and further entrenching the lack of correspondence between theoretical notions and experimental concepts, theoretical notions are – within the permissible operations of logic – linked to the world of observation by an infinite number of experimental concepts (Nagel, 1979:99). This incongruence between theoretical notions and experimental concepts is however only symptomatic of something far more consequential. It is a distinguishing mark of theories that their formulation is approached with “painstaking care” and that the articulated interrelations between the theoretical notions are done with “great precision” (Nagel, 1979:99). Indeed, as Stinchcombe (1987:6) observes, theoreticians ought rather to be accused of ignorance than vagueness. The care taken and the precision sought after in creating theories are fundamentally important and not only for stylistic purposes. If achieved, it not only engenders a greater measure of explanatory power, but it more nearly allows a theory to be applied to qualitatively different subject matters. As against what holds for theories, rules of correspondence that coordinate theoretical notions

²⁶ Rules of correspondence – or, as they are more commonly referred to, correspondence rules – stipulate the basic connections by which the abstract terms employed in theories are related to the world of observation (Nagel, 1979:95).

with experimental concepts are stated in more loose and imprecise terms (Nagel, 1979:99).

We now know that theoretical notions are linked to observational materials by way of correspondence rules. The statement, however, needs to be qualified. Consequently, some of the theoretical notions employed in nearly all of the theories of the natural sciences are in no way tied to experimental ideas, with the concomitant benefit being that theories constructed accordingly are afforded a greater degree of flexibility in extending the theory to areas of inquiry originally not envisioned as part of the subject matter of the theory (Nagel, 1979:102). Indeed, as was illustrated above, the explanation by theories of qualitatively different empirical generalisations and laws is a defining feature of theories. We should note, however, the important caveat that the actualisation of this latter feat is further dependent on a theory being formulated in such a way that “no reference is made in it to any set of specialized experimental concepts” (Nagel, 1979:103-104). This implies that the “statements of a theory have the form of generalized conditionals, *which place no spatiotemporal restrictions on the class of phenomena that may be explained with their help*” (Nagel, 1963:212; emphasis added). Inclusion of such considerations would have the effect of restricting the application of a theory to those situations to which the concepts are said to apply (Nagel, 1979:104). Accordingly, in constructing a theory, and owing to the desirability of fostering theories of great generality, great care is taken in abstracting from the complexity of reality, in eliminating as much as possible from the subject matter (Nagel, 1959:14). Conversely, in *applying* a theory to specialised circumstances, a theory is supplemented by introducing additional assumptions as necessitated by a given occasion (Nagel, 1979:104).

Finally, a theory consists of a model (or interpretation) of the theory by which the highly abstract and complicated nature of the postulates of the theory, and the terms occurring within them, are made more understandable in terms of relatively familiar notions (Nagel, 1979:90, 95). Although the precise meaning of the term ‘model’ is disputed (Godfrey-Smith, 2003:238), a model *of a theory* seeks to make more understandable the complexity of the abstract calculus of a theory by reducing it to more familiar visual expressions. This can be done by way of analogy, mathematical symbols or through organismic, mechanical or other expressions (Waltz, 1979:7).

Irrespective of the ways in which this proceeds, a model of a theory will be as abstract or, conversely, as concrete as the theory it purports to model (Waltz, 1979:7). The term 'model' is often expressed in two senses: one, and as stated here, a model provides an interpretation of the abstract calculus of a theory; two, a model provides a simplified picture of reality, as evidenced in, say, a model airplane (Waltz, 1979:7). In some instances, such as that of the model airplane, the notion of simplification attaches to the idea of scale, thus creating the twin requirements of reduction (in scale) *and* simulation (of reality). The premise is then that, in the case of the model airplane, reality should be simulated (Waltz, 1979:7). In the case of theories, the approximation or simulation of reality jars with the nature and purpose of theory. As we have seen from the above, and as will be amplified in the following section, fostering theories of great generality and explanatory power require of us to abstract or depart from reality, not stay close to it.

2.2.3 Waltzing towards theory: reflections on Waltz's theory of theory

The previous sections have attempted to provide justification for and an exposition of a particular conception of theory as evidenced in the philosophy-of-science literature. In painting this picture, we have at times provided cursory reflections on the nature of Waltz's conception of theory and the ways in which it is interlaced with the conception of theory advanced in these pages. In this section, we will more fully engage with this task. Although we have drawn a sharp distinction between laws and theories, we have yet to define the concept 'theory'. A theory is, accordingly, "a picture, mentally formed, of a bounded realm or domain of activity"; it is "a depiction of the organization of a domain and of the connections among its parts...The infinite materials of any realm can be organized in endlessly different ways. A theory indicates that some factors are more important than others and specifies relations among them" (Waltz, 1979:8).

For our purposes, the important point to recognise here is that the first task of a theory is the demarcation of an autonomous realm of inquiry. One has to find a way of setting apart one's domain of concern from everything that could possibly be included within it. In reality, such a domain cannot and does not stand on its own (Waltz, 1979:8). Thus, as Waltz (1979:8) notes, "[t]he question, as ever with theories,

is not whether the isolation of a realm is realistic, but whether it is useful". Usefulness, in this context, means nothing more than the emergence of a theory with great explanatory and predictive powers (Waltz, 1979:8). The situation is hardly a novelty. In developing the field of economics for instance and, by extension, in furnishing a theory that would explain what transpires within it, the concept of an economy was invented and artificially disentangled from the socio-political framework in which it was embedded (Waltz, 2008d:68). This basic fact implies that theories are bound to be about something, not everything (Waltz in Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:379, 380). The demarcation of an artificially constructed realm of inquiry is accordingly the first and most basic requirement of a theory.

Once such a realm is envisioned, one is faced with the task of identifying the most salient causal factors at work and showing the *necessary* connections, as conceived of within the terms of the theory, among them (Waltz, 1979:8; 2003). On account of this and by the very nature of the tasks they set out to achieve, theories are systematic in character, i.e., they constitute an explanatory system. The concepts and assumptions of theories do not stand in isolation from one another, but are shown to be highly interdependent. They form, in essence, a unified conceptual framework, with the connections between them being continuous in nature (Nitze, 1959:1). The point carries more weight than we might think. Thus we often fail to heed the warning, as is evident in Morgenthau's attempt to furnish a theory of international politics, that the provision of elements of a theory is not tantamount to a theory and that while providing explanations are the core business of theories, not every explanation is a theory (Waltz, 2008d:71; Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:386). Instead, the continuous relationship that exists between the concepts of theory coupled with the distinctive nature of the concepts themselves that serves the function of providing the understanding of the body of data that our theory attempts to illumine (Nitze, 1959:1). And, because they are conceptually interrelated, theories gain the added advantage of providing in a systematic manner explanations for a vast range of disparate facts (Nagel, 1979:22).

The concepts employed by theories are however not only systematic in character, but also few in number. In general, the presumption is that less is more. If there is one great lesson to be learned from the physical sciences, it is that theories should

be conceptually sparse (Kaplan, 1961:16). The argument is, as Stinchcombe (1987:8) reminds us, that in those cases in which a conceptual variable is constitutive of eight or, still worse, ten distinct causal mechanisms, the connections between the variables will be “shifting and messy”. In identifying the most pertinent causal factors, in setting them apart from the infinite factors that could conceivably be made part of a theory, a process of simplification must necessarily be engaged in (Waltz, 1979:10; Nitze, 1959:1-2).²⁷ Accordingly, levelling critique against a theory on the basis of its perceived omissions, or identifying those variables one believes to be the central omissions of a theory, is *ipso facto* misplaced and constitutes a misrepresentation of the theoretical enterprise (Waltz, 2008d:75). Theories are, after all, all about omissions (Waltz, 2004:2).²⁸ Why should this be the case? Should theories or, more narrowly, theories of international politics not perhaps be as complex as our evidence suggests? One is tempted to argue in the affirmative, to follow the wave of thought that suggests that the more our theories conform to the complexity of reality, the more we allow them to become messy, the better off we would be. Structural realism, consequently, is often faulted for failing to incorporate domestic variables – whether political, economic, and cultural, or any other (Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:379-380).

From the above we know, however, that theories are by their very nature circumscribed and that there are sufficient theoretical grounds in defence of such a claim. In constructing a theory, it therefore does not hold that other factors are deemed unimportant. Elegance and simplicity, as pointed out in Chapter 1 of this study, are however the hallmarks of theory; complexity that of reality (Waltz, 1997:913; 2004:3). This is necessarily the case since the failure to simplify would thrust one back to the level of description, not explanation (Waltz, 2008d:75). In short, we will lose the benefit of figuring out what is connected with what and why such connections obtain. Alternatively phrased, theories provide the benefit of identifying the central forces at work and indicating “the necessary relations of cause

²⁷ In addition to the criterion of simplicity, Nitze (1959:2) argues that one should also bear in mind the criterion of sufficiency. While theories must be conceptually sparse, they must also include “sufficient elements [in order to] bear a meaningful relationship to the body of data it is meant to illuminate”.

²⁸ Moreover, the inclusion of variables in a theory that one believes lacks sufficient explanatory depth is a complex undertaking. For, as Waltz (1997:916) indicates, “[t]o add to a theory something that one believes has been omitted requires showing how it can take its place as one element of a coherent and effective theory”.

and interdependence – or suggest where to look for them” (Waltz, 1979:10). Moreover, and contra common expectations, theory does not militate against complexity, but constitute instead an instrument by which we deal with complexity (Waltz, 2008d:72).

Theories are not only simplifications, but also bold abstractions. They provide explanations of laws, and are thus different in kind from laws and, by implication, the empirical world (Waltz, 1979:5). To explain laws, to provide systematic and comprehensive explanations for a vast range of facts, require of us to abstract from reality, i.e., to move away from the reality manifest in observation. In failing to do this, one is pinned down at the level of description. One gains explanatory power, as Waltz (1979:7) reminds us, by moving away from reality, not by staying close to it”. Accordingly, the attempt to furnish theories of great explanatory power is dependent on their being “formulated without reference to, and in abstraction from, the individualizing qualities and relations of familiar experience” (Nagel, 1979:11). This is why theories and the theoretical notions integral to them are not discovered but invented (Waltz, 1979:5).

Moreover, the assumptions of theory, as with theoretical notions, are the product of the creative genius of the theoretician. They are “non-factual elements of a theory” (Waltz, 1979:10). These assumptions, such as structural realist theory’s assumption that states seek to survive, do not in any sense capture the wondrous complexity of human life (Waltz, 1979:10, 89). They are however not meant to do so. Contra the painstaking accuracy implicated in descriptions, the task of creating theories, and the quest for theoretical knowledge (i.e. the aims of explanation and systematic generality), demands that the assumptions of theories be “brazenly false” (Waltz, 2008d:72).²⁹ Men, as Waltz (2008d:72) notes, imbued with a multiplicity of motives, but unless we engage in processes of simplification and abstraction, theory becomes impossible. Accordingly, the introduction of an assumption or a set of assumptions into the structure of theories stems from their particular usefulness in the process of

²⁹ The falsity or unrealistic nature of assumptions can take different forms (cf. Nagel, 1963:214-216). It appears to be the case, as will be evident shortly, that the sense in which the notion of an assumption of a theory is understood within Waltz’s structural realist theory is that the latter is conceived to be unrealistic if “it does not give an “exhaustive” description of some object, so that it mentions only some traits actually characterizing the object but ignores an endless number of other traits also present” (Nagel, 1963:214).

theory-construction and the attendant quest for the achievement of theoretical knowledge. The comparison with economic theory is, again, a particularly useful one. In the construction of micro-economic theory (cf. Wetzstein, 2005:8), we find that the assumptions of theories are invented and that they are freely introduced into the structure of theories, knowing full well that they do not in any sense capture the entirety of human motivations:

Unrealistically, economists think of the acting unit, the famous “economic man,” as a single-minded profit maximizer. They single out one aspect of man and leave aside the wondrous variety of human life. As any moderately sensible economist knows, “economic man” does not exist. Anyone who asks businessmen how they make their decisions will find that the assumption that men are economic maximizers grossly distorts their characters. The assumption that men behave as economic men, which is known to be false as a descriptive statement, turns out to be useful in the construction of theory (Waltz, 1979:89).

We should note, however, that the assumptions thus advanced are not introduced in a careless manner (Waltz, 1979:10). Instead, their sole purpose is to facilitate theory-construction (and, by implication, explanation) and to ascribe meaning to the data, with their worth evaluated on the grounds of the explanatory sufficiency of the theory of which they form part (Waltz, 1979:10, 91). In assuming that states seek to survive, Waltz (1979:91) therefore freely admits that the assumption is “a radical simplification” made in service of constructing a theory and that we should assess the validity of the assumption not based on the categories of truth and falsity, but on “whether it is the most sensible and useful one that can be made”. And usefulness, in this context at least, depends on the extent to which “a theory based on the assumption can be contrived”, a theory which allows us to gain insights into consequences that, in the light of the theory, become self-evident (Waltz, 1979:91). Seen against this backdrop, theories are then the product of creative ideas and intuitions, not observations of reality (Waltz, 1979:11).

On account of this feature of theories, and with due regard to the processes of simplification and abstraction, the application of theory is bound to fall short in attempts at understanding the real world. Between theory and its application, vast

differences emerge. If this was not the case, if theories did indeed mirror reality, there would be little need for theory. A theory shows how an artificially constructed domain of activity is organised, identifies the central causal factors at play and their interconnections, and illustrates how and why such connections obtain. In constructing a theory, care is taken to strip away the complexity of the concrete world of human experience with the aim of arriving at a conceptually unified, yet sparse theory; in *applying* the theory, in using it as an instrument that deals with the world of practice, we move in the opposite direction: we take care to conjoin the forces illuminated by our theory with the empirical matter omitted in the process of theory-construction (Nitze, 1959:14; cf. also Kaplan, 1961:16). In using a theory to understand the real world, attention is therefore paid not only to the explanatory logic accruing from the theory, but also to that which falls outside of it (Waltz, 2004:3; cf. also Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:380). This is undoubtedly what Nagel (1979:104), as noted above, had in mind in arguing that the application of a theory to specialised circumstances requires that a theory be supplemented by introducing additional assumptions. Waltzian structural realism therefore freely admits that explaining and/or understanding international politics requires that attention be paid to both national and international politics (Halliday, Rosenberg & Waltz, 1998:380). One should remember, however, that the move from theory to application is and always will be a complex undertaking (Waltz, 2008d:75).

I have said a great deal concerning Waltz's conception of the nature and development of theory, while leaving aside the important question of how theories organise their material. It is noted in Chapter 1 that, in organising their material, two distinct types of theory vie for our attention: reductionist theories and systemic theories. The distinction to be drawn between them does not turn on the levels each theory deals with, but rather on how each organises its materials (Waltz, 1979:60). A reductionist theory, as previously stated, is a theory that deals with the behaviour of the parts: the whole is known through an analysis of the properties and interactions of its parts (Waltz, 1979:18, 60). It holds, as the example of classical physics illustrates, that the object of inquiry should be reduced to its constitutive parts and examine the properties and relations extant between them (Waltz, 1979:39). The parts thus examined, and the relations between them, are then taken as constitutive of the whole. The logic of inquiry is essentially the behavioural one, with causes

being unidirectional in nature and emanating solely from the behaving units (Waltz, 2004:3). In this conception, political outcomes, whether national or international, result from “the characteristics and the interactions” of the behaving units (Waltz, 2008d:77). External outcomes therefore result from internal forces (Waltz, 1979:60). Systems theories, as against this, show how the organisation of a realm affects the attributes, actions and interactions of the parts. A systems theory, properly defined, takes the form of recognising that part of the explanation for the behaviour of units and the outcomes resulting from their interactions lies within the system’s structure (Waltz, 1979:73). The theory shows then how the structure of a system produces a similarity in behaviour and outcomes irrespective of changes in the attributes and intentions of the parts. The logic of inquiry, as against reductionist theories, is systemic: causes run in different directions, with political outcomes resulting from both the attributes and interactions of states *and* variations of the structure in which they conduct their affairs (Waltz, 1997:914; 2004:3). With the differences firmly established, how does one assess the adequacy of one as against the other? Two criteria emerge: by looking at one’s subject matter and assessing the explanatory gains resulting from their utilisation (Waltz, 1979:19). In drawing the differences between reductionist and systemic theories, it is important to note that it is not the intention of this study to convey the impression that reductionist theories are of no use, but rather that for our subject matter they are perhaps less useful. In particular, one is compelled to recognise that the framework in which the units of the international-political system conduct their affairs has marked effects on them. The validity of the proposition will receive attention in subsequent chapters.

In conclusion, this section has advanced three overarching claims: one, the differences drawn between the concepts ‘law’ and ‘theory’ are marked and, by the very nature of the distinction, are consequential; two, the structure of theories and the processes by which they emerge attest to the fact that the business of theory-construction is a far more intricate enterprise than many believe; and three, the conception of theory underpinning Waltz’s structural realist theory is highly indebted to a particular conception of theory as evident in the philosophy-of-science literature. In the next section, we will see that basic problems implied by the testing of theories lend credibility to the complex nature of the theoretical enterprise.

2.3 Testing theories: procedures and limitations

The quest for the validation or invalidation of theories, and the drawing of hypotheses from them in service of this task, appears to be the current vogue within our discipline (Waltz in Sagan, Waltz & Betts, 2007:137). At one level, this is perhaps a good thing. In fashioning theories, we are inevitably confronted with the task of evaluating their explanatory worth (Waltz, 1979:13). More critically, we are also led to test our theories in order to sift out the weeds from the flowers, i.e., to eliminate those theories considered to be incorrect (Waltz, 2008e:93). At quite another level, however, we should be wary of the rush towards testing theories, especially if testing continues to proceed along positivist lines. We have, accordingly, been led to believe that the testing of theories, qua positivist science, is a fairly easy endeavour and one that could be satisfactorily done by pitting theories against facts (Waltz, 1997:913; 2008e:94). As against the widespread allure of this position, the testing of theories is, one must insist, both a far more complicated and uncertain endeavour than usually presumed. This is all the more true if we accept the premise that the conception of theory-testing underpinning positivist science, and deeply ingrained within the fabric of the discipline, is severely flawed (for a rejection of positivist conceptions of theory-testing, consider Lakatos, 1987). Pointing out the difficulties in testing theories or, conversely, rejecting the simplistic notions about testing, does not however obviate the need for evaluating theories. We still need to determine, as argued above, whether there is merit to the explanatory claims proffered by a theory. With this fact firmly established, how then should we evaluate a theory?

Waltz not only sets out to highlight basic instructions for testing a theory, but he also provides an impressive stock of knowledge dealing with philosophical challenges in testing theories. In enunciating his basic instructions in testing a theory, Waltz (1979:13) departs on the basis of identifying seven procedures by which a theory is tested. Before we proceed to scrutinise these, it is perhaps worth mentioning that these procedures do not in any sense provide an exhaustive account of Waltz's conception of the problems implied in testing theories. Those who fail to appreciate this fact stand to lose a great deal of the gist of Waltz's thinking. Part of the blame for this, one feels, must be placed at the door of Waltz, for his more trenchant thoughts on testing theories is not only relegated to the latter half of *Theory of International*

Politics (see, in particular, pp. 123-124), but appears to be more fruitfully laid bare in subsequent contributions (cf. for instance Waltz, 1997; 2008e). Nonetheless, given that these procedures do form the overarching framework in which Waltz advances his thoughts on testing theories, they provide a useful point of departure. In testing a theory, therefore, one is instructed to:

1. Provide a statement or account of the theory being tested;
2. derive empirical observations (hypotheses) from it;
3. relate the hypothesis or hypotheses inferred from the theory to the world of observation;
4. ensure that, in completing tasks two and three, the implicitly defined meanings of the terms employed in the theory being tested should be used;
5. account for the effect of perturbing variables falling outside the range of the theory by eliminating or controlling for them³⁰;
6. devise qualitatively different and demanding tests; and
7. critically ask whether a theory, in the case of the failure of a test, “flunks completely, needs repair and restatement, or requires a narrowing of the scope of its explanatory claims” (Waltz, 1979:13).

It may often be the case that the failure of a theory to overcome the hurdle of testing results from the failure to correctly apply one or all of these procedures (Waltz, 1979:13). Although these procedures point towards some important considerations in testing a theory, and their logic appears to be self-evident, some of them need to be amplified presently.

In particular, it is often overly easy to assume that the greatest difficulty in testing a theory derives from the instruction of devising qualitatively diverse and demanding tests (Waltz, 1979:14). Although there is something to this argument, the more pressing problem in testing theories lies however “in finding or stating theories with enough precision and plausibility to make testing worthwhile” (Waltz, 1979:14). To

³⁰ As Waltz (2003) later conceded, controlling for perturbations in the natural sciences proceeds without much difficulty; in the social sciences, however, this procedure becomes near impossible. What can one do? If the expectations drawn from a theory yield results at odd with our expectations, we are then confronted with the task of giving consideration to and looking for sources of perturbation not included in our theory (Waltz, 1979:15).

subject a theory to (demanding) tests requires first and foremost that one has something worthwhile to test and, where one does, that one understands the basic claims proffered by a theory prior to attempts at testing it (Waltz, 1997:914).³¹ Yet in our discipline, argued Waltz already in 1979, we are faced with the problem of the widespread failure of theories of international politics to define the terms employed by theories and the interconnections between variables with enough precision, clarity and logic that would make subjecting them to tests a worthwhile endeavour (Waltz, 1979:14). The question may rightfully be asked whether this situation is still characteristic of the present theoretical landscape of the discipline. In more ways than one, and as we will more nearly see in the following section, the question must be answered in the affirmative.

One problem in testing theories, and undoubtedly *the* foundational one, therefore relates to stating a theory with enough precision and plausibility. By the very nature of the theoretical enterprise, theories are tested by drawing hypotheses from them and by checking these hypotheses against observational evidence. In fulfilling this task, in inferring hypotheses from a theory, we are consequently instructed to heed what a theory claims to explain. Care should be taken, as a matter of logic, in ensuring that the generality of a theory is matched by the generality of the hypotheses inferred from it (Waltz, 1979:16). We should note, however, that although theories are tested by drawing hypotheses from them, not all the hypotheses inferred from it will be equally useful as a test of a theory (Stinchcombe, 1987:7). For instance, some hypotheses inferred from a theory could with equal plausibility be attributed to other theories and, if confirmed, will have the effect of increasing the credibility of *all* of these theories (Stinchcombe, 1987:7). Conversely, the confirmation of hypotheses believed to be peculiar to a theory has the effect of *greatly* increasing the credibility of that theory (Stinchcombe, 1987:7). A theory will further gain in credibility by inferring from it hypotheses dealing with qualitatively different phenomena (Stinchcombe, 1987:19-20). In general, the presumption is that an increase in the number of qualitatively similar hypotheses inferred from a theory

³¹ One is often struck by the failure of scholars of international politics to heed this instruction. Thus, a recent conference on *African Voices in the New IR Theory*, hosted by Rhodes University, South Africa, devoted a great deal of attention to invalidating the applicability of Waltzian structural realism to Africa (see, in particular, Salem, 2013). That a theory should be tested in accordance with what it claims to explain, and the fact that structural realist theory is *not* fashioned with the explicit aim of explaining African affairs, is thus blithely ignored.

leads to each new hypothesis eliminating fewer alternative theories such that, in this case at least, more really is less; alternatively, increasing the variety of hypotheses inferred from a theory has the effect of increasing the number of alternative theories that is eliminated (Stinchcombe, 1987:21-22).

The confirmation or rejection of hypotheses and, by extension, the confirmation or rejection of theories, should however not be accepted without critical reflection. In failing an observational test, notably, one is instructed to reconsider the accomplishment of the second and seventh procedures laid bare above (Waltz, 1979:13). Also, where observational tests have patently failed, we should be reluctant in hastily rejecting theories; conversely, we should guard against the easy acceptance of theories in the face of the confirmation of observational tests (Waltz, 1979:14). A theory that has passed all tests is not inevitably the fairest one of all. Instead, we are reminded that “a theory is made credible only in proportion to the variety and difficulty of the tests, and that no theory can ever be proved true” (Waltz, 1979:14).

Although theories are tested by inferring hypotheses from them, the question has yet to be asked whether falsification or confirmation constitutes the best method in assaying theories. Neither have we considered the possible limitations in testing theories by way of pitting them against facts. Both aspects will receive attention here. As a point of departure, we should perhaps note that the question of the efficacy of falsification or confirmation in assaying theories is largely a misleading one. Although we will have to take a position in this debate, and will do so presently, the important point is at any rate that neither falsification nor confirmation leads to any certainty in knowledge. Nonetheless, we have been led to believe, following Karl Popper, that falsification is the fairest method of all. The belief is a false one. According to Popper, assaying theories by way of the confirmation of multiple observations is of little avail, since the possibility of one falsifying instance defeating the theory always exists (Waltz, 2008e:92). Confirmations, it is further believed, are to be rejected for theoreticians, in testing their theories, are likely to be predisposed to elevating confirming cases as proof, while disregarding, consciously or not, those cases confounding their theories (Waltz, 1979:123). While Popper believed that a theory cannot ever be shown to be true, he thus believed that falsity can be demonstrated

(Waltz, 2008e:92). This feature of falsification, specifically, that science cannot prove, but only disprove, is – as Lakatos (1987:172) points out – the hallmark of the falsificationist argument. A theory, according to this view, is then defeated if the observations drawn from them are shown to be false or, more critically, if one falsifying instance exists.

The arguments advanced by Popper are however highly problematic. Errol Harris, notably, has argued that the results of tests need to be interpreted and that the acceptance of the validity of critical tests (i.e., those attempting to falsify a theory) falls short in crucial respects (Waltz, 1997:916; 2008e:92). In particular, we are reminded that critical tests are “always conducted against background information that in its day is taken for granted” (Waltz, 2008e:92). By ignoring this instruction, one assumes that the reality against which one’s theory is evaluated is *the* reality, i.e., a true representation of what is real. In doing this, one inevitably assumes too much. There exists, unfortunately, no way of checking the validity of the background information against which such tests are conducted (Waltz, 2008e:92). For, as Hume and Kant noted centuries before, “nothing is both empirical and certain” (Waltz, 2008e:92). Rather, what is conceived as reality is instead an intellectual construction – or so at least Gunther Stent, a molecular biologist, thought: “[r]eality is constructed by the mind...the recognition of structures is nothing else than the selective destruction of information” (quoted in Waltz, 1997:913).

If we follow the route of falsification, and find our hypotheses to be falsified, we are at any rate still left with the task of figuring out what it means for our theory (Waltz, 2008e:92). With this in mind, Lakatos (1987:174) holds that “*we cannot prove theories and we cannot disprove them either*” (emphasis in original). Why should this be the case? The facts against which theories are pitted are it seems highly problematic (Waltz, 1997:914). For one thing, they are infinite in number (Waltz, 2008e:93). More importantly, however, facts do not exist independent of theories any more than theories exist independent from facts (Waltz, 2008e:92). There exists, accordingly, a fundamental interdependence between the two such that we cannot say that the validity of theories is dependent on “facts that are simply given” (Waltz, 2008e:92-93). There is, so to speak, no objective fact existing independently of theory (i.e., there are no facts that are simply given) by which the validity of our

theories can be checked. Facts are accordingly theory-laden or, as Goethe framed it, “[t]he highest wisdom is to realize that every fact is already a theory” (quoted in Waltz, 2008e:93).

Thus far we know that falsification errs in at least two respects: one, it assumes that the reality against which we evaluate our theories can be objectively known; two, it assumes the existence of a natural demarcation between theory and fact where none in fact exists (Lakatos, 1987:174). Although such claims have been painstakingly put forward by philosophers of science, and have informed the practice of distinguished natural scientists (see, in particular, Weinberg, 1994), they have yet to be sufficiently internalised by scholars within our discipline. Instead, and owing to the enduring legacy of the positivist tradition, scholars within our discipline firmly believe that the true test of a theory is provided by pitting it against “the hard facts of empirical reality”, that a theory must be in agreement “with prior evidence about a research question”, and that falsification, not confirmation, is to be preferred (Waltz, 2008e:93). Yet the actual history of science rejects the validity of a “two-cornered fight” between theory and fact and, in respect of the allure of falsification, we are reminded that “some of the most interesting experiments result [...] in confirmation not falsification” (Lakatos, 1987:81). Moreover, as Weinberg (1994:93) has argued and as Waltz (2008e:93; 1997:914) has steadfastly insisted, all theories suffer the fate of being “contradicted by some experiment”. If experimental results are pushed far enough in terms of decimal points, moreover, all hypotheses will be shown to be wrong (Waltz, 1997:914).

If falsification is not, so to speak, the fairest method of all, which is? One answer to the question could be that we refocus our energies towards confirmatory tests. Indeed, some of the problems identified by Popper, in particular those relating to theoreticians knowingly (or not) choosing confirming cases, can be addressed by selecting hard cases, i.e., cases in which sufficient grounds exist for an entity to behave in ways contrary to what one’s theory leads one to expect (Waltz, 1979:123). This is but one solution. The complexity of testing theory and, more trenchantly, testing theory in the social sciences, demands however that we make use of a variety of ways in testing theories, including falsification, confirmation, comparing and contrasting behaviours in differently and similarly structured realms and, finally,

by drawing comparisons between those features found in the real world and those obtaining in the theoretical world (Waltz, 1979:124). While extremely helpful as aides in testing theories, they will unfortunately not provide us with the certainty we often demand. For, as we now know, theories can neither be proved nor disproved (Lakatos, 1987:174). What then should we do? How should we go about assaying theories?

One answer to this question, and unfortunately not a particularly helpful one, is to take up Lakatos' solution and test theories by probing the "fruitfulness of the research programs they may spawn" (Waltz, 1997:914). A research programme (following Lakatosian logic, a succession of theories united by a set of common concepts) becomes then fruitful if it yields (or to use the correct terminology here, *predicts*) ever more novel facts; it becomes less useful, and the hard core of the theory more doubtful, if the research programme fails to account for ever more anomalies (Waltz, 2008e:94; Elman & Elman, 2003:20). For various reasons, however, the utility of Lakatos' solution has been rejected: one, a research programme is created not by the main proponent of a theory, but by its successors, with the corollary that the successor theories may be qualitatively inferior; two, it fails to eliminate the problem of testing; three, within the social sciences, the problem of reaching consensus on what counts as 'novel facts' is and will be a particularly difficult one; and four, if the difficulty of testing a theory is highly problematic, we are then left to question the worth of launching a research programme in the first place (Waltz, 2008e:94).³²

For our purposes, however, the utility of Lakatos' work lies less in his proposed solution of evaluating theories by drawing on the methodology of scientific research programmes. It lies instead, one must argue, with his more general conclusion, consistent with the verdict rendered by scholars prior to him, that in the face of the inability of a theory to be conclusively falsified or verified, "a theory can be overthrown only by a better one" (Waltz, 2008e:94; 1997:914). The implications following from this are sweeping. It suggests, in particular, that in judging the worth

³² Although Lakatos' dictum of testing theories on the basis of the fruitfulness of the research programmes they spawn is rejected here, we could point out Waltz's structural realist theory has generated many new debates (within and beyond the realist camp) and alternative realist theories of international politics (Elman & Jensen, 2013:19).

of a theory, emphases are placed on a theory's ability to explain, not predict, and the success by which it fulfils this task (Waltz, 1997:916). Indeed, with respect to the allure of prediction, both Weinberg (1994:96) and Stinchcombe (1987:18) conclude that prediction provides an extremely poor test of scientific theories (cf. also Waltz, 1979:28; 2003; 2004:3). Accordingly, while able to successfully predict certain things, a theory may nonetheless be false, with success in prediction resulting from various extraneous and unknown factors (Stinchcombe, 1987:18). One is then, ultimately, left with the sobering thought that the true test of a theory, in addition to gauging its explanatory success, "is that people (meaning the people in the field) find it worth dealing with, arguing about, criticizing, trying to apply" (Waltz, 2003).

2.4 The nature and state of theory in international politics

Where are we as a discipline in terms of current understanding of the nature of theory? One answer to this question – undoubtedly a commonplace one – is to argue that the conception of theory now prevalent within our discipline has assumed a richness, both in terms of diversity and meaning, unimagined in previous disciplinary epochs. The correctness of this view, one must insist, depends on the degree to which the new conception of theory has in fact succeeded in transcending the old. But what exactly was the old? In commenting on this question, and with a particular focus on the American mind, Farrell and Smith (1967:v) note that "[t]he pragmatic bent of Americans, their bias against the theoretical and abstract and in favor of the practical and concrete, is a commonplace". Citing Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*, they hold that in "the American metaphysic, reality is always material reality, hard, resistant, unformed, impenetrable, and unpleasant. And that mind is alone felt to be trustworthy which most resembles this reality by most nearly reproducing the sensation it affords" (Farrell & Smith, 1967:v). Although these comments tell us some things about the conception of theory (or lack thereof) within the American mind of that time, one would do well to consider Stanley Hoffmann's critique that the discipline was in essence an American social science, with disciplinary praxis shaped by the tools, procedures and ideas produced by US scholars (Hoffmann, 1977). In more general terms, and as Waltz (1979:1-13) pointed out, the conception of theory prevalent at the time was largely inductive, grounded in

the set-of-laws conception of theory and with very little if any distinction drawn between the theoretical and empirical worlds.

If we take this conception of theory as some sort of yardstick of the old, what then does the new offer? Alternatively phrased, what do we see when we probe current understandings of the concept 'theory' and the ways in which scholars conduct their inquiries? Across the board, there appears to be consensus that to say much about anything that goes on in the world of international politics requires the construction of a theory of international politics or, where such a theory already exists, its application to real-world events. Once one understands why this must be the case, why the construction and development of theory within our discipline (like in others) is *the* indispensable venture, the logic of the proposition advanced is fairly simple to grasp. Ever since Hume and Kant, as pointed out above, the uncertainty of the empirical has been noted (Waltz, 2008:92). Within the natural sciences, moreover, the proposition that the facts of science do not in and of themselves yield explanations for why they obtain is one that is fairly well-established and widely accepted (Waltz, 1979:4; cf. also Nagel, 1979:11-12). In our discipline, however, while scholars of international politics have generally paid lip service to the interdependence of theory and fact, they have been predisposed to elevate the factual content of their studies to the detriment of theoretical development and innovation (Wæver, 2010:315). Thus, as Waltz (2011:4) has concluded, there "isn't much theorizing going on in international politics".

Indeed, in respect of the latter point, one cannot but note that for many students of international politics there is nothing distinctive about the concept 'theory' or the activity of theorising. No conceptual and intellectual boundaries are drawn between 'theory' and 'explanation', between that which is subsumed under the activities of theorising and philosophising, explanation and description. This Waltz (1979; 1997; 2011) realised and his reflections, then and now, on the failure among scholars of international politics to discern these key differences are striking. In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz (1979:1) laments that within our discipline scholars of international politics "use the term "theory" freely, often to cover any work that departs from mere description and seldom to refer only to work that meets

philosophy-of-science standards”.³³ The condition, interestingly enough, seems to be characteristic of the social sciences in general (Nagel, 1963:211). More recently, Waltz (2011:4) has restated his discontentment with this position by strenuously rejecting the widespread assumption that any scholarly activity reaching narrowly beyond the empirical is apt to be called theory. Patent linguistic differences aside, the terms ‘theory’, ‘philosophy’, ‘interpretation’ and ‘explanation’ are not one and the same. All of them are mentioned here on account of the fact that students of international politics consistently err in failing to draw clear conceptual and intellectual boundaries between them. For most, philosophy, interpretation and explanation are akin to theory. Yet key differences separate them, with these differences turning on the structure of scientific propositions. Nonetheless, at the core of all of them is the particular concern of providing an explanatory account of some phenomenon or other. This much is not disputed. The problem emerges however when we fail to heed the structurally distinct properties of theories and explanations and, more importantly, when we fail to understand what each can and cannot achieve. Like the other terms mentioned here, theories deal in explanations. We have seen that their *raison d’être* is to provide systematic explanations of disparate events within an artificially demarcated realm. Yet we also know that while theories explain, not all explanations can be deemed theories. As aforementioned, theories provide a distinctive kind of explanation in science and, with due regard to the fruits they bear, they provide “highly integrated and comprehensive systems of explanation” (Nagel, 1979:18, 22). Accordingly, if the concept ‘theory’ was used indiscriminately in previous disciplinary epochs, as Waltz (1979:1) steadfastly insists, we are unfortunately not any closer now to addressing this issue. On this score, then, the new appears to be strikingly close to the old.

In other respects, too, we are confronted with some of the remnants of the old. As a basic point of departure, Wæver (2010:315), notably, contends that the discipline has reverted “back to a more empiricist, almost inductivist view of theory”. Current disciplinary trends point towards the fact that debate on the nature of theory is weakening (Wæver, 2010:315), that scholars within the discipline are increasingly borrowing from other disciplines in attempts at explaining international politics (thus

³³ Note that Aron (1967:1) made a similar observation in his quest to provide a sketch of a theory of international relations.

removing any notions of furnishing distinctly *political* theories of the discipline) and, importantly, that there exists “an increasing orientation towards large-N type of studies with only a rudimentary sense of theory” (Wæver, 2012:7). With due regard to the latter point, Mearsheimer and Walt (2013:428) scathingly remark that the discipline “is moving away from developing or carefully employing theories and instead [it is] emphasizing what we call simplistic hypothesis testing”. In this enterprise, theory plays a marginal role, “with most of the effort devoted to collecting data and testing empirical hypotheses” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2013:428). A regression into brute empiricism, “supported by, at best, a very weak conception of theory”, is manifesting itself (Coetzee & Hudson, 2012:259). Theory is in decline. It has, moreover, become commonplace for contributions to leading journals to be of the theory-plus-case model, with the overriding rationale being to expose the missing variables in the theory (Wæver, 2012:4, 13). We have already cautioned against the folly of both.

Further, what is of particular interest, especially given the purposes of this study, is the extent to which the conception of theory advanced by Waltz continues to be misinterpreted – and none more so than those deemed to be his most ardent disciples (Wæver, 2012:10). Within the mainstream, in particular, the set-of-laws conception of theory endures remarkably well, as does the proposition that theories are tested by pitting them against the hard facts of empirical reality (Wæver, 2012:11). Beyond the mainstream/American conception of theory, we do find however, a European alternative premised on a conception of theory as a loose conceptual system (Wæver, 2012:12). The former conception of theory suffers the fate of ignoring the abstract and intuitive nature of some of the most impressive explanations of the natural *and* social sciences; the latter, the inability to provide clarity and precision, coupled with unrelenting “confusion over explanation, causation and constitution, and – less noticed – a tendency to reinforce a role of theory as world views” (Wæver, 2012:12). Both approaches jar, at any rate, with the conception of theory advanced by Waltz and are merely indicative of the extent to which the Waltzian conception of theory, properly understood, has been marginalised within disciplinary praxis. There exists, therefore, an essential paradox in respect of Waltz’s position in the discipline: on the one hand Waltz is hailed as the

“king of thought” (Mearsheimer, 2006:109), yet, on the other hand, scholars continually err by misinterpreting him on the question of theory (Wæver, 2009:217).

Although a number of things concerning the nature and state of theory within the discipline have been noted, I would like to conclude this section by pointing towards some expected outcomes to be gleaned from the intersection (or lack thereof) between the conception of theory advanced here and that underpinning liberal accounts of democratic peace. In particular, our concerns fall on probing the extent to which the frameworks advanced by liberal scholars of democratic peace do indeed provide explanations and, if so, whether such explanations are deserving of the label ‘theory’, as well as scrutinising the qualitatively different outcomes resulting from differing conceptions of theory. In providing answers, one should first reflect on the arguments put forth by liberal scholars of democratic peace. Two proponents of democratic peace theory, notably John Owen and Michael Doyle, are noteworthy in this regard. I mention these two only, not because others are of lesser moment, but because they, more than anyone else, have attempted to theoretically account for the democratic peace. From Chapter 1, we know that both scholars have argued that an explanation proper of the democratic peace is wholly dependent on the intersection between normative and institutional (structural) frameworks. By way of the former, institutional constraints (viz., the existence of checks and balances and the possibility of electoral punishment) suffice to explain the absence of war between (liberal) democratic states. The latter framework postulates the explanatory merit of liberal values and norms and their externalisation in cases of war-threatening crises.

While stressing the interplay between normative and institutional arguments, Owen (1996; 1997a) further stipulates that an explanation proper of the absence of war between liberal states requires recognition of the role that perceptions play in curtailing state behaviour. Accordingly, a “liberal democracy will only avoid war with a state that *it believes to be liberal*” (Owen, 1996:121; emphasis in original). More specifically, Owen’s conception of democratic peace holds that liberal ideas engender two intervening variables, notably liberal ideology and democratic institutions. The former functions to prohibit war with fellow liberal democracies; the latter allows this normatively grounded framework to affect foreign policy (Owen, 1996:122). Liberal ideology, grounded in a philosophical commitment to individual

freedom, thus enables liberal states to forgo war with other liberal states – once they have perceived each other as such – in that these states are considered as rational and pacific due to their pursuance and protection of their citizens' true interests (Owen, 1996:124).

Although with some differences, Owen's (1996; 1997a) position does not radically depart from Doyle's (1996) Kantian inspired liberal theory of democratic peace. Doyle (1996:10) highlights a three-fold set of imperatives as constitutive of Kant's conception of, and as explanation for, democratic peace: (i) a republican constitution typified by juridical equality, some form of representation and the separation of legislative and executive power; (ii) a commitment to and preservation of individual liberties (a basic appreciation of individuals as ethical subjects); and (iii) transnational (economic) interdependence. In thus outlining these imperatives, Doyle notes that all three combine to constitute the fundamental properties of a liberal republic and, where they do combine, help explain both the war- and peace-proneness of liberal states. Framed in more concrete terms, the first of these imperatives exacts a relationship premised on accountability between the state and the electorate. The possibility and fear of electoral punishment leads to hesitation on the part of those in power in formulating and advocating war-prone policies (Doyle, 2005:464). The second imperative, grounded in a philosophical commitment to fundamental human rights, provides the foundation for mutual respect between liberal states, while the third serves to add a material incentive to the normative underpinnings of the first and second imperatives (Doyle, 2005:464).

From the arguments advanced in this chapter, we know that a theory has a distinctive structure and, even more so, that it possesses a determinate content. Because it does, because a theory is constitutive of a distinctive kind of explanation, it is afforded a wealth of benefits not likely to be found with other types of explanations and attempts at understanding. With Owen's and Doyle's arguments firmly established, we can now assess their explanatory and theoretical merit. Thus, as the first part of our quest, is explanation the proper descriptive term for the intellectual activities engaged in by Owen and Doyle or, alternatively phrased, do the frameworks advanced by these authors indeed explain? In more than one respect Owen and Doyle do provide explanations. Their accounts of democratic peace tell us

something about how (liberal) democratic states function and how the functions they fulfil have an effect on inter-liberal relations. However, care should be taken not to conflate the acknowledgement of a body of knowledge as explanations with the question whether such explanations are useful. This question can only be addressed by subjecting such explanations to critical tests. For the purposes of this study, we can freely admit that explanations are provided in service of vindicating the democratic peace phenomenon.

The second part of our quest, namely the question of the extent to which such explanations are deserving of the label theory, is at once more troublesome for Owen and Doyle – and more fundamental. From what was said in this chapter we now know that the distinctions drawn between theory and explanation do not merely turn on linguistic conventions. Theories are differently structured and because they are they provide more comprehensive and systematic explanations. Their systematic character, coupled with the fact that the terms occurring in theories are not fixed by definite observational procedures, holds that theories are able to explain qualitatively disparate empirical generalisations and laws. The resultant explanations, moreover, are deemed all the more credible if their conceptual elements can be shown to be highly interdependent. Theoretical explanation is premised on illustrating the mutual dependence of the concepts advanced in one's theory. One would do well to remember, as variously argued above, that it is a distinguishing mark of theories that their formulation is approached with "painstaking care" and that the articulated interrelations between the theoretical notions are done with "great precision" (Nagel, 1979:99). The care taken and the precision sought after in creating theories are fundamentally important and not only for stylistic purposes. If achieved, it not only engenders a greater measure of explanatory power, but it more readily allows a theory to be applied to qualitatively different subject matters. It is, furthermore, the theoretical notions, implicitly defined by the postulates of a theory, that carry out the core business of a theory, to wit, explanation (Nagel, 1979:92).

This lack of conceptual interdependence tends to thwart any pretensions of theory in both Owen's and Doyle's explanations and serve to render the above-mentioned benefits null and void. Indeed, if we were to look critically at the explanations provided, we fail to find any convincing logic by which the concepts advanced are

shown to be both interdependent and necessary, as defined within the terms of the theory. Both Owen and Doyle provide explanations without illustrating how the concepts advanced form an ordered whole. While the explanations advanced may point toward something, they cannot go very far – we do not know how the different concepts interact and because we do not we cannot be sure if the conceptual whole (as both Owen and Doyle claim), or simply one of its parts, is responsible for the empirical phenomenon. To frame it differently, the lack of conceptual interdependence denotes that we cannot be sure which cause should be attributed to the effect of peace between (liberal) democratic states. Because the authors have not illustrated the mutual dependence of their concepts, we cannot logically entertain the notion that the peace-inducing effects ascribed to the whole could conceivably obtain, neither can their frameworks be applied to qualitatively disparate subject matters.

The liberal proponent of democratic peace could retort by saying that such a high level of conceptual interdependence is unnecessary given that Owen and Doyle merely state the conditions needed for (liberal) democratic peace. If the aim of conceptual interdependence, of showing what is related to what else and why, is not one that is deemed worthwhile in our discipline, we must be willing to live with the fact that the explanations we do advance will forever bear a much closer affinity to the category of description than that of explanation. We will then confine ourselves to providing still more variables without understanding which cause is to be assigned to what effect, how our concepts are interrelated, how the conceptual whole serves to explain what we observe.

How does this situation compare with the theoretical structure advanced by Waltz? The conceptual interrelationship of Waltz's structural realist theory, and the extent to which this facilitates explanation, is laudable. Consider, for instance, the defining features of the concept of structure and the high level of interdependence that exists between structure and its constitutive properties. Structure refers to the arrangement or ordering of the units of the system and is defined by (i) the ordering principle of the system (that is, anarchy), (ii) the specification of functions of differentiated units (in essence, the units of the international-political system are like-units and perform similar functions and face similar tasks), and (iii) the distribution of capabilities across

units (Waltz, 1979:81, 88-99). The concepts are intertwined. A change in the ordering principle of the system produces not only a change in system, but would produce a change in the expected behaviour of the units. An international-political world organised according to the logic of anarchy looks fundamentally different, and induces fundamentally different behaviour from its constituent parts, than if some other organising principle would take hold.

Moreover, the functions states fulfil and the ends they seek are similar on account of the organising principle of the system. In hierarchic systems, a formal division of labour takes place: each unit can freely pursue its own interests. Specialisation thus occurs, with mutual relations of dependence developing between different sectors of and interests within society. Thus, as Waltz (1979:104) notes, “the cobbler depends on the tailor for his pants and the tailor on the cobbler for his shoes, and each would be ill-clad without the services of the other”. This kind of specialisation can thus proceed because the realm in which these activities are conducted is formally structured, i.e., the means by which the units must secure their identity and preserve their security are not the concerns of the units themselves (Waltz, 1979:104). Public agencies are organised for that purpose (Waltz, 1979:104). Anarchic realms, as against this, place the premium not on specialisation, but on survival.³⁴ The self-help logic of anarchic systems requires of units to work to lessen their dependence, to take care of themselves in as many ways as are realistically possible. This notion of self-help and the attendant problem of trust within anarchic realms imply that there are definite limits to the international division of labour (Waltz, 1979:105). Each unit is thus constrained to fulfil similar functions and because they are a great deal of emulation (of policies, behaviour and institutions) thus occurs.

While the units of the system face similar tasks and perform similar functions, their ability to achieve these differ widely (Waltz, 1979:96). On account of the fact that the units are functionally similar, distinctions are then drawn between them according to their “capabilities for performing similar tasks” (Waltz, 1979:97). The distribution of capabilities thus extant between the units tells us something about how the units

³⁴ Not all realists, of course, would agree with this. The offensive realist theory of John Mearsheimer holds for instance that the structure of the international system places a premium not necessarily on surviving but hegemony (Mearsheimer, 2001:12). In Mearsheimer’s theoretical conception of great-power politics, power-maximization, not survival, becomes the ultimate concern of these states.

stand in relation to one another. As the distribution of capabilities changes, so does the structure of the system and, once it does, different expectations about behaviour and outcomes emerge (Waltz, 1979:99). Although more can be said about the interdependence of these concepts, the point that emerges is simple: that a change in one concept effects changes in the others. We should also note that the terms employed in the theory are generally of a highly abstract nature. Accordingly, it is because these concepts are shown to be mutually dependent, coupled with their abstract nature, that the scientific ideal of comprehensive and systematic explanations can more readily be achieved. The interdependence and abstractness of the concepts thus advanced effect a greater degree of explanatory merit and, once more, holds the promise that the theory is capable of being applied to qualitatively disparate subject matters.

We have also seen in this chapter that, in the case of the explanation of laws by theories, care should be taken to ensure that the intelligibility of a law be established independent of the meanings attached to it by virtue of it being embedded within, and explained by, a given theory. A law, we have argued, must fulfil two requirements: one, it must have “a life of its own”, i.e., its meaning must be established independent from the theory of which it forms part; and two, it must be based on observational evidence that will allow it to survive in the case of the demise of the theory (Nagel, 1979:86-87). Failure to uphold the distinction between a law and the theory which purports to explain it will result in introducing a “fatal circularity”, i.e., a situation in which there remains nothing for the theory to explain (Nagel, 1979:87). In the case of Owen’s and Doyle’s arguments, as with much of the literature on the causes of democratic peace, we find however that this distinction is brazenly ignored. The specific terms occurring in the perceived law – or, in attenuated form, the empirical generalisation of democratic peace (i.e., the terms ‘democracy’ and ‘liberalism’) – wholly derive their meanings on account of their being embedded in and being explained by the particular theory adopted in service of explaining the law or empirical generalisation. The terms are thus theory-dependent and have little determinable sense outside of it. A fatal circularity is inevitably introduced. In the case of Waltzian structural realism, as against this situation, we find that the basic terms occurring in the law or empirical generalisation of the

continuity of international politics (more precisely, the enduring problem of war) exist outside of or independently from the theory adopted to explain it.

Two scathing critiques against the nature of theory undergirding liberal accounts of democratic peace have thus far been proffered. One more needs to be added. It is generally accepted that, in the case of the explanation by theories of qualitatively different empirical generalisations and laws, its actualisation will be entirely dependent on a theory being formulated in such a way that “no reference is made in it to any set of specialized experimental concepts” (Nagel, 1979:103-104). When failing to uphold this principle, a theory’s range of application is restricted to those situations to which the concepts are said to apply (Nagel, 1979:104). Accordingly, in constructing a theory, and owing to the desirability of fostering theories of great generality, great care is taken in abstracting from the complexity of reality, in eliminating as much as possible from the subject matter (Nitze, 1959:14). Conversely, in *applying* a theory to specialised circumstances, a theory is supplemented by introducing additional assumptions as necessitated by a given occasion (Nagel, 1979:104). Noting this, what do we see when we look at Owen’s and Doyle’s respective explanatory frameworks? In light of this cautionary principle, both scholars’ explanatory frameworks, in particular their rendition of the essential elements of liberalism and/or democracy, is formulated on the basis of, and grounded within, specialised experimental concepts. Moreover, the concepts ‘democracy’ and ‘liberalism’, though abstract in nature, more nearly approximate reality than, say, ‘anarchy’ and ‘structure’ (defined within the parameters of Waltz’s structural realist theory). It is for these reasons that the ideal of fostering theories of great generality cannot be met.

The conclusions reached here will require greater validation and we will seek to achieve this task as the study progresses. For now, however, we are led to believe that, given the poverty of theory (understood within the conception of theory advanced here), Owen’s and Doyle’s explanatory accounts are extremely limiting and have fatal consequences for attempts at explaining the phenomenon of democratic peace. The section has also illustrated in various ways that the conception of theory currently prevalent within our discipline is and remains at its

core anti-Waltzian and, owing to this, that we stand to lose a great deal of the benefits encapsulated in this conception of theory.

2.5 Evaluation

This chapter set out with one overarching aim in mind: the explication of, and the furnishing of a defensible basis for, the logic and structure of scientific theory and its intersection with Waltz's conception of theory. From the arguments advanced in this chapter, we have seen that the Waltzian conception of theory is deeply embedded within a particular conception of theory as evidenced within the philosophy-of-science literature and that the particular fruits of this conception of theory are rather extensive. We have also seen that this conception of theory militates against any notion of conceiving of theories as sets of laws, that there are well-established grounds for distinguishing between laws and theories, and that each fulfil different tasks and serve different ends. The primary business of theories, we have argued, is explanation. Theories, moreover, are distinctively structured and, on account of this feature, they are to be distinguished from other types of explanations and attempts at understanding. Their concepts, and the theories of which they form part, emerge by way of the creative genius of the theoretician. They are thus invented and cannot be said to emerge from our data. The concepts are, moreover, highly abstract, systematic, few in number and thus provide a highly simplified account of reality.

This chapter has also pointed towards the fact that the business of testing theories is a highly complex one. Although we have stated that theories are to be tested by drawing hypotheses from them, we now also know that theories cannot be conclusively confirmed or falsified and that the logic underpinning falsification, irrespective of its widespread disciplinary dominance, is severely flawed. Following Lakatos, we know that the falsificationist argument errs in at least two respects: it assumes that the reality against which we evaluate our theories can be objectively known and that there exists a natural demarcation between theory and fact where none in fact exists. With this in mind, and echoing Waltz's sentiment, we have called for the necessity of subjecting theories to tests that are both qualitatively different and demanding. Subjecting a theory to critical tests is, however, dependent on the successful accomplishment of a prior task: ensuring that a theory is stated with

enough precision and clarity so that the task of testing can meaningfully proceed. It is to this task that the following chapter will turn.

The final section of this chapter set out to probe the prevailing disciplinary understanding of the nature of theory. It appears to be the case that now, as before, scholars of international politics are predisposed to an inductivist and empiricist conception of theory. Theory, as was argued, is in decline. Concurrently, misinterpretation of Waltz on the question of theory appears to be rife. It is against this backdrop, and with due regards to the particular conception of theory advanced here, that the nature of theory undergirding liberal accounts of democratic peace was scrutinised. Accordingly, we have pointed towards the fact that, in respect of the conception of theory advanced here, the explanatory frameworks advanced by Owen and Doyle fall short in crucial respects. Owing to this charge, several well-established benefits accruing from the conception of theory laid bare here cannot follow.

CHAPTER THREE

WALTZING TOWARDS A THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come [sic] they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because you ask not.

The General Epistle of James, Holy Bible (King James Version), Ch. 4:1-2

What is lacking among all these moralists, whether religious or rational, is an understanding of the brutal character of the behavior of all human collectives, and the power of self-interest and collective egoism in all inter-group relations.

Reinhold Niebuhr (Niebuhr, 1960:xxxiv)

It is likewise true [...] that without the imperfections of the separate states there would be no wars, just as it is true that a society of perfectly rational beings, or of perfect Christians, would never know violent conflict. These statements are, unfortunately, as trivial as they are true.

Kenneth N. Waltz (Waltz, 2001:228-229)

3.1 Introduction

There is perhaps a sense in which the age-old saying, i.e. ‘the more things change, the more they stay the same’, is more nearly applicable to the theory and praxis of international politics than to any other area of social inquiry and activity. Recognition of this feat, and its manifestation in the concrete world of everyday experience, is more widespread than one might think. In Christian theology, notably, one finds the writer of the book of *Ecclesiastes*, the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem, exhorting the Israelites that “[t]he thing that hath been, it is *that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun” (Holy Bible, Ch. 1:9; emphasis in original). In much the same vein, the Christian realist scholar of international politics, Reinhold Niebuhr, notes the dual character of every new development and innovation in human knowledge and technique by

highlighting its potential for both good *and* evil (Waltz, 2001:21). It is undoubtedly also *the* theme that John Mearsheimer touched upon in reflecting on the immediate future of Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union – out of the ashes of the old, we are bound to return not to the brazenly new but to more of the remnants of the past (cf. Mearsheimer, 1990). One does not have to look far and few between to find comparable expressions of this tendency within the everyday business of international politics. Continuities³⁵ are rife, more than one might appreciate. We find for instance the persistence of military and economic competition between states, even within those areas in which power politics are considered obsolete. Accordingly, as then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has noted, Russia “must rely on the very latest developments in the art of war. Falling behind means becoming vulnerable” (Putin, 2012; Coetzee, 2013:316). More tellingly perhaps, in respect of US-European military competition and arms transfers, recent arguments have emphasised that US policy objectives ought to be geared towards ensuring that the major arms importers of the world “buy products from the United States rather than China, Russia, *or even Western Europe*” (Caverley & Kapstein, 2013; Coetzee, 2013:316; emphasis added). And Russia’s recent bellicosity in the Crimea also conjures up distant memories of the Crimean War in the 1850s. In fact, arguments abound that point to the fact that we might soon see a return of the Cold War. These are but three examples and we can and should add to them, but it is an endeavour best postponed for subsequent chapters.

What then is possibly useful in pointing to such continuities here, in a chapter dealing with the exposition of Waltz’s theory of international politics? A great deal, one might say. Fact is, whether we confine ourselves to matters theoretical or practical, we cannot seem to escape Waltz’s (1979:18) lamentation that “[n]othing seems to accumulate, not even criticism...[but instead]...the same sorts of summary and superficial criticisms are made over and over again, and the same sorts of errors are repeated”. Thus we find for instance that the current advice given to men of affairs by students of international politics about how to wrench the world from the grips of war and disaster is strikingly similar to that of erstwhile historical epochs, most concretely

³⁵ The very existence of continuities – or regularities – militates of course against the rise of postmodernist thought. It is of course ironic that postmodernists’ rejection of the existence of universality is preconditioned on their making universal claims (cf. Strauss, 2009).

found in the political philosophy of Kant and, perhaps more so, nineteenth century liberal political and economic thought (cf. Chapter 4). More narrowly construed, and with a view towards the aims of this chapter, it is worth noting that Waltz's philosophically rich exposition and his formal and systematic classification of images of international relations (itself a necessary precursor to developing a theory of international politics) in *Man, the State and War* has made little headway in altering the thought-patterns of students of international politics. Today, as before, we tend to think along similar lines as scholars of international politics that have gone before us, with explanation turning mostly on "finding out who is doing what to produce the outcomes" (Waltz, 1979:62). New understandings of international politics, though differing in content, often turn out to be disappointingly similar to the old, especially if one appreciates the continuity in their logic of inquiry.

In juxtaposing *Theory of International Politics* against such explanatory accounts, and in building a case for a non-reductionist theory of international politics, we have noted from Chapter 2 that much of Waltz's conception of theory, and his subsequent formulation of a structural realist theory of international politics, continues to be marred by misinterpretation. We have also surmised from the latter chapter that not only are theories formulated with "painstaking care" and the articulated interrelations between the theoretical notions done with "great precision" (Nagel, 1979:99), but, in testing them, a great deal of attention ought to be paid "in stating theories with enough precision and plausibility to make testing" a worthwhile pursuit (Waltz, 1979:14). It is with these two premises in mind that the central aim of this chapter emerges, to wit, to provide a logically defensible account of Waltz's theory of international politics that will bring justice to the richness of his theoretical construction. The chapter will as a matter of course, and given the already stated charge of the misinterpretation of Waltz's theory of international politics, lean exclusively on Waltz's oeuvre, in particular *Theory of International Politics* and *Man, the State and War*. Perhaps it is pertinent to momentarily pause here and to say a few words about the possible relevance of the latter contribution to the explication of Waltz's theory of international politics. It is the contention of this study that, in the light of any attempt to comprehensively account for Waltz's theory of international politics, there are a great many benefits to be gained from perusing the pages of *Man, the State and War*. Not only does this contribution highlight the fact that then,

as now, we have lost sight of some of the treasures of Western political thought to critically understand the underlying causes of war and peace, but it also provides fertile grounds as precursor to understanding *Theory of International Politics* – and, in some senses at least, it provides fuller illustrations of the arguments developed in the latter contribution. There is accordingly much to be gained in understanding war and peace, as Waltz has steadfastly insisted, by perusing the pages of classical Western political thought (cf. also in this regard, Waltz, 1959).

The chapter consists of three interrelated and cumulative sections. The first section will carry further the distinction drawn in preceding chapters between reductionist and systemic theories of international politics. Although we have already touched on this distinction, much work remains. We would still like to know, for instance, why reductionism provides inadequate grounds for the study of international politics and, as a corollary, what the essential requirements are for developing a systems theory of international politics. This will be followed by an examination of the notion of political structure. Three aspects will receive attention: how structures are generated and maintained, how they work their effects and how they ought to be defined. The final section will lay bare the effects accruing from the structure of the international-political system and, in particular, illustrate the extent to which differently structured international-political systems, defined in terms of the distribution of capabilities across units, produce distinctive structural effects.

3.2 “He is a troublemaker” versus “He makes trouble”: reductionist and systemic theories of international politics

Is man, so to speak, the great architect of his own problems and, of perhaps the most destructive one, war? The opening statements of this chapter, or at the very least the first two, answer in the affirmative and point at once towards the inherently fallen (i.e. sinful, prideful and destructive) nature of man. Men are, in short, lovers of self, full of pride, with their thoughts and actions geared towards satisfying their own lusts. The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, states forthrightly that man’s “feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known” (Holy Bible, *Romans*, Ch. 3:15-17; emphasis in original). At its core, the argument acknowledges that the evilness of man, as

evidenced throughout human history, originates not from learned tendencies but from man's inherently flawed nature. A child, so the argument goes, needs neither to perceive lying, nor to be instructed in its arts, in order to excel at it. This is a position that holds much water among those ascribing to a Christian realist worldview. Augustine, for example, attributes to a great many ills (whether quarrels, robberies, murders or wars) man's intimate love affair with "so many vain and hurtful things" (Augustine, quoted in Waltz, 2001:25). On his part, Niebuhr (1960:xxix) points towards the problem of individual and collective egoism as central causes of human and social strife. This conception of man is of course not restricted to those upholding a Christian realist viewpoint (Waltz, 2001:25). Outside this tradition, and within the confines of the political writings of Hans Morgenthau in particular, we find it stated with equal vigour. The Greek historian of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides, was of the opinion that a fundamental continuity in the behaviour of individuals and nations persists owing to the invariability of human nature (Jaeger, 1945:389). Morgenthau simply states that man is driven by an intimate lust for power (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003:76), while Benedict de Spinoza's political philosophy ventures to say that man's faculties, his ability to reason, is always the servant of his passions (Waltz, 2001:24).

International politics, accordingly, is essentially evil, with bad things occurring due to the inherently corrupt nature of those responsible for making foreign policy (Elman & Jensen, 2013:17). Among those accepting this view of man, certain fundamental differences exist, with the differences turning on the extent to which man can be improved. While accepting the imperfections prevalent in man, some men contend that the imperfections ought not to be viewed with a debilitating pessimism. Instead, through uplifting man, through educating him and securing his psychic-social re-adjustment, man can be bettered (Waltz, 2001:16). The problem is then not that man is irrevocably bad, but that he has lost his way and that through proper methods and techniques – mostly emanating from the behavioural sciences – his behaviour can be altered to more closely serve the cause of peace.

The above represents, in simple terms, the classical statement of Waltz's first image of international relations. To the question, "Is man, so to speak, the great architect of his own problems and, of perhaps the most destructive one, war?", first image

scholars of international relations (pessimists and optimists alike) thus answer in the affirmative.

Contra this position, second image scholars of international relations contend that the fundamental causes of war and peace lie not within man, but within the internal organisation of states (Waltz, 2001:81). Good states produce peace; bad states produce war – this a representative statement of the second image of international relations (Waltz, 2004:3). Stated in more formal academic terms, the structure of the separate states – whether it be economic, social and/or political – thus accounts for the phenomena of war and peace, with certain structural configurations (those deemed to be inherently ‘good’) producing more favourable (viz. peace-prone) outcomes. The inevitable implication of this line of reasoning is that, given the war-producing defects found within certain states, their transformation into ‘good’ states will finally relegate war to the annals of history or, perhaps less rosy, sufficiently reduce its incidence (Waltz, 2001:83). As a classical expression of the second image of international relations, we have already drawn a great deal of attention to the notion of a democratic peace, a theme that will receive much greater elaboration in Chapter 4 of this study. For now, it will suffice to say that for Kant, as for liberals of almost all shades, (liberal) democracy constitutes “pre-eminently the peaceful form of the state” (Waltz, 2001:101). Although the notion of a democratic peace lies beyond the scope of this chapter, it would serve our purposes well to momentarily reflect on socialist thought – and thereby illustrate the train of thought of second image scholars of international relations. Socialists, too, it should be pointed out, had in their minds conclusively identified the fundamental causes of war and peace and, especially among revisionists, had proffered the socialist state as *the* peaceful form of the state. In respect of the latter, Hobson’s theory of imperialism could provide a brief, yet adequate, illustration. The theory and the assumptions undergirding it provide economic, not political, explanations of international politics (Waltz, 1979:20).

From John Hobson’s study of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) in South Africa, he deduced both a general explanation for all modern wars and a prescription for peace (Waltz, 2001:145). His argument holds that the prevalence of unfettered capitalist production at home leads to industrial surpluses and, in searching for better

opportunities for profits abroad, states find themselves engulfed in a competitive struggle for markets. The competition for markets among states leads in turn to their engaging in imperialist ventures (Waltz, 2001:145; 1979:21-22). In short, capitalism yields capital surpluses at home, which inevitably lead to a competitive struggle for markets abroad and, ultimately, war. Through postulating a profit-and-loss statement for imperialism, his construction further stipulates that the capitalist state, owing to the unequal and sparse distribution of wealth among groups, gains very little from imperialist ventures, whereas select financial and industrial groups stand to profit greatly (Waltz, 1979:21; 2001:145). For the capitalist state, then, as for the socialist one, imperialist ventures are irrational ones. The important point to note, however, is that the former state, given the dominance of special economic interests, is ineluctably constrained to follow irrational policies; the latter state, as against this, is inherently predisposed towards rationality (Waltz, 2001:146). Thus, as Hobson (in Waltz, 2001:146) notes:

A completely socialist State which kept good books and presented regular balance-sheets of expenditure and assets would soon discard Imperialism; an intelligent *laissez-faire* democracy which gave duly proportionate weight in its policy to all economic interests alike would do the same. But a State in which certain well-organized business interests are able to outweigh the weak, diffused interests of the community is bound to pursue a policy which accords with the pressure of the former interests.³⁶

Capitalism and war are then two sides of the same coin. In capitalist states, special economic interests express itself in the adoption by governments of warlike policies; socialist states, given its representation of the true economic interests of the body politic, are guarantors of peace. In the latter states, accordingly, rational processes can finally hold sway and the promise of peace justly served (Waltz, 2001:146-147). As an expression of the second image of international relations, the locus of the causes of war and peace, seen in the light of Hobson's theory, is found in its entirety in the internal organisation of the separate states: capitalism produces war; socialism promises peace.

³⁶ The emphasis on reason, as expressed in Hobson's construction, is both interesting and unwarranted. For, as Niebuhr (1960:xxx) warns, those enamoured by the virtues of reason often fail to appreciate that "reason is always, to some degree, the servant of interest in a social situation".

To what end have we provided, though in a cursory manner, an exposition of the first and second images of international relations? Two reasons, primarily. Firstly, to draw attention to the third of our opening statements, to wit, the question and notion of the infinite perfection of individuals and/or states are for the purposes of international politics far less consequential than is usually presumed. As will transpire in subsequent sections, in the absence of an organised power the problem of peace and the difficulty for states behaving always in altruistic terms remain a vexing one (Waltz, 2001:5). To understand why this is the case, it is incumbent upon us to look at the international-political framework (read: structure) in which states conduct their affairs. This, at any rate, is the leitmotif of this chapter. The second reason is to provide a number of useful examples of reductionist theories of international politics with an eye towards more fully discerning the distinctive features of reductionist and systemic theories of international politics. It is to this we now turn.

What, then, is implicated in the notion of a reductionist theory of international politics? More specifically, what are the distinctive qualities of reductionist and systemic theories? From Chapters 1 and 2 we know that both reductionist and systemic theories “deal with events at all levels”, and that the distinction drawn thus turns less on the level each theory deals with, but rather on how each organises their materials (Waltz, 1979:60). With reductionist theories, the locus of causes of international-political outcomes is found at the individual or national level; systems theories, as against this, locate the fundamental causes of international-political outcomes within and across different levels (Waltz, 1979:18). A reductionist theory provides then an account of the behaviour of the parts: the whole is known through an analysis of the properties and interactions of its parts (Waltz, 1979:18, 60). From Hobson’s theory of imperialism we have seen that the internal structural configuration of capitalist states account not only for imperialist wars, but for war in general. Peace, if it were to occur, would require the internal transformation of the structure of national economies. We have seen a highly similar formula in Doyle’s and Owen’s liberally grounded explanations of democratic peace. In these constructions, as in all reductionist approaches, causes are unidirectional in nature and emanate solely from the characteristics and interactions of the behaving units (Waltz, 2004:3; 2008d:77). External outcomes are therefore wholly internally generated (Waltz, 1979:60).

There is undoubtedly a sense in which the logic of reductionism must be a highly appealing one to scholars of international politics (Waltz, 1979:19). States, and the individuals tasked with governing them, are it seems the ones doing the acting, a proposition that appears to be a truism. There is then a short distance between admitting of this fact and assuming that the most basic causes of international-political outcomes are wholly derivative of the behaving units of the system. We shall shortly come to see the folly of this line of reasoning given Waltz's (1979:47) contention, following Rousseau's lead, that "[t]he context of action must always be considered, whether dealing with men or with states, for the context will itself affect attributes and purposes and behavior as well as alter outcomes".

Systems approaches, and the theories that result from them, can best be understood through comparison with analytic (reductionist) approaches. The latter holds, as the example of classical physics illustrate, that we reduce the object of inquiry to its constitutive parts and examine the properties and relations extant between them (Waltz, 1979:39). The parts thus examined, and the relations between them, are then taken as constitutive of the whole. The method is not without merit. It has high value in those situations where the interactions among a multiplicity of factors "can be resolved into relations between pairs of variables while "other things are held equal" and where the assumption can be made that perturbing influences not included in the variables are small" (Waltz, 1979:39). The sufficiency of the analytic method will however be guaranteed only if we can entertain the assumption that systems-level effects are either absent or not sufficiently strong to alter the behaviour of the units. The contrary is then also true. The insufficiency of the analytic method, and the case for the adoption of a systems approach, will gain credibility if outcomes result not only from the specific qualities and interactions of variables, but from their formal organisation (Waltz, 1979:39).

With this in mind, systems theories show how the organisation of a realm affects the attributes, actions and interactions of a system's parts. Within such a context, any attempt at predicting or understanding outcomes cannot usefully proceed by merely knowing the qualities, aims and interactions of the behaving units (Waltz, 1979:39). A systems theory of international politics, properly defined, takes the form of recognising that part of the explanation for the behaviour of units and the outcomes

resulting from their interactions lies within the international-political structure in which they conduct their affairs (Waltz, 1979:39, 73). The theory shows then how the structure of a system produces a similarity in behaviour and outcomes irrespective of changes in the attributes and intentions of the parts. The logic of inquiry, as against reductionist theories, is systemic: causes run in different directions, with political outcomes resulting from both the attributes and interactions of states and variations of the structure in which they conduct their affairs (Waltz, 1997:914; 2004:3).

With the distinction between reductionist and systemic approaches firmly established, it would be meaningful to comment on the nature of systems as well as the formal requirements for the construction of a systems theory of international politics. A system, properly defined, is meant to denote “a set of interacting units” (Waltz, 1979:40). The concept operates at two levels: in the first place, a system “consists of a structure, *and the structure is the systems-level component that makes it possible to think of the units as forming a set as distinct from a mere collection*” and, in the second place, a system is constitutive of interacting units (Waltz, 1979:40; emphasis added). In order to usefully illustrate the operation and interaction of the two levels, and with the view towards gauging their effect(s) on each another, delimitation of the different levels is essential. A systems theory, properly constructed, must then show the distinctive qualities of the systems-level component (or structure) vis-à-vis the level of interacting units. In doing this, care must be taken to omit from the definition of structure the attributes and the relations of units. The failure to do so would lead to an inability to draw a distinction between structural changes and changes that occur within them and, more generally, would render any attempt at providing a systems-level explanation null and void (Waltz, 1979:40, 57).

Although we have thus far said a great deal about reductionist and systemic approaches, we have not yet established why, for the purposes of studying international politics, the former tends to be inadequate. Alternatively phrased: within the field of international politics, why is a systems approach needed? Before we set out to answer this question, it is necessary to state what is meant with ‘inadequate’. In saying that reductionist approaches to the study of international politics are inadequate, one is not saying that the causal forces identified within such constructions are irrelevant, that they can and ought to be easily done away with.

Instead, and by way of returning to Waltz's images of international relations, we can freely admit that a realistic understanding of international politics requires engagement with the forces at *all* three levels. Thus, as Waltz (2001:225) notes, "no single image is ever adequate". Inadequacy, in this context at least, more nearly attaches to the notion of incompleteness. This becomes evident if we consider the interrelations between the different images:

The third image describes the framework of world politics, but without the first and second images there can be no knowledge of the forces that determine policy; the first and second images describe the forces in world politics, but without the third image it is impossible to assess their importance or predict their results (Waltz, 2001:238).

Incompleteness, not irrelevance, is then what is at stake here. But what accounts for reductionist approaches being labelled incomplete? We are led to expect that the prevalence of a similarity of outcomes across time and space, irrespective of changes in the agents producing them, renders reductionist theories defective (Waltz, 1979:39). To illustrate more fully why this should be the case, why reductionism provides an insufficient basis for understanding international politics, we can usefully reflect on some of the shortcomings inherent in the first and second images of international relations.

To the bleak conception of human nature discerned in Augustine, Spinoza, Niebuhr and other first image pessimists, Rousseau and, by implication, Waltz respond that, while *perhaps* an accurate depiction of man, it is far less consequential for understanding the interactions between states. Admitting the latter does of course not detract from the fact that man has been, and will continue to be, deeply implicated in the events of world history (Waltz, 2001:27). The causal import of human nature in understanding social events is however significantly reduced by "the fact that the same nature", whether good or bad, "has to explain an infinite variety of social events" (Waltz, 2001:27, 29). It is not overly difficult to 'prove' that man is bad: evidence of his viciousness, of his deep-seated love affair with crime, war and rape are not hard to come by. Yet, and by way of counter-evidence, we have also come to know some men as selfless, altruistic, loving, caring and as

bearers of many other virtuous qualities. In cases such as these, providing evidence and counter-evidence do little to prove or disprove the validity of the first image: our acceptance or rejection thereof hinges instead on the theory we hold (Waltz, 2001:27-28). The problem is then, as Waltz (2001:28) notes in drawing on Durkheim, that “the psychological factor is too general to predetermine the course of social phenomena. Since it does not call for one social form rather than another, it cannot explain any of them”.

Causal analysis is first and foremost an attempt to account for a wide variety of events (Waltz, 2001:29). In the history of international politics, as in human relations in general, we have witnessed both war and peace. While human nature stands central to both conditions, it cannot in and of itself explain both war *and* peace, except by way of imparting unto man a dual nature in which he is sometimes led to wage war and at other times to make peace. This in turn, leads us to ask what factors account for the fact that he sometimes wishes to fight while at other times remain at peace (Waltz, 2001:29). The assumption that human nature is *the* central cause of war, coupled with first image pessimists’ conception of human nature as fixed, makes any notion of peace a logical impossibility. By arguing however that human nature is but one of several causes of war, even while still granting the assumption that there exists a fixed quality to human nature, makes the search for the conditions of peace a more realistic one (Waltz, 2001:30). Ultimately, then, the diversity of events to be explained by human nature renders it wholly insufficient to be the single determinant of war and peace (Waltz, 2001:81).

If the first image of international relations falls short in crucial respects, what of the second? Are we not led to believe that within a society of perfect states, as within a society of, say, true Christians, war would be an outright impossibility? Thus Augustine, in affirmation of the above, notes that “with the good, good men, or at least perfectly good men, cannot war” (in Waltz, 2001:23). The statement is of course true, yet also, as has been pointed out, trivial. Perhaps one more citation can be provided here that will serve to illumine the problematic nature of the line of reasoning that has been followed in second image analyses of international politics: “To expect states of any sort to rest reliably at peace in a condition of anarchy would require *the uniform and enduring perfection of all of them*” (Waltz, 2001:x; emphasis

added). The citation, though somewhat limited in words, is unbelievably rich in content. At least two aspects vie for our attention. One, the notion of the enduring perfection of states is a highly problematic one (cf. Waltz, 2001:83). The gist of the problem is this: how do we define, and agree upon, the nature of the 'good' state? We shall do well to remember that, in their formulations of the good state, liberals and socialists gave markedly different answers. The terms implied in the definition of the 'good' state, if seen within the context of international politics, are it seems just as much a product of the situation and capabilities of states as of internal ideological disposition. With the behaviour of states unregulated, notions of justice, fairness and, yes, even the 'good' state, cannot be objectively defined and within such a world the strong are likely to define these terms in accordance with their own conceptions thereof (Coetzee, 2013:315). This is but one side of the problem. The other side is this: how good (i.e. morally perfect) must the 'good' state be in order for peace between states to become a realistic proposition?

The question is a rather important one, for in Kant's conception of democratic peace, notably, the proper external behaviour of states was wholly dependent on their reaching a sufficient level of internal perfection (Waltz, 2008a:12). One need only note here that those states generally deemed as the quintessential paragons of liberal ideology, most notably the US, have fallen markedly short of Kant's desideratum of internal perfection. In this regard, William Blum (2006) has in various ways shown the absence of morality on the part of past US administrations, citing examples of horrific experiments conducted on the American public without their knowledge. More trenchantly, John Perkins (2004), a self-proclaimed economic hit-man, has shown in a great many ways how the US government, in collusion with major corporations and banks, has endeavoured to create, manipulate and sustain an economic system geared towards promoting US commercial interests (Perkins, 2004:xi). Such endeavours, given the extent of the collusive and manipulative practices engaged in by past US administrations, hardly speaks to the (liberal) democratic character of the US. Consequently, if the quintessential 'good' state is still not good enough, we are led to question the validity of any prescription for peace based exclusively on the second image of international relations.

Two, even in agreeing upon the definition of the 'good' state, states are still faced with the vexing problem of figuring out how to get to this ideal – i.e., figuring out both how to get *all* the states there and how to get them there *all at once*. The gist of the problem can be illustrated by referring to the statement made above: that in a society of true Christians, war cannot occur. In considering this statement, Rousseau notes that “a people of true Christians would form the most perfect society imaginable” (in Waltz, 2001:169). The statement, if transposed to the world of international politics, is comparable to saying that within an international society of truly (liberal) democratic states war cannot obtain. Rousseau, however, merely states the proposition to point towards the impossibility of actualising it. Thus he notes not only that such a society would not be one of men, but, more importantly, he notes that within such a society peace and harmony would be entirely dependent on “*all* the citizens *without exception*” being “equally good Christians; if by ill hap there should be a single self-seeker or hypocrite...he would certainly get the better of his pious compatriots” (in Waltz, 2001:169; emphasis in original). Unless everyone acts in morally decent ways or, following the above illustration, unless every Christian acts, with reference to the notions of peace and harmony, always in accordance with the true dictates and spirit of Christianity, one can scarcely be expected to do so. Each individual and/or state is of course free to buck the trend, to act in ways deemed morally decent. Consequences follow however from selecting certain kinds of behaviour as against others: some behaviours are rewarded; others are punished (Waltz, 1979:92). This means nothing more than to say that those individuals and/or states whose behaviour “conform[s] to accepted and successful practices” are more likely to survive and prosper (Waltz, 1979:92).

The statement points us towards the necessity of considering the environment in which individuals and states conduct their affairs, and especially whether the environment of the latter is conducive to the types of behaviour generally implicated in notions of democratic peace. In international politics, however, the game to be won, as Waltz (1979:92) reminds us, “is defined by the structure that determines the kind of player who is likely to prosper”. In situations marked by unregulated competition, as is the case in international affairs, trust is scarce and one has to rely on one's own devices and means to sustain and protect oneself (Waltz, 2001:xi, 168). Ignoring this fact ignores a great deal of the politics conducted in a realm in

which the units are expected to take care of themselves. The problem for Rousseau, and subsequently for Waltz, thus turns on the fact that, for men as for states in a state of nature, one “cannot begin to behave decently unless he has some assurance that others will not be able to ruin him” (Waltz, 2001:6-7).³⁷ Unless, therefore, all the states of the world can be supernaturally and at once transformed into the ideal type, however defined, international politics would remain on the old footing – and the old footing is one in which interest more often than not prevails over ideology. The mere existence of a few states acting in morally unacceptable ways would lead others to follow suit, to maintain the devices and means necessary to sustain and take care of themselves. Why in international politics such behaviour is deemed necessary at all will become clearer as the chapter unfolds.

The criticisms levelled against the first and second images of international relations are rather scathing and neatly illustrate the inadequacy of reductionist theories of international politics. It would be useful to offer a few general points of critique applicable to both the first and second images of international relations to drive the point home. Perhaps the most scathing critique against reductionist theories of international politics is that all states, irrespective of variation in economic institution, social custom and political ideology, have engaged in war (Waltz, 1979:67). We have seen at the international level that differently structured states “have produced similar as well as different outcomes” and similarly structured states “have produced different as well as similar outcomes” (Waltz, 1979:37). The postulated causes of war have varied greatly; the supposed effects less so – a proposition that leads us to conclude that the causes postulated by students of international politics have not been correctly or completely specified (Waltz, 1979:67-68).

Moreover, the similarity of outcomes, irrespective of variance in the postulated causes, thus points towards the existence of constraints “operating on the independent variables in ways that affect outcomes” (Waltz, 1979:68). Something, as Waltz (1979:39) has noted, acts as a constraint on, or is interposed between, those responsible for the acting and the outcomes accruing from their particular actions (Waltz, 1979:39). In cases such as these, in cases where the organisation of a realm

³⁷ We will, in Chapter 5 of this study, consider the extent to which nuclear weapons serve to mitigate such concerns.

affects the attributes, behaviour and interactions of units, explanation at the level of the units will yield “an infinite proliferation of variables”, given the insufficiency of unit-level variables to exhaustively capture the observed result (Waltz, 1979:65). We need only mention here that, in the explanatory constructions of scholars labouring in defence of the notion of a democratic peace, the proliferation of variables has been bewildering. Sebastian Rosato (2003:587) for instance, has identified five differing variants underpinning the institutional argument of democratic peace, with the normative argument equally troubled by a multiplicity of causal mechanisms. The failure to comprehensively account for the outcomes observed, thus leads to a bewildering proliferation of variables at the unit-level. In this respect, as in others, the case for the adoption of a systems theory of international politics becomes all the more appealing.

By way of conclusion, and to bring our critique of reductionist theories full-circle, the heading of this section pointed towards a possible difference in content between two statements: “He is a troublemaker” and “He makes trouble”. In situations marked by the absence of systemic forces, the latter statement follows logically from, and predictions can be based on the attributes of, the former (Waltz, 1979:60-61). This is pre-eminently the logic of reductionist theories. In Hobson’s construction, this meant that capitalist states inevitably produce imperialist policies. Yet we know that all manner and forms of state (be they republics, divine-right monarchies or modern democracies) as well as all forms of economic organisation (ranging from pastoral to socialist), have engaged in imperialist ventures (Waltz, 1979:26). Hobson thus failed to see that where outcomes are not uniquely determined by the attributes, actions and interactions of units, but also by their situations, predicting outcomes based exclusively on the former is bound to fail (Waltz, 1979:60-61). The presence of systemic forces thus leads us to deduce that “He makes trouble” does not logically follow from “He is a troublemaker”. Peace-prone states are at times warlike; warlike states are at times peace-prone. To more nearly understand why this should be the case, we can turn to the notion of structure as a constraining and disposing force in social behaviour.

3.3 The nature of (political) structure and the structure of international politics

Although we have made a case for the causal import of the framework (structure) in which states conduct their affairs, we have yet to specify how structures or, more narrowly, the structure of the international-political system, work their effects and, with reference to the latter system, what these effects are. The latter concern is one for subsequent sections; the former, one to which we now direct our attention. To be successful, a systems theory of international politics has to illustrate how international politics can be thought of as an autonomous (distinct) realm of inquiry, marked off from any other international system (economic or otherwise) said to exist (Waltz, 1979:79). In achieving this, in demarcating international politics as a domain to be studied in its own right, a systems theory of international politics becomes possible. This is moreover where the notion of structure becomes especially helpful. From what we have said before, a system is a two-level concept, consisting of both a structure and interacting units, and, in defining the former, we have argued that care should be taken to leave aside, or abstract from, the attributes, behaviour and interactions of the units (Waltz, 1979:79). With these prerequisites established, we can usefully turn our attention to the notion of structure and, in particular, the characteristics of political structures.

3.3.1 On the notion of structure and the structure of the international-political system

In 1979, Waltz noted that the term 'structure' had become a social science favourite (Waltz, 1979:73). In doing so, he argued, the term had become all-inclusive, thus rendering it so vague that it had lost any distinct meaning (Waltz, 1979:73). Today, as before, the term remains in vogue, within the social sciences generally and the study of international politics more specifically. What the term means and how the effects it generates are brought about are however not often and precisely stated. With this in mind, what is meant with 'structure', i.e., what distinctive meaning attaches to the term? The term 'structure' is a system-wide concept through which it becomes possible to think of a system as a whole. This however does not bring us any closer to answering our question. Accordingly, the term 'structure', properly conceived, is meant to imply "a set of constraining conditions" (Waltz, 1979:73).

Conceived in this manner, a structure serves to act as a selector, thus rewarding, punishing, limiting or moulding the behaviour of the units operating within its field of force and, in doing so, it tends to yield a common quality of outcomes irrespective of differences in the efforts and aims of those producing them (Waltz, 1979:73-74). As should be self-evident, however, structures do not act; behaving units, as against this, do. The effects of structures are then necessarily indirect, with the behaviour of the units within a system affected by its structure (Waltz, 1979:74). But how are these effects brought about? In two ways, principally: through processes of socialisation of and competition among the units (Waltz, 1979:74).

Let us first consider the process of socialisation. At the most basic level, namely that of a pair of individuals, firms or states, the situation is this: *A* exerts an influence on *B*. The latter, changed owing to the influence exerted by the former, influences *A*. This implies, as Mary Parker Follett points out, that “*A*’s own activity enters into the stimulus which is causing his activity” (in Waltz, 1979:74). Consequences thus become causes. The attributes and behaviour of both parties are then affected by the other (Waltz, 1979:74-75). There is however more to this. As Waltz (1979:74) notes, “[e]ach is not just influencing the other; both are being influenced by the situation their interaction creates”. Through their interaction, they generate and become part of a system, which limits and moulds their behaviour. In organisations and societies, the effects of socialisation are still larger and more permanent. At any rate, whether as members of a group, a crowd, and an organisation or, in still larger terms, a society, processes of socialisation occur. Such processes limit and mould behaviour. They punish certain types of behaviour, while rewarding others, and in doing so, members are brought into conformity with the established norms of the larger group (Waltz, 1979:75-76). Similar processes occur in international politics.

Through limiting and moulding, and punishing and rewarding, patterns of behaviour emerge that tend to lead towards a similarity of outcomes. This is but one way in which structures work their effects. The second way, namely that of competition, also encourages similarities in the behaviour and attributes of the units (Waltz, 1979:76). Among the units of a system, and within loosely organised or segmented systems in particular, the result of competitive behaviour is the generation of a specific order. Within such an order, each unit decides for itself how and by what means it wishes to

adjust its relations (Waltz, 1979:76). Insofar however as structures act as selectors, i.e., they constrain and dispose, punish and reward, we can come to expect certain outcomes irrespective of whether or not we know the intentions of the units or whether or not the units understand the constraints imposed on them by the structure of which they form part (Waltz, 1979:76). The units of competitive systems, in devising their strategies, thus select behaviours in accordance with their consequences (Waltz, 1979:76). And, in selecting them, they gaze their eyes towards the practices and modes of behaviour of the more successful competitors and, in finding these, seek to emulate them. Adapt or die – or, alternatively phrased, emulate or fall by the wayside – is the fundamental logic found within competitive systems. Competitive systems thus demand of their units to adjust their relations to those of the more successful ones and, in doing so, a marked reduction in the variety of behaviours and outcomes occur (Waltz, 1979:77). Both socialisation and competition serve then to bring outcomes within definable ranges.

3.3.2 Defining (international-political) structure

We now have some sense of what is meant by the concept ‘structure’ as well as how it generates its effects. We have not yet established however how the structure of a system is to be defined. A structure, Waltz (1979:80, 81) notes, is defined by and tells us something about how the units of a system is ordered or arranged. It tells us something about the relations (or positions) the units occupy vis-à-vis each other (Waltz, 1979:80). In asking how structures are to be defined, the first and most basic point of departure is to examine the principle by which the constitutive units are arranged. In domestic politics, hierarchical configurations predominate, with the arrangements among the parts typified by relations of super- and subordination. The second part of the definition turns on the character of the units, more specifically on specifying the functions to be fulfilled by formally differentiated parts. Within, for instance, the American presidential system on the one hand and the British parliamentary system on the other, distinct roles and functions are discernible³⁸ and, owing to this, different behaviours and outcomes are produced. And, in the final

³⁸ Think, for instance, about how in the British system the legislative and executive offices are fused; in the American system, as against this, the offices are not only separated but they also stand in opposition to one another (Waltz, 1979:82).

instance, a structure is defined by the distribution of capabilities across its units – in essence, units come to occupy different positions vis-à-vis one another through changes in relative capability. Thus, by gaining or losing certain capabilities, the relation between Parliament and Prime Minister and that of Congress and the President may vary (Waltz, 1979:81-82).

What do we see if we transpose this definition of structure to the international-political system? Against the backdrop of the threefold definition of structure laid bare above, we note that the basic units of the international-political system (i.e. states) (i) conduct their affairs within a condition of anarchy; (ii) are functionally undifferentiated (i.e. all states face similar tasks and encompass similar functions); and (iii) are differentiated on the basis of the distribution of capabilities across them (Waltz, 1979:88-99). This requires some elaboration. Let us begin by considering the ordering principle of the system. Domestic politics is pre-eminently the realm of centralisation and hierarchy; international politics, as against this, that of decentralisation and anarchy (Waltz, 1979:88). What is suggested by these terms? In the former, the arrangement among the parts is typified by relations of super- and subordination: entitlement or authority to command is vested in some, while others are required to follow. In the latter, the arrangement among the parts is marked by relations of coordination: while each is formally the equal of the others, no agent or agency is entitled to command and none is required to follow. As should be evident, the two structures are organised on the basis of qualitatively different, even contradictory, ordering principles (Waltz, 1979:88). Domestic political structures, moreover, are characterised by the presence of formally organised governmental institutions and offices; in international politics, no such institutions or agencies, endowed with system-wide authority, exist and in their absence the development of formal relations of super- and subordination cannot proceed (Waltz, 1979:88).

We are however faced here with what appears to be a fundamental problem. From the definition of structure laid bare above, we now know that the most basic term by which a system is ordered is that of its ordering principle: it tells us something about how a realm is ordered. This implies that the concept 'structure' is primarily an organisational concept. Yet, as we have also stated, international politics is marked by the absence of formal organisation. We are then called to resolve this problem: to

explain how an order can be said to exist without an orderer and how organisational effects can accrue where no formal organisation is present (Waltz, 1979:89). The puzzle can be solved, Waltz (1979:89-93) argues, through analogy with microeconomic theory and, in particular, classical economic theory. Microeconomic theory holds that through the self-interested acts and interactions of individual units, notably individuals and firms, an order is spontaneously generated. The theory is premised on the interaction between two central concepts, that of the economic units and the market. As was argued in Chapter 2 of this study, all theories have built-in assumptions. Microeconomic theory assumes that the acting unit (or 'economic man') is geared towards profit-maximization. This is the first concept invented by microeconomic theorists. The second one is that of the market, the invention of which generates two further questions: how are markets formed and how do they work their effects? We have, in the first part of this section, given sufficient attention to the second question, to wit, an examination of the ways in which structures work their effects, i.e. through processes of socialisation and competition. The first one, however, requires our attention. Given that this is a fundamental point, it is worth citing Waltz (1979:89-90) at length on this:

The market of a decentralized economy is individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended. The market arises out of the activities of separate units – persons and firms – whose aims and efforts are directed not toward creating an order but rather toward fulfilling their own internally defined interests by whatever means they can muster. The individual unit acts for itself. From the coaction of like units emerges a structure that affects and constrains all of them. Once formed, a market becomes a force in itself, and a force that the constitutive units acting singly or in small numbers cannot control. Instead, in lesser or greater degree as market conditions vary, the creators become the creatures of the market that their activity gave rise to.

This neatly tells us something about the origin of markets and, by implication, the formation of structures. How is this analogy helpful in our quest to conceive of an order where no orderer is apparent? Similar to economic markets, international-political systems emerge from the coaction of units seeking to fulfil their own internally defined interests. In defining international structures, our attention is

directed towards the pre-eminent political units operating in a given age, whether the units are city-states, empires or states. The co-existence of states leads to the emergence of structures. States do not willingly subject themselves to the creation of and participation in a structure that would limit and mould their behaviour in decisive ways. As with economic markets, international-political systems are “individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended” (Waltz, 1979:91).³⁹ In both systems, the coaction of the units leads to the formation of structures. What happens to these units, i.e. whether they live, prosper or die, is entirely dependent on their own self-generated means and devices. Accordingly, the formation and maintenance of both economic markets and international-political systems are dependent “on a principle of self-help that applies to the units” (Waltz, 1979:91). In structural realist theory, as in microeconomic theory, the motor of the units’ behaviour is assumed not realistically described. States, as Waltz (1979:91) assumes, “seek to ensure their survival”. Structures result then from the co-action of units existing in a self-help arena, with the attendant assumption that the units wish to survive.

Prudence dictates that we briefly touch on the third component of the structure of the international-political system set forth above, namely that of the distribution of capabilities across units. From this definition we have surmised that the basic units of the international-political system are functionally undifferentiated, i.e., all states face similar tasks and encompass similar functions. The states are, in essence, like units (Waltz, 1979:95). Owing to this, distinctions among them are then drawn by gauging their different capabilities in performing similar tasks (Waltz, 1979:79). There is nothing inherently problematic about this. The problem, however, turns on the very notion of ‘capability’, which seems to constitute a unit-level variable – and, if this is the case, a clear violation of Waltz’s admonition against including unit-level variables in the definition of structure.

Students of international politics have noted this. Alexander Wendt (1987:341), for example, has argued that the distribution of capabilities is in essence reducible to the properties of the units (states) comprising the international-political system and, accordingly, Waltz’s emphasis on the need to transcend unit-level variables fails on

³⁹ As John Mearsheimer (2001:3) explains, the situation that emerges is one “which no one consciously designed or intended”.

his own terms. This statement is however predicated on an erroneous reading of Waltz's conception of structure and the proper place of the distribution of capabilities within his conception of a structural theory of international politics (cf. Wight, 2006:95 on this). Waltz's (1979:98) argument is at any rate convincing: "Although capabilities are attributes of units, the distribution of capabilities across units is not. The distribution of capabilities is not a unit attribute, but rather a system-wide concept". Accordingly, all states are situated within, and stand in relation to, an anarchically ordered international system necessitating that attention be paid to the relations of difference confronting all of them. Alternatively phrased, each state is thus situated in relation to all other states, with the capabilities of each state (a unit-level property) only ascertainable on the grounds of its relational character vis-à-vis all other states, and this constitutes a property of the structure of the system.⁴⁰ The distribution of capabilities is therefore a structurally determined relational measure (Wight, 2006:95), providing a positional picture of how each state is situated (on the grounds of its capabilities) in relation to all the others. And, following Waltz (1979:80), the arrangement of the parts within a given system constitutes a property of the structure of the system.

The arguments raised here provide us with basic yet essential information concerning the structure of the international-political system. What have we learned? We now know how structures are generated and maintained, how they are to be defined and how they work their effects. With this in mind, we can usefully turn our attention to the next section.

3.4 The structure of the international-political system: beyond definition and towards effects

What distinctive effects follow from the structure of the international-political system? The short, but unfortunately not very helpful, answer is this: a great many. To more nearly capture the distinctive effects of the international-political system, our attention will fall on two interrelated aspects: one, to probe the characteristics of anarchy and the effects accruing from anarchic realms and, two, to illustrate the

⁴⁰ As the historian Paul Kennedy notes, "so far as the international system is concerned, both wealth and power are always *relative* and should be seen as such" (Kennedy, 1989:xxii).

ways in which differently structured international-political systems, defined in terms of the distribution of capabilities across units, yield distinctive structural effects.

3.4.1 The nature of the beast: anarchic realms and international politics

Although we already have some sense of what is implied by the notion of anarchy, much labour remains. In examining the characteristics and effects of anarchy, it is perhaps best to draw some comparisons between domestic (hierarchically structured) and anarchic realms. Two points will be advanced in this fashion, with a number of others raised by way of examining the nature of anarchic systems in and of themselves. We can begin our discussion by probing the extent to which the occurrence of violence provides an adequate criterion for distinguishing between national and international politics. What is to be understood with the notion of an anarchic realm? Anarchy, though designating a state of war, does not imply an international system marked by constant war. As Hobbes (in Nye, 2003:5) notes: "Just as stormy weather does not mean perpetual rain, so a state of war does not mean constant war". With each state deciding for itself how best to pursue its policies, and with the instrument of force readily at the disposal of each, the possibility of war remains however always in the background. In the state of nature, whether among individuals or states, strong ties exist between the absence of government (or anarchy) and the occurrence of violence. The threat and occurrence of violence does not however provide an adequate criterion for distinguishing between internal and external affairs. In both domains, violence occurs and, in some cases, the violence of internal affairs is more rampant than that which occurs outside of it (Waltz, 1979:102-103). A cursory examination of, for instance, African history provides ample evidence of this fact. If not violence, what criterion informs then the distinction to be drawn between national and international politics? The difference, Waltz (1979:103) notes, lies within their distinctive structures, i.e., in the distinctive modes of organisation of the different realms in doing something about the use of force. In domestic politics, formally organised agents and agencies exist by which the private use of force is prevented and countered. Given the existence of public agencies, the realm is in essence one in which the constitutive parts are not expected to take preparatory steps to defend themselves. The principle of self-help is not part and parcel of national systems. The international system, as against this,

is pre-eminently a realm of self-help – in short, the structure of the international-political system is such that its basic units are expected to take care of themselves (Waltz, 1979:104).

The second key difference to be drawn between the hierarchy of domestic politics and the anarchy of the international-political system turns on the distinctive qualities of the notion of interdependence within the two realms. Because of their distinctive structures, the concept ‘interdependence’ takes on distinctive forms within domestic and international politics. As against international politics, interdependence within domestic political systems is more aptly described as integration (Waltz, 1979:104). We shall shortly see why this is the case. Although in a somewhat different context, we have at any rate already touched on some of these aspects (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.4). In hierarchic systems, a formal division of labour takes place: each unit can freely pursue its own interests. Specialisation thus occurs, with mutual relations of dependence developing between different sectors of and interests within society. Thus, as Waltz (1979:104) notes (cf. Chapter 2, Section, 2.4, p. 59), “the cobbler depends on the tailor for his pants and the tailor on the cobbler for his shoes, and each would be ill-clad without the services of the other”. This kind of specialisation can thus proceed because the realm in which these activities are conducted is formally structured, i.e., the means by which the units must secure their identity and preserve their security are not the concerns of the units themselves. Public agencies are organised for that purpose (Waltz, 1979:104). Furthermore, within the two realms, the ways in which ends are defined and means developed for reaching them are markedly different. In anarchic realms, the functional similarity of units tends to remain more or less constant and units strive for greater measures of independence; in hierarchic realms, functionally distinct units seek to attain ever greater measures of specialisation and, in doing so, they become more integrated. A high level of dependence thus comes to exist between the units to the point that the parts of a polity become bound together by their differences (Waltz, 1979:104). They become, in essence, highly integrated.

While the units of the international-political system are functionally similar, vast differences in capability exist among them – and from these differences, an international division of labour does emerge (Waltz, 1979:105). Compared with the

domestic realm, however, the international division of labour is rather slight. Integration produces centripetal tendencies among the parts; interdependence among nations, as against this, centrifugal ones. Why is this the case, i.e., why is the integration of nations conceived to be a far-fetched notion? The answer lies within the structure of the international-political system, which serves to limit the cooperation of states in significant ways. Within anarchic realms, a premium is placed not on specialisation, but on survival. In domestic politics, specialisation brings gains for everyone, though for some more than others. Two distinct and contradictory imperatives are at work here: in domestic politics, the imperative is 'specialise'; in international politics, 'take care of yourself' (Waltz, 1979:107). In the latter system, self-help is the principle of action and units must rely on self-generated means and on their own arrangements to fulfil their ends and maintain their security (Waltz, 1979:111; 2001:188). In extending the division of labour to the international realm and in seeking to cooperate with mutual gain in mind, states feeling insecure must consider the possible division of the gains obtained. Accordingly, they have to concern themselves more with relative than with absolute gains.⁴¹ The impediments to cooperation do not necessarily derive from the character or immediate intentions of either of the parties involved. They are to be found, as Waltz (1979:105) notes, in the "condition of insecurity – at the least, the uncertainty of each about the other's future intentions and actions".⁴² Further, the self-help logic of anarchic systems requires of units to work to lessen their dependence, to take care of themselves in as many ways as are realistically possible. This notion of self-help and the attendant problem of trust within anarchic realms imply that there are definite limits to the international division of labour (Waltz, 1979:105-106). Each unit is thus constrained

⁴¹ This does not imply that relative gains are the only thing that matters. As Jervis (2003:285) correctly points out, the (neoliberal) assertion that relative gains are the only thing that matter for realists is a false one: "to assert this would be to declare international politics a zero-sum game – and many realists have been sensitive to possibilities of mutual security". With the advent of nuclear weaponry (cf. Chapter 5), the possibility of mutual security greatly increased.

⁴² The difficulty of cooperating under anarchy is, interestingly enough, appreciated by some liberal scholars. Charles Lipson, notably, has noted that when a "special peril of defection" exists, i.e. the ever-real possibility of sudden and devastating attacks, "there is little hope for stable, extensive cooperation" (cited in Rosato, 2014:49). In general, however, critics of structural realism are highly optimistic about the prospect of great powers being able to accurately discern one another's intentions (Rosato, 2014:50).

to fulfil similar functions and because they are a great deal of emulation (of policies, behaviour and institutions) occurs (Waltz, 1979:107).⁴³

With these two points established, we can turn our attention to a third. From what has been said in previous sections, and with an eye towards outlining the third distinctive feature of anarchy, we now know two things: one, a fundamental disjuncture exists between, on the one hand, the attributes, intentions and interactions of actors and, on the other hand, international-political outcomes; and two, we know something about how structures work their effects. With this in mind, we are faced with the question of whether states and statesmen, by understanding the ways in which structures work their effects, cannot then appropriately adjust their strategies to more nearly achieve their original ends? The answer, Waltz (1979:107) holds, is that they often cannot. The logical response, one would imagine, is then this: why not? We have, to some degree at least, already laid the groundwork for answering this question (cf. Section 3.2 above). Answering this question is however fundamentally important, especially since so much of the rhetoric of international politics seems to turn on the notion that a change in the thought-patterns of one or a few states would radically transform the effects accruing from the structure of the international-political system. The examples provided by Waltz (1979:107-108) nicely illustrate however why this is more difficult than is often appreciated:

If shortage of a commodity is expected, all are collectively better off if they buy less of it in order to moderate price increases and to distribute shortages equitably. But because some will be better off if they lay in extra supplies quickly, all have a strong incentive to do so. If one expects others to make a run on a bank, one's prudent course is to run faster than they do while knowing that if a few others run, the bank will remain solvent, and if many run, it will fail. In such cases, pursuit of individual interest produces collective results that nobody

⁴³ One should add, however, that while the structure of the international-political system limits cooperation in decisive ways, it should also be evident that cooperation is not impossible. Thus, states do not find it impossible to cooperate, to make agreements and to establish organisations – the *extent* of such cooperative endeavours are however conditioned by the anarchic structure in which the units conduct their affairs (Waltz, 1979:115-116). For illustrations of the difficulties and limitations of cooperation under anarchy, see Chapter 5.

wants, yet individuals by behaving differently will hurt themselves without altering outcomes.⁴⁴

In cases such as these, as in international politics generally, the individual units are victims of what Alfred E. Kahn has described as the “tyranny of small decisions” (in Waltz, 1979:108). The crux of the argument is this: “[s]ome courses of action I cannot sensibly follow unless you do too, and you and I cannot sensibly follow them unless we are pretty sure that many others will as well” (Waltz, 1979:108). We shall do well to remember here Augustine’s proposition that a society of true Christians would be one of perfect harmony and peace only if *all* its members acted in accordance with the dictates and spirit of Christianity. In Rousseau’s mind, this thought is expressed in the proposition that “to be sane in a world of madmen is in itself a kind of madness” (in Waltz, 2001:181). In competitive and self-help realms, changes in the behaviour of some of the units will scarcely alter outcomes unless the changes are system-wide or, failing that, the structure of their field of activity is changed (Waltz, 1979:108). In searching for remedies for strong structural effects, the cure is unfortunately to be found only in structural changes (Waltz, 1979:109). Where trust is scarce and competition is plenty, and in situations predominated by the logic of self-help, each state plots its own course and devises its own strategies in accordance with *its* perception of needs and interests (Waltz, 1979:109, 113). In such situations, the possibility of the use of force by one or more of the units remains always a realistic one (Waltz, 1979:113).

The arguments laid bare above can with some justification be neatly summarised by the two imperatives operating within domestic and international politics respectively: in the former, “specialize” and, in the latter, “take care of yourself” (Waltz, 1979:107). In concluding this section, it will be useful to reflect on the idea of balance of power and, accordingly, by way of a further refinement of Waltz’s structural realist theory, balance-of-power theory. Structural realist theory, and balance-of-power theory in particular, leads us to expect that unbalanced power, irrespective of its current beneficiary, will one day be brought into balance (Coetzee, 2013:300). A balance, “once disrupted, will be restored in one way or another” (Waltz, 1979:128). Balance-

⁴⁴ For more detailed illustrations of the logic of such cases, cf. Waltz (2001:187-223). We will, however, provide more illustrations in Chapter 4 of this study.

of-power theory is however riddled with confusions and misunderstandings (cf. Coetzee, 2013; Waltz, 1979:116-128; 2000a). Not only is it impossible for the theory to precisely say when balance will be restored, but scholars often forget that balancing is a costly and strenuous activity and one in which timing is all-important (Waltz, 2008c:xii-xiii). What then does the theory, properly stated, hold?

The theory has at its core a number of fundamental assumptions about states. The assumptions, exhaustively listed, are these: (i) that states are unitary actors, striving at a minimum to survive and, at an extreme, to attain universal domination; (ii) that they seek in sensible ways to use the means available to them with an eye towards actualising desired ends; and (iii) the means thus available to them are either internally generated (i.e., through increases in military and economic capability or through devising clever strategies) or through external efforts (notably, the formation, maintenance and strengthening of alliances or the strengthening or weakening of an opposing alliance). It should be stated that, in respect of the politics of external alignment and contrary to popular opinion, balance-of-power systems require no more than two players to operate (Waltz, 1979:118). The latter already points us in the direction of a fuller statement of the twin conditions required for the operation of balance-of-power systems: one, the coexistence of (two or more) states wishing to survive; and two, their conducting their affairs within an anarchic and self-help arena (Waltz, 1979:118, 121). The theory, accordingly, takes its particular form from the assumed motivations of states and their corresponding actions. Balance-of-power theory purports to provide a description of the systemic constraints resulting from those actions and, on account of this, points towards the expected outcome: the repeated formation of balances of power (Waltz, 1979:118).

What are the factors that lead us to expect such an outcome? In providing explanations for the recurrent formation of balances of power, one must look towards the distinctive features of the international-political system. The anarchic structure of the international-political system places an extremely high premium on security. More than any other concern, states wish to maintain their relative position vis-à-vis other states (Waltz, 1979:126). Within self-help and competitive systems, as has been pointed out, those who fail to effectively provide for themselves, or do so in ways less effective than others, subject themselves to all manner and forms of peril,

whether that be in terms of prosperity or, more fundamentally, their own survival (Waltz, 1979:118). In seeking to avoid such dangers, states tend to act in ways that lead towards the formation of balances of power. No assumptions of rationality or self-willed action on the part of states are implied here; the theory turns instead on the notion that either states emulate the behaviour of the more successful competitors or they run the risk of suffering the consequences (Waltz, 1979:118). Thus we find among states, most especially the great powers, high degrees of competition in the arts and machinery of warfare and, among the lesser ones, emulation of the military policies, weapon systems and capabilities of the great powers (Waltz, 1979:127). Behaviours are selected, as we shall remember from preceding sections, according to their consequences: in short, adapt (i.e., emulate) or die. Breaking out of this competitive system is moreover exceedingly difficult. To explain why this is the case, we can merely restate the proposition attributed to Rousseau in the previous section, namely that “to be sane in a world of madmen is in itself a kind of madness” (in Waltz, 2001:181).

Although subsequent chapters will shed more light on, and provide a more thorough engagement with, some of the criticisms of balance-of-power theory, it is necessary that we here briefly touch on a persistent one: namely, the ostensible failure of balance-of-power theory to explain the particular policies of states. The criticism, though true, is of course entirely misplaced. Thus, as Waltz (1979:121) concedes, balance-of-power theory “does not tell us why state X made a certain move last Tuesday”. Criticising the theory on such grounds is similar to criticising the theory of universal gravitation for its failure to explain why a falling leaf has proceeded along a wayward path. Theories located at one level of generality cannot and should not explain matters located at another level of generality (Waltz, 1979:121). This is but one rejoinder to the criticism that balance-of-power theory fails to explain the particular policies of states. A second, and equally fundamental one, relates to the inability of scholars of international politics to appreciate the differences to be drawn between a theory of international politics and a theory of foreign policy (Waltz, 1979:123; cf. also Waltz, 1996). A theory of foreign policy tells us why similarly placed states behave in dissimilar ways (Waltz, 1996:54). As against this, a theory of international politics, and balance-of-power theory in particular, points us towards the expectation of a marked similarity in outcomes of similarly situated states, about the

outcomes resulting from the uncoordinated actions of states and, importantly, about the constraints all of them are subject to (Waltz, 1979:122). In asking and answering how a particular state would react to such constraints, one would require both a theory of international politics *and* a theory of foreign policy (Waltz, 1979:122).

Against this backdrop, and by way of summary, what are the central expectations to be gleaned from balance-of-power theory? At least three expectations arise: one, the theory leads us to expect that states will tend to act in ways that lead towards balance in the system, whether or not they intentionally act with this end in mind; two, the system will tend towards balance; and, three, given the competitive and self-help arena in which states conduct their affairs, a great deal of emulation will occur such that states will come to display common characteristics (Waltz, 1979:128).

3.4.2 The virtues and vices of international-political systems

We now have some sense of the ways in which the anarchic structure of the international-political system works its effects and what these effects are. The remainder of this section will be devoted to two interrelated aspects: one, to compare different international systems, with reference to, multipolarity, bipolarity and unipolarity; and, two, to illustrate the ways in which differently structured international-political systems, defined in terms of the distribution of capabilities across units, yield distinctive structural effects.

In all of modern history, the international-political system has been one of fairly small numbers (Waltz, 1979:192). Nearly three centuries of international politics yielded a system always with numbers of no more, and usually far less, than eight great powers.⁴⁵ Ever since Waltz's publication of *Theory of International Politics*, and given his indebtedness to microeconomic theory, we know that systems of smaller numbers have concrete advantages over larger ones, and that as numbers change so do our expectations of the behaviour of units and the outcomes of their interactions. Thus, following from micro-economic theory, market structures typified by perfect competition have the effect of forcing producers to remain inwardly

⁴⁵ For a specification of the great powers of a specific era in the history of international politics, cf. Waltz (1979:162).

focused, to concern themselves with their strategies and plans and not those of competitors, for in every sense each producer cannot affect the market. As price is determined by market forces and not by the effort of any one producer, each producer is free from the constraint of focusing their attention on competitors. They are thus “free of tactical constraints and subject only to strategic ones” (Waltz, 1979:133). In small-number (oligopolistic) systems, however, producers are at once constrained to focus attention on their own internal efforts *and* those of competitors – they are subject to both tactical and strategic constraints. Within such systems, large firms both affect and are affected by market forces. Unlike firms in large-number systems, firms in oligopolistic markets cannot absolve themselves of the necessity of setting their policies (internal and external) without due consideration of how such policies will affect their peers. They are thus constrained to set their policies and formulate their plans by focusing attention at once on manipulating the market *and* the plans and policies of competitors (Waltz, 1979:133-134).

As with oligopolistic market structures, international politics tend to be a system of fairly small numbers, with great powers being at once “limited by their situations and able to act to affect them” (Waltz, 1979:133-134). How states react to “market pressures” varies as numbers change. With this fact established, and given the logic of small-number systems, are we better off with small or still smaller numbers? As numbers decrease, complications lessen, barriers to entry rise, the costs and difficulty of bargaining decrease, and the units find it easier to deal with one another (Waltz, 1979:135-136). Analogously, international-political systems with small and still smaller numbers have distinctive advantages. As numbers decrease, so does the level of interdependence⁴⁶ between the great powers and as it does, the likelihood of conflict reduces, i.e., “the system becomes more orderly and peaceful” (Waltz, 1979:138). Contra popular opinion, high levels of interdependence breeds conflict, as the case of World War I, marked as it were by inordinately high levels of interdependence, illustrates (Waltz, 1979:158). The loosening of interdependence for some as numbers fall and, obversely, the increase of dependence for others, brings other political effects as well. In a world marked by independence for some and dependence for others, “some are severely limited while others have wide ranges of

⁴⁶ The concept ‘interdependence’, as used in Waltz’s theory, denotes a situation in which two or more parties are mutually dependent (Waltz, 1979:143).

choice; some have little ability to affect events outside of their borders while others have immense influence” (Waltz, 1979:153). Given however the logic of self-help, all states, if they reasonably can, endeavour to lessen their dependence on others in respect of vital goods and services (Waltz, 1979:155). In effect, what we find is that those that are highly *independent* find more ways of providing for their needs and interests (Waltz, 1979:156), and independence increases as numbers fall. Although we have established that economic interdependence tends to lessen as numbers decrease, we have little warrant to say that the correlation between size and economic interdependence is an absolute one. Thus, as Waltz (1979:160) warns, “economic interdependence varies with the size of great powers and their size does not correlate perfectly with their number”. To establish then whether a system of, say, two is preferable to one of four or five great powers requires that attention be paid to the concept of military interdependence. Within the military realm, the notion that interdependence loosens as numbers fall is more nearly an exact one.

Economic interdependence and, much more so, military interdependence loosens as numbers dwindle to two; as numbers grow, so does the economic and military interdependence of states. Because their levels of military interdependence vary considerably, the requisite behaviour in bipolar and multipolar systems is of a vastly different order. In anarchic systems, balancing behaviour is required by states; yet, within systems marked by different levels of interdependence, balancing proceeds in markedly different ways (Waltz, 1979:163). In multipolar systems, balancing is conducted through alliance formation and internal efforts; in bipolar systems, with interdependence at low levels, balancing proceeds primarily through internal efforts (Waltz, 1979:163; 2000a:5-6). What implications follow from this? In multipolar systems, and owing to the presence of too many powers within the system, drawing clear and fixed lines between allies and adversaries becomes exceedingly difficult; yet, within such systems, there are at the same time too few powers to render insignificant the effects following from defection (Waltz, 1979:168). The problem within multipolar systems is then that there “are too many [great powers] to enable anyone to see for sure what is happening and too few to make what is happening a matter of indifference” (Waltz, 1979:168). Moreover, within multipolar systems, competition becomes a more complex business. The increase in numbers accelerates both uncertainties in gauging the relative military capabilities of states

and difficulties in estimating the relative strength and cohesion of alliances (Waltz, 2000a:6). As against this, the security of great powers in bipolar systems is entirely dependent on self-generating means, for the security of each cannot be assured by any other state or combination of states. Internal balancing, as against the situation prevalent with external balancing, is at once more reliable and precise (Waltz, 1979:168). Uncertainties about threats, and confusion about who is likely to respond to them, multiply when numbers increase; they decrease as numbers fall (Waltz, 1979:171-172). Within systems marked by bipolarity, the reduction in uncertainty and the increase in the ease by which calculations are made, become forces for peace (Waltz, 1979:168). The vice of great-power politics in multipolar systems is then miscalculation or inattention; in bipolar systems, it is overreaction (Waltz, 1979:172; 2000a:13). Alternatively phrased, within the great-power politics of multipolar and bipolar systems respectively, two sets of characteristics obtain: in the former, “[i]nterdependence of parties, diffusion of dangers, confusion of responses”; in the latter, [s]elf-dependence of parties, clarity of dangers, certainty about who has to face them” (Waltz, 1979:171-172).

We now know that bipolar systems promise a greater measure of peace than multipolar systems do, for the great powers at any rate. For the latter states then, distinct advantages, if measured principally in terms of national security, accrue from bipolar systems (Waltz, 1979:161). What can we say about international-political systems of still fewer numbers, one in which the capabilities of one power far outweigh those of any other? Whether the world of the present, and that of the future, is still entwined in such a system is a question we must consider, though not here. We must presently seek to understand the distinctive properties of unipolarity and whether its manifestation has seriously imperilled structural realist theory. To do so, it might be useful to return to the analogy drawn between microeconomic theory and international-political systems. In market structures of perfect competition, market forces determine price and individual units are free to focus inwardly on their own strategies and plans; oligopolistic sectors of an economy, as against this, require of firms to be attentive to their own dispositions and those of competitors, for the market affects and is affected by them. Perfect competition represents one end of an extreme; monopoly the other. While firms in market structures of perfect competition are price takers, “a monopoly is a price maker” (Browning & Zupan,

2006:312). Although not in any sense unconstrained, a monopoly more nearly has control over price than firms in oligopolistic sectors of an economy do.

In international politics, similarly, a system of one denotes that for the dominant power few external constraints exist. The emphasis, we should add, falls on 'few' and not 'none', for it is overly easy to draw the conclusion that the dominant power is wholly unrestrained. Economically and, much more so, militarily interdependence is low – or has been for the last two decades or so (cf. Waltz, 2000a; 2000b).⁴⁷ For instance, by the turn of the twentieth century, the US, Japan and the European Union (EU) exported 12 percent or less of their total GDP (Waltz, 2000b:50). In military affairs, the lopsided nature of American capabilities is far more conspicuous. By 2000, the American defence budget was larger than the defence budgets of the next eight states combined (Waltz, 2008b:248). Though not possessing a free hand in all matters, the important point to note is that for the unipole the major constraints and threats are internally generated. In essence, in a world typified by one great power left standing, international politics becomes domesticated. The dominant power is free to follow its very whim, to set policies and make strategies with little regard for those of allies and to exert pressure on others with a vast range of tools at its disposal.

It is tempting to believe then, as some do, that given the liberal credentials of the unipole, unipolar systems are both remarkably stable and peaceful.⁴⁸ Robert Jervis (2009:188) in fact notes that a unipolar system with Nazi Germany at its centre would be a vastly different one than that which we became accustomed to under US hegemony. There is undoubtedly merit in this argument, but one can seriously question how much. The notion of a dominant power behaving moderately, with forbearance and restraint is, though possible, fanciful (Waltz, 1997:915). The presence of overwhelming power tends to lead to disregard for moderation. For, as Waltz (1991:668) has pointed out, "a country disposing of greater power than others do cannot long be expected to behave with decency and moderation" (cf. also Waltz, 2011). As the dominant power becomes accustomed to having few external

⁴⁷ We will, in Chapter 6 of this study, consider whether this condition still characterises the world of the present.

⁴⁸ In more general terms, and distinct from Waltz's argument, Mearsheimer (2010:86-87) holds that a unipolar system is likely to yield a "more peaceful" world.

restraints, its policy becomes “capricious”, “sporadic” and “self-willed” (Waltz, 2000a:29). To a dismaying extent, US behaviour stretching from the late 1980s to the present reflects this condition and lends credibility to the notion that the behavioural vice of unipolar systems is overextension (Waltz, 2000a:13). A period of 20 years has yielded six US interventions in weaker countries (Waltz, 2008c:xii) – or, framed more forcefully, the US “has been at war for a startling two out of every three years since 1989, and there is no end in sight” (Mearsheimer, 2011a:16-17). That the events of 9/11 set the stage for such behaviour is a conclusion that is easily drawn, but it rather misses the point, for in important respects the attacks merely perpetuated trends and policies already in motion (Waltz, 2008b:247).

Although international politics has, for the last 20 years or so, become domesticated, there remains much left in the structure of Waltz’s structural realist theory. International politics continues to be conducted in a condition of anarchy. In such a realm, as we now know, states are at once concerned about their survival and constrained to “take care of themselves as best they can” (Waltz, 1979:105, 107; 2000a:18). Subsequently, concerns about and competition over relative gains, military and economic advantage, and the placement of states persist. Uncertainty about the future behaviour of the unipole invites distrust and leads states to either strengthen their own capabilities through self-generating means or by forming alliances with the hope of restoring the international disequilibrium in power (Waltz, 1979:127; 2000a:28, 29). In the light of such international-political conditions, balance-of-power-theory leads us to expect, as we shall do well to remember, that balance will in one way or another be restored (Waltz, 1979:128). When balance will be restored, how and by who are, though highly important, matters best left for subsequent chapters.

3.5 Evaluation

The chapter departed on the basis of an acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of one of the imperatives of theory-testing advanced in Chapter 2, namely, that in subjecting our theories to tests care should be taken to “finding or stating theories with enough precision and plausibility to make testing worthwhile” (Waltz, 1979:14). Testing theories requires first and foremost that one has something

worthwhile to test and, where one does, that one understands the basic claims proffered by a theory prior to attempts at testing it (Waltz, 1997:914). In various ways, this chapter set out to achieve this task by providing a logically defensible account of Waltz's theory of international politics that would seem to bring justice to the richness of his theoretical construction. In doing this, we attempted to trace his line of thought by illustrating, firstly, the inadequacies of reductionism and, by extension, reductionist theories of international politics and, as against this, the necessity of adopting a systems approach to international politics. As became evident through our examination of the statements "He is a troublemaker" and "He makes trouble", any attempt at predicting or understanding (international-political) outcomes cannot usefully proceed by merely knowing the qualities, aims and interactions of the behaving units (Waltz, 1979:39). We are led to expect that the prevalence of a similarity of outcomes across time and space, irrespective of changes in the agents producing them, renders reductionist theories defective (Waltz, 1979:39).

This was followed, secondly, by an examination of the nature of (political) structure and the structure of the international-political system. We pointed towards the distinctive characteristics of structure, the requirements of a systems theory as well as the ways in which structures work their effects. In respect of the latter, we saw that the processes of socialisation and competition tend to yield marked similarities in the behaviour and attributes of units. Adapt or die – such is the logic that is part and parcel of the effects accruing from the international-political system. This was followed, thirdly, by a fuller engagement with the definition of, and the effects following from, the anarchic structure of the international-political system and, more narrowly, its intersection with structurally distinct international-political systems, i.e., multipolarity, bipolarity and unipolarity. The basic thrust of the argument was this: that the international-political system is at its core a competitive and self-help arena and that different structural configurations yield distinct structural effects. In subsequent chapters, the theory laid bare above will serve to explain a great deal of international politics – historical and contemporaneous.

CHAPTER FOUR

SHALL WE WALTZ ONCE LAST TIME? DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY IN LIGHT OF THEORY AND HISTORY

If the French attempt to bully and intimidate us [i.e. Great Britain] as they have done, the only way of meeting their menaces is by quietly telling them we are not afraid, and by showing them, first, that we are stronger than they are, and secondly, that they have more vulnerable points than we have.

Lord Palmerston's rejoinder to French bellicosity during the Near Eastern Crisis,
1838-41 (quoted in Layne, 1997:88)

What a figure...we [i.e. Great Britain] shall cut in the eyes of the world, if we lamely submit to this outrage when all mankind will know that we should unhesitatingly have poured our indignation and our broadsides into any weak nation...and what an additional proof it will be of the universal...belief that we have two sets of weights and measures to be used according to the power or weakness of our adversary. I have a horror of war and of all wars one with the U.S. because none would be so prejudicial to our interests, but peace like other good things may be bought too dearly and it can never be worth the price of national honor.

Lord Clarendon in response to the Anglo-American crisis over the *Trent* Affair,
1861 (quoted in Rock, 1997:114-115)

[W]e now have solid evidence that democracies do not wage war on each other. Stable democracies rarely even skirmish with each other. They are much more likely than other governments to settle disputes with each other peacefully, by negotiation or mediation.

Bruce Russett (Russett, 1995a:x-xi)

4.1 Introduction

From what was said in Chapter 1 we have noted that the principal aim of this study is to point towards the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism in an international-political world composed of progressively high numbers of (liberal)

democratic states. That such a world is of relatively recent origin is a point that is too often easily forgotten and one that ought to engender a healthy dose of scepticism in any assessment of the validity of notions of democratic peace. It is, after all, only in the wake of World War II that a critical mass of (liberal) democracies came into being (cf. Doyle, 1996:8-9; Larison, 2012).⁴⁹ This is all the more true if we heed the admonition that not all democracies are in and of themselves liberal (in fact, the rise of *illiberal* democracy, as Zakaria (1997) noted, is becoming more widespread) and, consequently, that the concepts ‘liberalism’ and ‘democracy’ are *ipso facto* not inevitably interchangeable. We have furthermore argued that assessments of the validity of claims of democratic peace ought to turn on a far longer view of history and that in heeding this injunction we can expect to find confirmatory evidence of both the striking continuity of international politics and, as a corollary, the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism. We shall see, in this chapter and in the subsequent two, whether there is any merit to be attached to the expectations thus raised.

There is, unfortunately, a strong sense in which the conclusions drawn in this study, and the possible validity of the expectations raised in this chapter and subsequent ones, are bound to be met with derision. There appears to be, as both Christopher Layne (1997:99-100) and John Mearsheimer (2002:29-31) have noted, a progressively high disregard, and a discernible constriction in the spaces available, for the realist scholar of international politics – and disciples of Waltz pre-eminently among them. As against this, the allure of democratic peace theory continues unabatedly, irrespective of evidence that disconfirms the theory (Layne, 1997:99). In a 2016 contribution to the pages of *Foreign Affairs*, the acclaimed proponent of democracy promotion, Larry Diamond, once more informed his readers that democracies “do not go to war with one another”. In fact, so strong has the allure of democratic peace theory been that it has been likened to a faith, something beyond the realm of falsifiable scientific theory, with its proponents displaying “a remarkable hostility and intolerance” for those casting doubt on its principle findings and claims (Layne, 1997:99). It is with this in mind that Christopher Layne laments “that it is not

⁴⁹ More tellingly, perhaps, one can easily raise questions about the extent to which the US perceived Britain and France as liberal states in the years leading up to World War 2. Kennedy (1989:288) notes for instance that the Americans grew “ever more distrustful of Anglo-French policies” in the wake of the latter’s imperialist ventures.

unfair to say that” proponents of democratic peace theory “will *never* be convinced by any qualitative case study that disconfirms the theory, no matter how compelling the evidence” (Layne, 1997:99; emphasis in original). The outright conclusion, at the practical level, is seemingly that (liberal) democracies “either can do no wrong or, at worst, can intend no wrong” (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:171).

That such pessimism (nay, blind faith) informs the debate on the democratic peace ought to be particularly worrisome, most especially in the light of recent developments in other fields. Leading studies in the fields of psychology, biomedical research and even theoretical physics, *all* of them published in reputable journals, have now shown to be false when replicated under almost exact experimental conditions (Wilson, 2016a). Thus, in replicating one hundred experiments emanating from the field of psychology, all of them virtually replicating the original experimental conditions and materials, researchers found “an astonishing 65 percent failed to show statistical significance on replication, and many of the remainder showed greatly reduced effect sizes” (Wilson, 2016a). Moreover, there seems to be general consensus that 50 percent of all biomedical research will subsequently prove to be false (Wilson, 2016a). In a paper submitted to the prestigious *British Medical Journal*, its authors deliberately subjected the paper to eight major errors (including errors of study design, methodology, data analysis and the interpretation of data), with the net result being that none of the paper’s 221 reviewers succeeded in identifying all of the errors (Wilson, 2016a). It is generally accepted that in the social sciences this predicament is far more widespread. It is against this backdrop that Wilson (2016a) contends, contra Thomas Kuhn, that modern scientific developments speak less to the notion of scientific progression than regression. John Ioannidis (2005:0696), more scathingly, argues – based on a rigorous application of Bayesian statistics – that it “can be proven that most claimed research findings are false” and that the majority of research findings “are false for most research designs and for most fields”. The argument is a sobering one and, we should repeat, not one made without the proper application of the instruments of scientific reasoning. There is, therefore, undoubtedly a warning here for proponents of democratic peace theory: be modest about the purported universality (and law-like nature) of the claims underscoring democratic peace theory.

But is the evidence stacked against democratic peace theory as compelling as Christopher Layne and other critics of democratic peace theory suggest? The short, though at this stage ill-explored answer, is 'yes'. In illustrating the veracity of our answer, here as in subsequent pages, we shall do well to consider that, for proponents of democratic peace theory, (liberal) democratic states have succeeded in transcending the structurally derived constraints of the international-political system (Layne, 1997:62), thus unshackling themselves from the bondage of power politics. We are thus once more confronted, as stressed in Chapter 3 of this study, with a case in which international-political outcomes are wholly derivative of internal (politico-ideological) factors. The whole is once more reduced to its constituent parts. In fact, so strong is the faith in (liberal) democratic states that it is believed that these states do not only refrain from war *inter se* but, tellingly, that they have abdicated from *threats to use force* in their relations with one another (Layne, 1997:62). Their faith has however little basis in history. For not only do cases of war between (liberal) democratic states exist (cf. Chapter 1)⁵⁰, but in those cases where (liberal) democratic states have come to the brink of war or where peace has endured remarkably well between some of them (e.g. the long Anglo-US peace), factors other than (liberal) democratic politico-ideological ones account for both the absence of war and the preservation of peace (cf. Layne, 1996a; 1997; Rock, 1997).

Historically and conceptually, democratic peace theory falls short in more ways than one. In respect of its conceptual foundations, a growing body of literature has in recent years emerged suggesting that the association drawn between German philosopher Immanuel Kant and the claims and expectations underpinning democratic peace theory is highly problematic (Ion, 2012:1). In particular, Ion (2012:3) notes that Kant's essay "Perpetual Peace" has been misinterpreted and, at times, vulgarised by proponents of democratic peace, with the conclusion being that "Kant cannot be assigned the goals and assumptions of democratic peace theory". As a most basic illustration, we can merely note Kant's outright aversion to

⁵⁰ We should point out that, among its chief proponents, the central thesis of democratic peace theory, i.e., that (liberal) democratic states have *never* gone to war, is rife with confusion and ambiguity – and for reasons other than the fact that (liberal) democracies have waged war against each other. For some, (liberal) democratic states have 'never' gone to war; others hold that these states have 'seldom', 'rarely' or 'almost never' done so (Layne, 1997:62). Russett (1995d:119) betrays this confusion by noting *within the very same sentence* that (liberal) democracies have "never (or almost never)" waged war against each other.

democracy (whether in its direct or indirect form) as well as his rejection of any notions of implementing his peace plan (Ion, 2012:1-2). We shall see, as this chapter (and the subsequent one) unfold, that the historical record is still more problematic.

The chapter, at its core, will thus attempt to shed light on the poverty of democratic peace theory, the poverty of the intersection between democratic peace theory and history and, alternatively, attempt to lay the groundwork for the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism. The chapter begins by providing a brief account of the evolution of the democratic peace research programme. This venture is to be followed by, on the one hand, setting forth the foundational arguments, claims and expectations constitutive of democratic peace theory and, on the other hand, by probing the arguments underpinning realist critiques of democratic peace theory. We shall, in particular, scrutinise the explanatory frameworks advanced by Doyle and Owen and, in broader terms, furnish an account of the expectations to be gleaned from democratic peace theory. This will be followed by advancing a number of expectations derived from Waltz's structural realist theory. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to providing a critique – theoretical *and* historical – of democratic peace theory. In our examination of the historical record, we shall take great pains *not* to provide an exhaustive account of the historical record. As was argued in Chapter 1 of the study, such accounts are readily available and have at any rate been done by scholars of far greater moment than the author of these pages. Our aims, moreover, are explicitly theoretical in nature and, in looking at history, we would at any rate like to cover a large span of time to probe the fundamental continuities in international politics operating across different international-political systems and historical epochs. In doing this, we shall limit our focus in this chapter and subsequent ones to the period ranging from the advent of US (liberal) democracy (1789) to the end of World War II. We shall however, where applicable, briefly touch on pertinent historical events preceding this temporal demarcation. To these arduous tasks we now turn.

4.2 The evolution of the democratic peace research programme: a critical appraisal

The genesis of the democratic peace research programme, if seen in respect of attempts at theoretical explanation of the empirical observation of democratic peace, lies squarely within the contribution(s) of Michael Doyle (1996 [1983, 1986]). Although various studies (e.g. Babst, 1964; 1972; Rummel, 1983 and, for an outright (realist) critique of the Kantian foundations of democratic peace, Waltz, 2008a) preceded that of Doyle, the latter's work more nearly set the stage for the theoretical (and, by implication, causal) development of the democratic peace research programme (Cohen, 1994:209). Deeply divisive issues pertaining, notably, to theory-construction (e.g. Slantchev, Alexandrova & Gartzke, 2005; Rosato, 2005), methodology and/or measurement (Oren, 1996; Spiro, 1996a; Slantchev *et al.*, 2005; Rosato, 2005), and historical-empirical validation (Mearsheimer, 1990; Cohen, 1994; Layne, 1996a; Owen, 1996) have however marked (or, perhaps more aptly, marred) the democratic peace research programme since the outset. Moreover, theoretical arguments advanced during the early onset of the research programme, particularly those postulating some or other connection between democracy (and/or liberalism) and peace, have subsequently been rejected on grounds of the development and utilisation of more advanced methodological approaches and more precise data-sets. Indicative of this tendency is, for instance, Buhaug's (2005) rejection – on grounds of a series of methodological concerns – of the validity of the monadic thesis (i.e. the hypothesis that democracies are more peaceful *in genera*⁵¹) as advanced in Bremer's (1992) study.

Other scholars have in turn focused their attention on probing the statistical tenability (validity) of the correlation drawn between (liberal) democracy and peace. Cohen (1994; 1995) has in this regard pointed towards a much more circumscribed correlation than that initially advanced by adherents of democratic peace theory. In her view, Cornelia Navari (2013:41) observes that it is “not entirely clear” that a defensible correlation exists between (liberal) democracy and peace. More scathingly, Spiro (1996a) has noted that the correlation drawn between democracy

⁵¹ As against this, the dyadic thesis/logic holds that (liberal) democratic states are only peaceful in relations with one another.

and peace is statistically insignificant. Both the incidence of war and the number of (liberal) democracies have throughout history been fairly low, with the subsequent probability of pairs of states being both (liberal) democratic and at war being miniscule (D'Anieri, 2017:128). Furthermore, it is worth considering that not only has the incidence of war between states been fairly low throughout the course of history, but with the coming of the industrial-technological revolution in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries *all* states affected by it (i.e. democratic *and* non-democratic states) were generally less belligerent than in pre-industrial times (Gat, 2005:73). To reinforce the latter point: democratic peace proponents have generally failed to heed the fact that “non-democratic countries, too, fought much less during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the industrial age” than in pre-industrial times (Gat, 2005:86).⁵² Furthermore, during the Cold War period, peace between (liberal) democracies has, similarly, merely formed part of a much larger pacific trend, viz. the existence of a condition of peace among *all* states constitutive of the so-called First and Second Worlds (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:160).⁵³

Although inquiry into the correlational nature of democratic peace theory persists, scholarly attention seems to have shifted in recent years towards explicating the causal mechanisms accounting for democratic peace. The shift seems to be indicative of, at the most basic level, a tacit acceptance among proponents and detractors of democratic peace, liberal and realist, of the correlational nature of democratic peace theory. The realist-inspired scholar of democratic peace, Sebastian Rosato (2003:585), though taking issue with the causal logics of democratic peace theory, has for instance recognised and accepted the robustness of the correlations drawn by proponents of democratic peace theory, a position supported by Layne (1996a). The shift is however an unfortunate one, most especially if seen in light of more recent arguments reinforcing the limits of the (liberal) democracy-peace correlation (cf. Henderson, 2002; 2008).

Nonetheless, liberal scholars of democratic peace continue to heap praise on the robustness of the correlational *and* causal nature of democratic peace, attributing to

⁵² This very fact – i.e. that *both* democracies *and* non-democracies have been far less belligerent in the wake of the industrial-technological revolution – should lead us to question the explanatory and peace-inducing merits of regime type as causal variable.

⁵³ For elaboration on this and other points, cf. Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.2.4).

it, as was pointed out in Chapter 1 of this study, the much-vaunted status of law. Accordingly, as Snyder (2004:57) notes, democratic peace theory is “the closest thing we have to an iron law in social science”. Not only can trenchant questions be raised about the extent to which democratic peace theory fulfils the essential requirements of a law, but in the realm of causal explanation, the pre-eminent business of theory, we have already pointed towards the poverty of the conception of theory underpinning liberally grounded frameworks of democratic peace (in respect of both indictments, cf. Chapter 2). The issue of causation remains a highly problematic and divisive one within the democratic peace literature – and, as more recent studies point out, “there seems to be surprisingly little research done in actually analysing how and why democracies cause peace” (Zimelis, 2012:18). Cohen (1994; 1995), for instance, holds that the causal argument underpinning (liberal) democratic peace is extremely weak. Moreover, alternative (i.e. non-liberal) explanations have proven to be far more credible (Cohen, 1995:324). Spiro (1996a), similarly, argues that democratic peace theory lacks causal validation and that proponents of (liberal) democratic peace have done little more than illuminating possible avenues for empirical research: “Doyle’s work did not go beyond suggesting what empiricists might look for, and empiricists have done surprisingly little to show that elements of liberalism and democracy are causal influences on peace”. There is, however, not a great deal of research that is undertaken to analyse empirically the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the ostensible connection between (liberal) democratic norms and peace (Zimelis, 2012:18). If democratic peace theory fails to provide convincing causal logics for the absence of war between pairs of (liberal) democracies, then “little is left but statistical correlations; democratic peace theory offers no convincing explanation of *why* democracies” remain at peace (Layne, 1996b:355).

Interestingly enough, disagreement about the cause(s) of democratic peace finds expression not merely between realist and liberal scholars of international politics, but, more disconcertingly, within and among liberal scholars of democratic peace. Indeed, among proponents of democratic peace, disagreement and confusion hold sway, with some prioritising democracy as the pre-eminent causal mechanism accounting for democratic peace, while others have opted to place their proverbial eggs in the basket of *liberal* democracy. Conceptually and empirically, the concepts ‘democracy’ and ‘liberal democracy’ are distinct. As Sean Lynn-Jones (1996:ix)

notes, the distinction turns on the fact that “the ‘liberal’ peace may not be identical with the ‘democratic peace’”. We should thus note that in attempting to provide an explanatory foundation for democratic peace theory, most proponents of democratic peace have failed to draw a discernible line between the democratic peace and the liberal peace, a shortcoming fruitfully exploited by realist scholars. Spiro (1996a:207), in particular, has levelled his criticism against the poverty of conceptual clarification among proponents of democratic peace theory and the effects thereof in assessing the empirical evidence. There are for instance, as Spiro (1996:207) points out, a discernible incongruence between the normatively driven frameworks postulated by liberal scholars, grounded in a normative *liberal* theory of democratic peace, and the specific properties of the data-sets used in illustrating the validity of these frameworks:

If there is something about the checks and balances of a constitutional republic, or of a pluralist democracy, or of a liberal regime, that prevents war, then we should expect to observe that democracies fight less than other types of regimes. Since every study...agrees that this structural theory is not validated empirically, the definition of democracy used in empirical tests needs to have some basis in a normative theory of democratic peace. A majority of studies, however, use a data set coded by Ted Gurr (“Polity II”) that measures elements of the democratic process, and *says nothing about liberal norms* (Spiro, 1996a:207; emphasis added).

Consequently, the failure of conceptual precision and clarification in respect of the causal mechanism(s) accounting for democratic peace, an essential prerequisite in theory-formulation (cf. Chapter 2), casts an ominous shadow of confusion over the empirical evidence undergirding democratic peace theory (Chan, 1997:64). We should note, with this failure firmly in mind, that the concepts ‘democracy’ and ‘liberalism’, while sharing some attributes, are conceptually distinct. This distinction ought to drive all inquiries into the democratic peace, with researchers clearly specifying the particular causal mechanism(s) their theories purport to explicate.⁵⁴ Conceptually and historically, the concept ‘democracy’ is attributed to the

⁵⁴ It is therefore surprising to note that some scholars of democratic peace, notably Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman (1992:145), insist that “the terms *democracy*, *liberal democracy*, *republic* and *liberal republic*” can be used interchangeably as they “are sufficiently alike”.

sovereignty (rule) of the *demos* (Owen, 1997a:15) and derives its most salient features from questions pertaining to representation (of voters and their preferences) and elections. Such a representation of the concept coincides fairly well with, *inter alia*, Samuel Huntington's explication of the essential attributes forming the bedrock of a democratic polity. A democratic polity is, accordingly, one typified by regular, free, honest and competitive elections, one which exacts an accountable relationship between voters and the elected decision makers (in the sense that the former is imbued with the power to remove the latter from political office), and in which a substantially large segment of the adult population is eligible to vote (cited in Russett, 1995b:15). There exists, however, no *a priori* reason why a democratic political system should be reflective of liberal policies and/or norms and why the policy process should be reflective thereof. Thus Owen (1997a:15) notes that there "is no necessary content to...a democracy, no particular worldview, anthropology, or vision of what the laws should look like. There is only the directive that the people ought to get what they want".

Unfortunately, within the confines of the democratic peace research programme, the distinction to be drawn between the two concepts is often brazenly ignored, with the concepts thus often perceived as mutually interchangeable (Rosato, 2003:586; Russett (1995c:31) represents a striking example of the failure to draw a discernible line between democratic and liberal norms). Not all scholars of democratic peace have erred in this regard. Those adhering to a *liberal* conception of democratic peace, with Doyle (2005:463) constituting the example par excellence, have steadfastly insisted that in and of themselves democratic institutions are not immune to the subjugation of the policy process to the vicarious policy preferences (however defined) of the electorate. With this in mind, no compelling rationale exists for why peace should hold reliably between two majoritarian governments (Doyle, 2005:463). In fact, Immanuel Kant⁵⁵, the ostensible protagonist of democratic peace theory, had deep-seated reservations about democracy, viewing it as a formalised and entrenched form of tyranny, and, as argued above, he consequently never

⁵⁵ Although Kant is generally considered the protagonist of democratic peace theory, the idea had already found expression in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Paine and, crucially, been rejected by Alexander Hamilton as nothing more than "familiar folk theory" (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:159).

advocated democracy, whether in its direct or indirect form (Spiro, 1996a:207; Ion, 2012:2).

In seeking to address this problem, various scholars have sided with Doyle's argument that short of constitutional liberalism, "democracy itself has no peace inducing qualities" (quoted in Zakaria, 1997). For Doyle, then, this holds that a conceptually rich account of democratic peace must be one grounded in a liberal theory of international relations, conceptualised in terms of the interaction between, on the one hand, political and economic freedoms and, on the other hand, (some form of) democratic representation or participation. A marked similarity is discernible in Owen's rendition of democratic peace. Here liberal ideas account for the absence of war between (liberal) democracies, notably the dual processes of democratic institutions (in particular, freedom of speech, regular competitive elections, and public deliberation by duly elected representatives) and liberal ideology. The conceptions of liberal theory advanced by both scholars speak to modern definitions of *liberal* democracy. This denotes some form of interplay of the processes and attributes typical of a democratic political system and that laid bare under the term constitutional liberalism (Coetzee, 2011:55).

In deconstructing the latter term, we should note that two interrelated forces are at play. At the most basic level, liberalism speaks to the deeply-entrenched philosophical tradition in Western political thought that puts an outright premium on the primacy of individual liberty (Zakaria, 1997). Alternatively phrased, liberal discourse recognises and mainstreams moral freedom, i.e. the notion that individuals ought to be treated, and reciprocally treat others, as ethical beings as opposed to inanimate pawns (Doyle, 1996a:4). Constitutionalism, on its part, has its roots within the Roman legal-political tradition recognising the paramountcy of the law, and provides legal warrants for individuals' life, liberty and property and the prevention of governmental encroachment into these circumscribed domains (Zakaria, 1997; Coetzee, 2011:56). It is against this backdrop that Doyle and Owen suggest that the empirical observation of the absence of war between (liberal) democracies ought to be cast in liberal politico-economic terms. The democratic peace is in reality the *liberal* peace: the interplay between liberal norms and institutions (i.e. democracy as a by-product of liberal ideas) accounts for the democratic peace. Although there is

no inevitable and necessary link between democracy and liberal policies, the existence of a democratic political system is seen as an essential feature of liberal conceptions of democratic peace, embedded as it is within the broader concept of liberal democracy. Consequently, democracy has to form part of the essential attributes of a normative liberal theory (encapsulating a range of economic and political warrants) in order to produce the no-war phenomenon generally ascribed to democratic peace theory (Coetzee, 2011:56). In and of itself, therefore, democracy has no peace-inducing qualities.

The position laid bare above, one strenuously advanced by Doyle (1996a) and Owen (1996), thus holds that an explanation proper of the democratic peace cannot otherwise but be rooted in a liberal theory of international relations. Such a theory must provide room for the interaction of structural (or: institutional) and normative forces in producing the no-war phenomenon of democratic peace – the former reduces the democratic peace to the institutional constraints imposed on democratically elected leaders and the latter “locates the cause of the democratic peace in the ideas or norms held by [liberal] democracies” (Owen, 1996:119). Both forces – institutional and normative – are then central to accounting for the absence of war between (liberal) democratic states. We should note, however, that not all scholars of democratic peace have accepted this dual approach to the democratic peace (cf. Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 1999), with some opting for explanations grounded exclusively in institutional or normative frameworks of democratic peace.

From within the realist camp, the validity of the institutional argument underpinning democratic peace theory has been subject to fierce critique. The critique, as we shall shortly see, is valid. Institutional frameworks are premised on the notion that the costs and constraints (i.e. the looming possibility of electoral punishment) part and parcel of liberal democratic states provide severe limitations on the range of acceptable behaviour by states. With this in mind, realists note that the logical consequence of the institutional argument is that liberal democratic states ought to be more peaceful *in general*, a proposition that has garnered little empirical support (Spiro, 1996a:207; Owen (1996:120), endorsing a liberally grounded theory of democratic peace, provides a similar argument). In fact, the contrary seems to be the case: liberal democracies are every bit as war-prone as authoritarian states

(Mearsheimer, 1990:48). Other scholars have been still more forthright in their assessment of the validity of institutional arguments of democratic peace. Rosato (2003:593-599), notably, in his analysis of the peace-inducing forces inherent in institutional arguments of democratic peace, bluntly states that *all* variants of the institutional argument lack empirical validation.

In illustrating the force of Rosato's argument, we would do well to remember that at the core of the institutional argument is the notion that democratic institutions and processes engender a relationship of accountability between decision makers and their various constituencies. This relationship of accountability constitutes the overriding logic of the accountability mechanism. The institutional argument, thus laid bare, is underpinned by five differing variants, with each variant indicative of a specific path to peace and its own validity dependent on whether the accountability mechanism obtains theoretical and empirical validation (Rosato, 2003:587).

The first of these variants, the public constraint mechanism, suggests that democratic leaders are constrained from going to war owing to the general public's aversion to war. The prevailing sentiment within the heart and mind of the man on the street is presumed to be one of anti-war. The second of these variants, the group constraint mechanism, shows how anti-war groups, whether situated within or outside of government, constrain leaders from waging war. The slow mobilisation mechanism constitutes the third variant and holds that, given the exceedingly great difficulty of mobilising public and civil society groups within (liberal) democratic states, such groups are inherently slow to mobilise for war. The fourth variant, the public nature of (liberal) democratic mobilisation for war, restrains (liberal) democracies from carrying out surprise attacks and, as a corollary, provides them with sufficient time for careful deliberation. And, finally, the information mechanism denotes that (liberal) democratic states are far better at signalling than their non-democratic counterparts. Two reasons are proffered for the latter argument: it is generally accepted that democratic elites, given their accountability to a war-averse public as well as the expectation that unpopular policies will be met by fervent resistance by opposition political parties, will only escalate disputes if a high probability of foreign war success can be guaranteed. The implication of this is that fellow (liberal) democratic states can more readily access and gauge private

information, i.e. democratic resolve in war-threatening crises (Rosato, 2003:587). Departing on the basis that all variants of the institutional argument is dependent on the validity of the accountability mechanism, Rosato (2003:593) postulated that, with due regards to the peace-proneness of (liberal) democracies and, conversely, the war-proneness of autocracies, we ought to find that liberal decision makers are much “more accountable than autocrats if accountability is a key mechanism in explaining” the dyadic peace. His study shows however that there is scant support for institutional arguments of democratic peace, leading us to question the notion that liberal states are faced with greater costs and constraints than autocratic states in times of crisis.

Instead, what the empirical evidence shows is that autocratic leaders, after disastrously committing their states to war, have been removed from office almost equally to that of democratic leaders faced with a similar predicament. Failure in war has, accordingly, exacted little more costs for autocratic leaders than their (liberal) democratic counterparts. In costly wars, moreover, autocratic leaders have been removed on more occasions than the leaders of (liberal) democracies. In both cases, i.e. costly and losing wars, autocratic leaders have in far higher percentages than their (liberal) democratic counterparts been subjected to punishment for adopting and pursuing unsuccessful policies (Rosato, 2003:594). Historically, then, the leaders of (liberal) democracies have been no more accountable than autocratic leaders for adopting and pursuing policies in response to losing wars and, more trenchantly, have been far less accountable in costly wars. Succinctly stated, in war-threatening crises, the leaders of (liberal) democratic states do not face higher expected costs than autocratic leaders.

The findings of Rosato’s (2003) study, and the conclusions emanating from them, have unsurprisingly incurred the wrath of proponents of democratic peace. Slantchev *et al.* (2005) have in this regard noted that Rosato’s findings are in effect counter-productive: his data does more to validate, rather than discredit, the accountability logic. Their argument is buttressed by two general observations: they note, firstly, that democratic states *are* far more accountable than autocracies (i.e. they are far more likely to be removed from office) and, secondly, that democratic states are far less likely to end up on the losing side in major wars than autocratic states. The

observations lead them to conclude that the leaders of (liberal) democracies are far more inclined to commit their states only to wars that they can win and, once committed, these states are disproportionately more likely to win the wars they are engaged in. This proposition, emphasising that (liberal) democracies are both more selective in engaging and more victorious in war than their autocratic counterparts, provides according to Slantchev *et al.* (2005) sufficient grounds for accepting that democratic leaders face far greater costs and constraints than autocratic states.

The argument is fraught with errors. That (liberal) democracies have historically been more victorious in major wars than autocratic states cannot be disputed. Various reasons can be advanced for this yet an engagement with this statement of fact hardly falls within the parameters of this study. The problem turns, however, on the postulated connection between, on the one hand, the disproportionately higher costs and constraints facing (liberal) democratic states and, on the other hand, the validation of this proposition on grounds of arguing that (liberal) democracies are far more selective in engaging in costly wars and, concomitantly, are far more likely to be the victor in major wars. To take this proposition seriously requires of us to conclude that (liberal) democratic states are in fact more accountable than their autocratic counterparts, a proposition that has, unfortunately, garnered little empirical validation (Rosato, 2005:470).

Moreover, when we zero in on some of the variants underpinning the institutional argument we quickly realise their flawed nature. Take, for instance, the slow mobilisation mechanism. The argument is, simply put, not true. Modern (liberal) democracies have rapid deployment forces at their disposal, the deployment of which is placed under executive control (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:168). It is also generally contended by proponents of democratic peace that the time required for acquiring popular support for war is quite considerable in (liberal) democracies. Again, the argument is simply not true. Not only is popular support often already present, but the bigger concern for governments is often how to resist, not enlist, it (cf. Section 4.5, p. 147 as well as Chapter 5 for confirmatory evidence of this practice) (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:168-169).

It is with these shortcomings in mind that (some) proponents of democratic peace have ascribed pre-eminence to normative explanations of democratic peace. Russett (1995c:41) is a case in point. He notes that the structural constraints to use force within democracies are less acute than with autocracies and, subsequently, “normative restraints must bear the load”. Yet normative explanations of democratic peace, proceeding from the notion that (liberal) democracies externalise the internal norms of compromise, non-violent conflict resolution, and trust and respect, are similarly fraught with theoretical and historical errors. Realists, in particular, have challenged the validity of normative arguments on the basis of a three-pronged attack. In the first instance, they have pointed towards the fact that an examination proper of the historical record provides scant support for the peace-inducing effect of (liberal) democratic norms in war-threatening crises between (liberal) democratic dyads. In the second instance and with a particular focus on norm externalisation during war-threatening crises, whether we look at two competing hockey teams, two competing firms or two competing armed forces, one cannot look past the fact that very few examples exist of organisations who apply their internal norms of conflict resolutions to their (external) relationships with other competing organisations (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:169). This is all the more the case when the units of a system have to fend for themselves and where force is the ultimate arbiter, as is the case in international politics.

In the final instance, they note that the high frequency of (liberal) democratic states intervening in the affairs of fellow (liberal) democracies undermines the ostensible trust and respect these states afford to one another in their foreign relations. Rosato (2003: 590) mentions in this regard American Cold War interventions in the affairs of *inter alia* Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954) and Brazil (1961, 1964).⁵⁶ The list is obviously not exhaustive. We shall recall from Chapter 1 that in a period of 60 years of American foreign policy, framed within the parameters of the post-World War II environment, the US has been implicated in more than 50 attempts to overthrow foreign governments and, more disconcertingly, has been implicated in the

⁵⁶ It should further interest the reader to point out that fears of American covert interventions with the goal of destabilising regimes were shared by friends and foes alike. Against the backdrop of the CIA orchestrated coup in democratic Guatemala (1954), and amidst fears of a similar fate befalling the newly born Jewish state, future Israeli intelligence chief, Isser Harel, actively opposed wide-ranging intelligence ties with the Americans (Raviv & Melman, 2014:34).

suppression of no less than 30 populist-nationalist movements struggling against non-democratic regimes. The behaviour, disconcertingly, continues into the very present, as the recent Ukraine crisis attests (Mearsheimer, 2014a:1; 2014b:176-177).⁵⁷ This figure becomes all the more disconcerting if we take into account statements such as those made by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in which he, in public testimony, noted that “every CIA operation of consequence was approved by the President, under the Ford as well as previous administrations” (Agee, 1976:xiv). In fact, the 1976 Report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence (the so-called ‘Pike Committee’s Report’) concluded that “[a]ll evidence in hand suggests that the CIA, far from being out of control, had been utterly responsive to the instructions of the President and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs” (Agee, 1976:xiv). In some cases, moreover, “paramilitary operations of the worst type” were not initiated by the CIA, but by the president, his Assistant for National Security Affairs or even the Department of State (The House Select Committee on Intelligence, 1976:21).

Liberal scholars of democratic peace have of course rejected this line of critique. Russett (1995a:13), in particular, argues that we should confine our analyses of the validity of democratic peace theory to interstate wars seeing that covert interventions are constitutive of a different political process, one in which public deliberation on war-questions are rendered futile.⁵⁸ This argument, we contend, is void of merit and for four very good reasons. One, by ceding to this way of thinking we are in fact ignoring a great deal of what actually transpires in the world of international politics and, more narrowly, between (liberal) democratic dyads. We are thus brushing aside significant parts of history. By confining ourselves to interstate wars, as Russett would have, we will ignore big and important events such as *inter alia* that of the American Civil War. In this instance, a case emerges of a group of highly interdependent (more precisely, highly integrated) people caught in the grips of a fierce civil war, thus casting doubt on the liberal argument that interdependence leads to peace. More importantly, two, we would fail to realise the high levels of

⁵⁷ We shall return to this issue in Chapter 6 of this study. For now, it is interesting to note how the behaviour repeats itself irrespective of the ideological bearings of the incumbent US president.

⁵⁸ Note, however, that some scholars contend that liberal thought (more precisely, liberal institutionalism) can provide powerful explanations for covert actions and, in general, the world of intelligence (Aldrich, 2002:54). This further strengthens the case for the inclusion of covert operations as part and parcel of the explication of democratic peace theory.

distrust that have existed, and continues to exist, between (liberal) democratic states, an issue that will receive more attention in the succeeding chapters. We shall come to see in Chapters 5 and 6 that in today's world, as of that of the distant past, relations between (liberal) democratic states have in a great many instances been marked by the absence of reciprocal trust and respect. Three, covert interventions – or, more precisely, the *aims and purposes* of these operations – go some way in highlighting the character of (liberal) democratic states. Alarming, the operations often reveal the extent to which (liberal) democracies act to develop and bolster non-democratic elements in societies striving for democracy. With this in mind, consider for instance US Congressman Ronald Dellums' apt observation about the repugnant nature of American covert operations:

Where have covert operations taken us? Are the nations that we have been involved with free democratic societies where the masses of people have benefits of democracy, or are those nations for the most part, military dictators, right-wing juntas, or regimes with extraordinary wealth and power in the hands of a few elitists. If the latter holds, it totally contradicts stated principles of this country. If we have been involved in covert actions which generated democracy, freedom and justice around the world, maybe we might arrive at some different conclusion. But I don't think anyone can justify continued covert action on grounds that we foster and develop democracy around the world (quoted in Agee, 1976:xiv).

It is worth pointing out here that the more recent past has more than its fair share of examples showing the extent to which the behaviour persists. We will engage with these examples as Chapters 5 and 6 of this study unfold. And, in Chapter 4, following Henderson (2002:82), we will ask the question whether (liberal) democratic states in which decision makers are permitted to covertly wage war against other (liberal democratic) states are (liberal) democratic states to begin with? "True democrats Don't Bankroll Juntas", as the title of Joshua Stacher's *The New York Times* article correctly points out (Stacher, 2013). Part and parcel of democratic statehood, we would do well to remember, is the notion of popular/civilian control of the military, a principle wholly at odds with the waging of covert warfare (Henderson, 2002:100).

While realists have highlighted the folly of normative arguments of democratic peace, some liberal proponents have taken issue with normative explanations on altogether different grounds. It is often the case, states John Owen (1996:121), that modern researchers, in their failure to account for the effect of perceptions, carelessly label states as liberal and/or democratic without appreciating that such states failed to perceive each other as such in times of crisis. The result is that the postulated normative check often failed to operate as envisioned within the democratic peace literature (Owen, 1996:121). On account of this ostensible shortcoming, we should thus note that peace between pairs of (liberal) democracies is conditional on their perceiving each other as (liberal) democratic: “A liberal democracy will only avoid war with a state that *it believes to be liberal*” (Owen, 1996: 121; emphasis in original). More tellingly, threat assessment, if and when conducted by liberal elites, is pre-eminently conducted through an ideological (rather than material) prism within (liberal) democratic states. The implications of this line of reasoning are quite profound and will provide fertile grounds for the development of a comprehensive critique of the validity of (liberal) democratic peace, an endeavour best left for subsequent sections. Liberal states thus perceive one another as non-threatening and, because a natural harmony of interests exists between them, war becomes both unnecessary and unjustifiable (Rock, 1997:104). As Owen (1997b:186) emphatically declares:

They [i.e. liberal elites] tend to regard a foreign state as “liberal” if it has adopted institutions compatible with those they would like to see in their own polity. They are apt to regard such a state as friendly, regardless of its material power. At the same time, they regard a foreign state that has institutions that would be harmful in their own state to be “illiberal” *and are suspicious of that state regardless of its power.* (Emphasis added)

Realists have however advanced good reasons for rejecting Owen’s (1996; 1997a; 1997b) emphasis on the import of perceptions on (liberal) democratic peace. In an especially illuminating study of great-power intentions, Rosato (2014) has illustrated the singular difficulty states experience in gauging one another’s intentions.⁵⁹ Why

⁵⁹ That it is inordinately difficult for states to gauge one another’s intentions is of course a Waltzian principle (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, p. 89).

this is especially damaging to democratic peace theory is not overly difficult to illustrate. For democratic peace theorists, the (peaceful) intentions of fellow (liberal) democracies can easily be inferred from (perceptions of) one another's (liberal) democratic norms and/or institutions. Yet, as Rosato (2014:51) notes, there are persuasive theoretical *and* historical arguments that attest to the fact that "[g]reat powers cannot confidently assess the current intentions of others based on their domestic characteristics or behaviour". Accordingly, even when (liberal) democratic states perceive one another as such, we have little warrant to believe that they can easily discern one another's (peaceful) intentions.

There is, however, another reason for rejecting Owen's emphasis on the import of perceptions to inter-democratic peace. There seems to be, as Rosato (2003:592; 2005:468) has pointed out, a conspicuous discrepancy between the theoretical argument advanced by Owen and the ways in which states have behaved historically (Rosato, 2003:592; 2005:468). The point to be stressed is *not* that perceptions are of no significance in the study of international politics but, rather, that the factors driving threat assessment are not, *pace* Owen, pre-eminently ideological in nature. Instead, an historical examination of the prevailing attitudes and perceptions of contemporaneous American political parties of the liberal credentials of foreign powers tends to show how states' perceptions of one another were less driven by ideological factors and far more by the subjectively defined personal preferences of decision makers, issues of party affiliation and/or strategic considerations (Rosato, 2005:592). We should add to this critique the fact that Owen's argument on the validity of perceptions displays an undeniable bias towards US cases (in fact, the *entirety* of his argument rests on cases involving the US) with the result being that his primary focus is on US attitudes and behaviour (Rock, 1997:149). This unfortunately yields a rather narrow base from which scholars of democratic peace could reliably predict how states would perceive each other in times of crisis (Rosato, 2005:592). Contrary to Owen, then, the *sine qua non* for inter-liberal peace, i.e. the import of perceptions, is itself much more a product of contextual and geostrategic imperatives than any objective perception of regime type.

The argument can easily be extended to other cases. In probing the nature of US perceptions of Wilhelmine Germany in the period before and following World War I,

Oren (1996) made an interesting observation. He noted how changes in US perceptions of the institutional and normative justness of the German political system were inextricably tied to changes in the international circumstances confronting the US, most notably the rapid deterioration in German-American relations (Oren, 1996:264). More to the point, US perceptions of Wilhelmine Germany were primarily influenced by “Berlin’s diplomatic and military behaviour, not the nature of its political system” (Rock, 1997:140). With the progressive development of geopolitical tensions in German-American relations around 1900, Americans increasingly came to view the German political system as illiberal (Rock, 1997:140). It should be noted, furthermore, that among contemporaneous political scientists, including the young Woodrow Wilson, the German political system prior to World War I was deemed to be a most advanced constitutional state (Oren, 1996:246).

The same can be said of British perceptions of the German political system, with British authors perceiving the latter as illiberal only in the wake of the rise of Anglo-German hostility (Rock, 1997:140). Between 1898 and 1901, quite tellingly, attempts at an Anglo-German alliance were underway, with the efforts breaking down owing to conflicting strategic *not* domestic (ideological) reasons (Layne, 1996b:356). Furthermore, as Kennedy (1989:252-253) observes, the majority of Britons, and especially those forming part of the Liberal Government, saw Germany in relatively favourable terms during the early years of the twentieth century. The subsequent Anglo-German naval race of 1908-1909, heated as it was, did a great deal to subvert those perceptions (Kennedy, 1989:253). In the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuela boundary dispute (1895-96), similarly, the import of perceptions is vastly overestimated. Members of the British cabinet agitating for peace, led by the avowedly pro-American Joseph Chamberlain (Garvin, 1934:159), held favourable impressions of the American democratic system. Yet, as Rock (1997:129) scathingly notes, “there is no concrete evidence that an affinity for U.S. democracy was decisive in determining their stance”. Instead, Britain’s strategic predicament informed their favourable impressions of the US (Rock, 1997:129). We will add to these examples in subsequent pages. For now, however, and by way of driving the point home, we cannot help but note that

[o]ver and over the unconscious convention is to count only those of whom we [the US and/or Western states] approve as democratic...and to tar enemies who run for office and compete for votes with the brush of autocracy. The convention extends from foes to friends. Those friends who lead patently authoritarian regimes might be called “king” or “president”, sometimes “leader”, but never “dictator” or its ilk (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:172).

Although we have pointed out that both institutional and normative conceptions of democratic peace are severely flawed, it would serve our purpose well if we consider still two more points of contention and, by way of concluding this section, reflect in a cursory manner on the importance of (American) hegemonic power to democratic peace theory. Firstly, we have in this section sporadically referred to problems of measurement and, in particular, difficulties relating to the quality of datasets against which democratic peace propositions are to be tested. As a particular limitation of our discipline, we should point out that the quality of data in IR is notoriously poor (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2014:441), a concession that ought to steer us away from hastily accepting the validation of our hypotheses.

Secondly, we have already noted that the issue of causation remains highly contentious within the debate on the democratic peace. More should be said. Thus Rosato (2003; 2005) notes, in a thoroughgoing examination of the causal logics of democratic peace theory, that save for correlation, little evidence exists to substantiate democratic peace proponents’ claims of causality. This conclusion sits comfortably with Layne’s (1996a; 1997; 2001) examination of the historical record, in which he found scant support for the causal validity of liberal explanations of democratic peace. Proponents of democratic peace, interestingly enough, have conceded this much. Russett (1996:339-340), for instance, emphatically states that in a like study of the four war-threatening crises examined by Layne (1996a), realist explanations “*were* predominant” and, with this in mind, he is more than willing to concede that “power and strategic interest greatly affect the calculations of all states, including democracies” (emphasis in original). Conceding this much, as Layne (1996b:356) aptly observes, does not “give the game away...it ends the game decisively”.

The point is a vitally important one, for as we know by now, proponents of democratic peace have unabashedly contended that (liberal) democracies have successfully created a separate peace in which the logic of power politics no longer holds sway. We can merely consider in this regard Doyle's (1996a:14) argument that realist theory, while providing "a plausible explanation of the general insecurity of states, offers little guidance in explaining the pacification of the liberal world". Beyond this general critique of the poverty of the causal logic of democratic peace theory, Rosato's (2003; 2005) findings expose however a still deeper deficiency in the logic underpinning liberal conceptions of democratic peace. To this end, he holds that the postulated dyadic nature of democratic peace theory, as propagated by liberal proponents of democratic peace, is baseless (Rosato, 2003; 2005). Why this should be a matter of grave concern to us and, as a corollary, the implications to be gleaned from it, are not difficult to understand.

The logic of democratic peace theory, notwithstanding vehement claims to the contrary (cf. in particular Doyle, 1996a:31; 2005:463), invariably gives rise to the expectation that liberal states will be more peaceful in general. This critique encompasses a much wider and much deeper challenge of the dyadic logic of institutional arguments previously levelled by realists. At stake here is the notion that the logic of democratic peace theory, in both its normative and institutional variants, is wholly reducible to monadic tendencies. Accordingly, while the empirical *finding* of democratic peace is dyadic in nature, the logic advanced in service of explaining it is essentially monadic (Rosato, 2005:467). Each postulated logic of democratic peace theory departs on the basis of the recognition that there are some things and/or qualities inhering in (liberal) democracies that lead them to act in qualitatively different ways from their non-democratic counterparts. The essence of the logic of democratic peace, resting as it does on a "multiplier argument" (Rosato, 2005:467), can perhaps be more clearly illustrated mathematically: " $a| + b| = >c$, where $a|$ stands for liberal democratic state marked by a high aptitude for conflict-resolution and a low propensity for violence (thus constitutive of a monadic tendency), $b|$ implies similar characteristics found within another liberal state, and $>c$ denotes the probability of peace are greatly enhanced by the combined effects of $a|$ and $b|$ " (Coetzee, 2011:65; cf. also Rosato, 2005:467). It is hardly surprising that liberal scholars of democratic peace have fiercely rejected Rosato's (2003; 2005) claims (cf. in particular Kinsella,

2005:456). They point out that a great many proponents of democratic peace, with Michael Doyle the pre-eminent example, have steadfastly insisted that the logic underpinning their arguments is wholly dyadic in nature: liberal relations *inter se* are qualitatively different from relations with non-liberal states. This, unfortunately, opens up the proverbial Pandora's box of perceptions, an enterprise we have already cautioned against.

In concluding this section, and by way of further extending our charge of the explanatory limitations of perceptions, it might be useful to say a few words here on the relationship between American might and the absence of war between (liberal) democratic states. It has been suggested that the origins and sustainability of the so-called (liberal) democratic zone of peace is largely dependent on American military and economic might (Gat, 2007; cf. also Smith, 2007:118; Rosato, 2003:599-600). With this in mind, former US Secretary of Defence, Robert M. Gates, noted that the "power and global reach of its military have been an indispensable contributor to world peace" (Gates, 2009:39). In similar vein, US president Barack Obama, in his acceptance speech at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, conceded that "the instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace" (Obama, 2009a). Moreover, not only has US power been indispensable to the development of (liberal) democracy, but, tellingly, it has also greatly affected positive perceptions thereof (Gat, 2007). The uneasy relationship between American might and the development and sustainability of (liberal) democratic peace has not gone unnoticed by proponents of (liberal) democratic peace. Doyle (1996a:28), for instance, has conceded that in the absence of hegemonic leadership the (liberal) democratic zone of peace would be seriously imperilled. This concession, we should point out, has the unfortunate effect of thrusting liberal arguments of democratic peace squarely within the theoretical ambit of realist theory (Smith, 2007:117), and has the effect – one would think – of decisively giving the game away.

4.3 Birds of a feather flock together? Claims and expectations of democratic peace theory and Waltzian structural realism

Do birds of a feather really flock together and, if so, why? Put differently, have (liberal) democratic states remained reliably at peace and, if the claim is borne out by

historical validation, for what reasons? The first of these questions, i.e. the historical-empirical validation of democratic peace theory, is a question to be answered in subsequent sections and in the following chapter. For now, we would like to know *why* we should expect peace to hold reliably between pairs of (liberal) democracies. From what has been said in preceding sections, we know that the absence of war between (liberal) democracies is generally attributed to the operation, and in some cases, the interaction of two forces for peace: (liberal) democratic norms and institutions. Where the two forces operate in tandem and, concurrently, where pairs of (liberal) democracies perceive each other in favourable (i.e. (liberal) democratic) terms, peace becomes a realistic proposition. More to the point, in cases of war-threatening crises, the expectation is that (liberal) democratic states, irrespective of the particular military and geostrategic considerations at play, will forego war owing to their mutual recognition of, and respect for, one another's domestic institutions and norms. There is, then, something unique – and uniquely peaceful – about the institutions and/or norms of (liberal) democracies, such that these enable decision makers to perceive one another as “reasonable, predictable, and trustworthy” (Owen, 1996:124). But what, essentially, are the unique institutional and normative properties underpinning (liberal) democratic states? Although we have touched on these matters, it might be prudent to more fully expound the idiosyncratic nature of (liberal) democratic institutions and norms.

Let us first examine the institutional argument underpinning democratic peace theory. The institutional arrangements characteristic of (liberal) democracies rest wholly on the notions of accountability and representation. The (in)formal division of powers within (liberal) democracies, the notions of representation and checks and balances, and the necessity of popular support (consent), imply that (liberal) democratic leaders are more nearly constrained from waging war than their non-democratic counterparts (Russett, 1995c:38). It is, essentially, the old argument that peace becomes possible when control of policy is placed in the hands of the people (Waltz, 2001:101). For Owen (1996:122-128), similarly, (liberal) democratic institutions provide citizens with the instruments to constrain and alter decision makers' behaviour, with these instruments consisting of freedom of speech, regular competitive elections and the necessity of public consultation in cases where war looms large. Doyle (1996:21), in laying bare the essential features of Kant's

conception of republican government, notes that the civil constitution of (liberal) democratic states ought to be republican in form. This is meant to denote a state in which absolute sovereignty is vested in its citizens and in which a separation of legislative and executive powers obtains (Huntley, 1996:48). A republican government, organised along these lines, thus induces a constitutionally structured path of caution typified by a relationship of accountability between government and the governed. Democratic representation, coupled with the notion of ‘trias politica’, yields hesitation as against autocratic caprice (Doyle, 2005:464). In Kant’s own conception, the institutional argument rests, accordingly, on the notion that:

If the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war...But, on the other hand, in a constitution which is not republican...a declaration of war is the easiest thing in the world to decide upon, because war does not require of the ruler, who is the proprietor and not a member of the state, the least sacrifice of the pleasures of his table, the chase, his country houses, his court functions, and the like (Kant cited in Doyle, 1996:24-25).

This tells us some big and important things about the (qualitatively different) institutional arrangements of (liberal) democratic states. What, then, is there to be said for the unique properties of (liberal) democratic norms? It is accepted dogma that norms of respect, trust, compromise and non-violent conflict resolution extant within (liberal) democracies are externalised in their foreign relations. Internally, these norms enable (liberal) democracies to resolve their conflicts peacefully and, importantly, “*without the threat of violence*”; when externalised, they become an enormous force for peace and constitute the very basis from which (liberal) democratic states project positive perceptions of one another (Russett, 1995c:31; emphasis added). The net result is the existence of what Russett (1995c:32) calls “a transnational democratic culture”, in which pairs of (liberal) democracies are seen as natural bearers of rights. These rights serve to mitigate fears among (liberal) democracies that they will dominate one another (Russett, 1995c:32). Faced with war-threatening crises, (liberal) democracies thus apply “democratic norms” in their

relations with one another which serve to “prevent most conflicts from mounting to the *threat or use of military force*” (Russett, 1995c:33; emphasis added). At the heart of this dovish behaviour, then, is the notion that in cases of war-threatening crises between pairs of (liberal) democracies, an unusually high degree of trust and respect obtains. Indeed, as more recent studies continue to stress, “mutual trust and respect are paramount for peaceful resolution of conflicts” (Zimelis, 2012:18).⁶⁰ Respect emanates from the existence of shared norms; trust from the expectation that (liberal) democratic states will respect one another and, consequently, be constrained normatively from engaging in belligerent behaviour (Rosato, 2003:586).

In his rendition of the normative argument, Owen (1996:124) notes that the philosophical commitment to individual liberty deeply embedded within liberal ideology, coupled with the necessity of (liberal) democratic states perceiving each other as such, acts to powerfully restrain pairs of (liberal) democracies from waging war. Perceptions of reasonableness, predictability and trustworthiness, owing to (liberal) democracies’ pursuance and protection of their citizens’ true interests, constitute the lifeblood of (liberal) democratic relations *inter se* (Owen, 1996:124). What is more, not only do (liberal) democratic states afford one another an unusually high degree of trust and respect, but, Owen (1996:124) argues, pairs of (liberal) democracies understand one another’s intentions, and these intentions “are *always* pacific toward fellow liberal democracies” (emphasis added).

For Doyle (1996:10), similarly, liberal ideas and norms – in particular, “the importance of the freedom of the individual” – form the essential foundation for the absence of war between (liberal) democratic states. Liberal ideas and norms implicate a steadfast commitment to and preservation of “the legitimate rights of all individuals” (Doyle, 2005:464). These rights, forming part of Kant’s conception of republican government, take the form of augmenting the right of democratic participation or representation with a two-fold set of rights: those that are generally labelled as the negative freedoms (i.e. freedoms of conscience, press, and speech; legal equality; and the right to private property) and those more properly referred to

⁶⁰ For liberals, and Zimelis (2012:18) most notably, democracy and trust are essentially inseparable. He defines trust as “the belief that others through their actions or inaction will contribute to my/our well-being and refrain from inflicting damage upon me/us”. We shall come to see in subsequent sections, however, that the quality of international-political life implies that trust is a scarce commodity.

as the positive freedoms (i.e. a combination of socio-economic rights ranging from equal opportunities in educational matters to health care and employment, each necessary for individuals to effectively express themselves and participate in society) (Doyle, 1996:4-5).

In international affairs, then, and in relations between (liberal) democracies specifically, mutual trust and respect are predicated on the manifest (overt) adherence to the norms, ideas and principles constituting the core of liberal theory. Thus, as Doyle (2005:464) explains, “domestically just republics, which rest on consent, presume foreign republics to be also consensual, just, and therefore deserving of accommodation”. We should add here that (liberal) democracies’ positive perceptions of one another, in addition to being predicated on the notion of domestic justness, is further strengthened by the existence of mutually beneficial economic ties (Doyle, 1996:26-27). The existence of such ties, liberals argue, is emblematic of the notion that (liberal) democratic states have every material (economic) incentive to predispose their states towards cooperative policies and away from those policies undermining their stake in situations of mutually beneficial economic exchange (Layne, 1996a:161). This argument is of course nothing new. In a memorandum written in November and December 1861, British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, noted that “Commercial Intercourse is the best Security for Peace, because it creates Interests which would be damaged by War [sic]” (in Claussen, 1940:517). Economic interdependence thus fosters peace, with the prospect of peace increasing as interdependence deepens.

We know from previous sections (and not excepting this one) that liberals – most notably, Owen and Doyle – steadfastly believe that the *interaction* of (liberal) democratic norms and institutions create the conditions for peace. Peace, accordingly, is dependent on norms and institutions working in tandem. We have, in fact, taken great care in these pages to labour this point, for it is in every respect a highly pertinent one. In pointing towards the import of this matter, care should be taken to answer two interrelated questions: one, what is the nature of the interaction of (liberal) democratic norms and institutions?; and two, in what ways does the interaction between (liberal) democratic norms and institutions affect the prospects for peace? In considering the first of our questions, Doyle (1996; 2005) notes that the

interaction of three interrelated pillars of liberal thought accounts for, on the one hand, the absence of war between pairs of (liberal) democracies and, on the other, the war-proneness of (liberal) democracies in their relations with non-democracies: (i) a republican constitution marked by juridical equality, democratic representation and the operation of the doctrine of 'trias politica'; (ii) a system of rights in which individual liberties are advanced and protected; and (iii) transnational (economic) interdependence. This, however, tells us very little about the *nature* of the interaction between (liberal) democratic norms and institutions. Owen's (1996:122) account is far more insightful. He argues that while liberal norms and ideas create a culture conducive to prohibiting war between (liberal) democracies, (liberal) democratic institutions provide the mechanism through which these norms and ideas affect foreign policy and international relations (Owen, 1996:122). This neatly settles the first of our questions, while leaving the second one still unanswered.

In many ways, the second question is far more consequential, especially in the light of the argument developed here. Peace, we are told, can only obtain if and when *both* normative and institutional forces operate. We see this most prominently in Doyle's (1986; 1996; 2005) work, where the possibility and sustainability of peace is wholly dependent on *all* three forces obtaining simultaneously: "No one of these constitutional, international or cosmopolitan sources is alone sufficient, but together (*and only where together*) they plausibly connect the characteristics of liberal polities and economies with sustained liberal peace" (Doyle, 1996:27; emphasis added). When the specific attributes laid bare above thus combine, and where they complement each other, we can expect, following Doyle and Owen, that (liberal) democracies are likely to remain at peace with one another; conversely, the expectation holds that in the absence of one or more of these pillars the pendulum swings towards the other end of the spectrum, i.e. the outright possibility of war.

4.3.1 Democratic peace theory: general expectations of war and peace

In light of the claims of proponents of democratic peace set forth above, and as we gradually veer towards examining the concrete world of international politics, what expectations can be gleaned from democratic peace theory? Framed differently, in looking at the world of international politics from the vantage point of democratic

peace theory, what do we expect to see? Some of these expectations have already been advanced elsewhere in these pages, though in relatively crude form. From what has been said before, we know that liberals contend that (liberal) democracies act, and have historically acted, in qualitatively different ways from their non-liberal counterparts, that they have in essence created among themselves “a cooperative foundation [...] of a remarkably effective kind” (Doyle, 1996:10). In Russett’s (1995c:24) mind, this takes the form of arguing that (liberal) democratic norms and institutions have enabled pairs of (liberal) democracies to “supersede the “realist” principles (anarchy, the security dilemma of states) that have dominated practice to the exclusion of “liberal” or “idealist” ones since at least the seventeenth century”.

In more concrete terms, then, democratic peace theory yields the following expectations about the world of international politics:

- Pairs of (liberal) democracies will forego war with one another if and when they perceive each other as (liberal) democratic – i.e. they will not perceive one another as a security threat and war will be deemed unnecessary and unjustifiable (Owen, 1997b:159; Rock, 1997:104; Layne, 1997:66);
- A (liberal) democratic state, after perceiving a state to be illiberal, will be confrontational towards that state and regard it as an outright security threat (Owen, 1997b:159; Layne, 1997:66);
- When crises erupt between pairs of (liberal) democracies, recourse to war is not considered a viable option and, in such cases, public opinion⁶¹ will be overwhelmingly pacific (Layne, 1997:66);
- When crises erupt between (liberal) democratic and autocratic states, and when the former perceives the latter to be illiberal, recourse to war is considered a viable option and, in such cases, public opinion will be overwhelmingly bellicose;
- A high degree of trust and respect will obtain between pairs of (liberal) democracies; conversely, the absence of trust will mark relations between

⁶¹ Public opinion, we should point out, provides not only a measure of the institutional constraint of (liberal) democratic institutions, but also tells us something about the trust and respect (liberal) democracies ostensibly afford one another (Layne, 1996a:165).

(liberal) democratic states and their non-liberal counterparts (Owen, 1996:132);

- In war-threatening crises between (liberal) democracies, liberals will agitate for peace. In crises between (liberal) democracies and illiberal states, liberals will agitate for war (Owen, 1996:132);
- Pairs of (liberal) democracies understand one another's intentions and that these intentions are *always* pacific towards one another (Owen, 1996:124; emphasis added);
- In war-threatening crises, pairs of (liberal) democracies will seek to resolve their crises by externalising domestic norms of compromise, non-violent conflict resolution, and trust and respect (Russett, 1995c:35). Consequently, preparations for war, the use of military threats, ultimatums, unwavering hard-lines and so-called big stick diplomacy are deemed relics of *Realpolitik* and anathema to (liberal) democratic relations *inter se* (Layne, 1997:66; Layne, 1996a:165);
- Pairs of (liberal) democracies, faced with a war-threatening crisis, will go to great lengths to accommodate one another. If and when threats are made, these should be seen as a last, not a first, resort (Layne, 1996a:166);
- Owing to their being less constrained, leaders of illiberal states will "more easily, rapidly, and *secretly* initiate" conflict (Russett, 1995c:40; emphasis added);
- The existence of mutually beneficial ties of economic interdependence enhances cooperation and, ultimately, peace (Layne, 1996a:161);
- In situations of peace and war, (liberal) democratic states will not act in ways that undermine one another's vital security interests. Withholding of information critical to a fellow (liberal) democracy's national security and colluding with one another's adversaries jar with the spirit of trust and respect (liberal) democracies afford one another.

4.3.2 Democratic peace theory: a wish upon a shooting star? Waltzian expectations of war and peace

We now have firmly in hand a great many expectations about the world of international politics as outlined by proponents of democratic peace theory. The picture to be drawn from this is one in which the quality of international-political life is wholly reducible to the attributes, actions and interactions of the behaving units. It is, essentially, the old reductionist logic alluded to in Chapter 3 of this study that “good states produce good outcomes [and] bad states, bad ones” (Waltz, 2004:3). In this world, and in relations between (liberal) democracies *inter se*, cooperation and compromise are rife, trust is plentiful and crises are amicably resolved on the basis of the externalisation of (liberal) democratic norms. A radically different picture of the world of international politics, and a markedly different set of expectations, emerge however once we direct our eyes towards Waltz’s structural realist theory. In painting this picture, the following ought to be kept firmly in mind: although the expectations to be advanced here have immediate bearing on the (in)validity of democratic peace theory, they are at once pitched at a far greater level of generality and inclusivity. One of the central contentions of this study, the reader will do well to remember, is that throughout much of history a basic continuity in the conduct of international politics is discernible. In light of Waltzian structural realism, then, what are these continuities?

In seeking to answer this question, the following expectations can be gleaned from Waltz’s structural realist theory:

- Across and within different international-political systems, an unusually high premium is placed by states, and the great powers pre-eminently among them, on power politics as a means of surviving in a hostile and competitive international-political environment;
- Changes in the internal qualities of states do not neatly coincide with changes at the international-political level such that we can expect a similarity in great power behaviour within and across different international-political systems irrespective of changes at the unit-level;

- The environment in which states, and the great powers in particular, conduct their affairs demands of them to make calculations over possible alliance partners less on the basis of ideology and more on that of interest – or, as Inbar (2012:23) aptly phrases this proposition, “Realpolitik can create partnerships between strange bedfellows”. In relation to democratic peace theory, we expect, accordingly, (liberal) democracies to foster relationships with both (liberal) democratic *and* non-liberal states;
- Although a basic continuity in behaviour is discernible across time and space, we nonetheless expect the behaviour of states, and the outcomes of their interactions, to vary in accordance with different international-political systems. Bipolarity, accordingly, holds a much greater promise of peace than multipolar systems do; unipolar systems, as against both, drastically increase the prospects for war and are marked by the desultory use and abuse of power by the dominant power;
- States will tend to act in ways that lead towards balance in the system, whether or not they intentionally act with this end in mind. Unbalanced power, irrespective of its current beneficiary, will one day be brought into balance;
- In anarchic systems, balancing behaviour is expected from states and as the structure of the system varies, so do the means by which balancing proceeds. In multipolar systems, accordingly, balancing results from alliance formation and internal efforts; in bipolar systems, balancing proceeds primarily through internal efforts;
- As numbers increase, complications accelerate. To this end, multipolar systems are generally marked by an increase in uncertainties gauging the relative military capabilities of states as well as difficulties in estimating the relative strength and cohesion of alliances. Conversely, as numbers dwindle to two, uncertainties gauging the relative military capabilities of states and difficulties in estimating alliance strength and cohesion decrease;
- In competitive and self-help environments, the premium falls on survival, on taking care of yourself in as many ways as realistically possible, and on working to lessen your dependence. Accordingly, we expect to find the conduct of international politics to be marked by the persistence of military and economic competition between states, most especially the great powers;

- In situations marked by unregulated competition, as is the case in international affairs, trust is an extremely scarce commodity;
- The limits imposed by anarchic realms on an international division of labour hold that states are constrained to fulfil similar functions and, owing to this, a great deal of emulation (of policies, capabilities, behaviour, attributes and institutions) occurs. With this in mind, states veer their eyes towards the practices and modes of behaviour of the more successful competitors and, in finding these, seek to emulate them;
- Though not in any way impeding cooperative behaviour among states, the environment in which the units of the international-political system act limits the extent of their cooperation in significant ways. The environment is one marked by a general condition of insecurity, in which the future intentions and actions of others are inordinately difficult to gauge. The international-political system thus encourages states to ‘take care of yourself’, to concern themselves more with relative than with absolute gains;
- In competitive and self-help systems, changes in the behaviour of some of the units will scarcely alter outcomes unless the changes are system-wide or, failing that, the structure of their field of activity is changed – in essence, what Alfred E. Kahn has suggested with the phrase ‘the tyranny of small decisions’ (cf. Chapter 3);
- Each state plots its own course and devise its own strategies in accordance with *its* perception of needs and interests;
- States wish to maintain their relative position vis-à-vis other states;
- Pairs of (liberal) democracies, when faced with war-threatening crises and when vital interests are at stake⁶², will refrain from war owing to realist factors relating to military and (geo)strategic considerations. In such cases, (liberal) democracies would not be inhibited from resorting to military threats and military build-ups, ultimatums and big-stick diplomacy in their relations with one another.⁶³

⁶² As Layne (1996a:166) aptly points out, realist theory points us towards the existence of a ratio of national interest to (liberal) democratic respect: the greater the interests at stake, the less likely pairs of (liberal) democracies are to respect one another.

⁶³ We should stress, in the strongest possible terms, that while we expect the predominance of (structural) realist factors, peace does not only result from external (international-political) factors. As Waltz (2000a:13) has insisted, peace “is maintained by a delicate balance of internal and external

4.4 Peering from within: (Waltzian) theoretical reflection on democratic peace theory

In the introductory section of this chapter, we alluded briefly to the question whether the evidence stacked up *against* democratic peace theory is as compelling as realist scholars suggest. Our answer at that juncture, and one to be more thoroughly engaged with in this section and in the following chapter, was a resounding ‘yes’. In labouring in defence of this answer, we have throughout this chapter endeavoured to point the reader towards some of the more pertinent limitations of democratic peace theory, most especially those deemed to be theoretical in nature. This task, though done with care in preceding sections, will continue in the present, and in particular by providing a theoretical critique of democratic peace theory on the basis of a number of (Waltzian) propositions advanced in Chapter 3 of this study. In completing this task, our immediate concern will then fall on bringing history to bear on the differing sets of expectations advanced above. It is, however, to the former task that we now turn our attention.

From the expectations set forth above, and from the theory advanced in preceding chapters, Waltzian structural realism leads us to expect that changes within states do not neatly translate into behavioural changes at the level of international politics. The environment in which states conduct their affairs, we shall recall, is one in which an unusually high premium is placed on taking care of yourself, of prioritising *national* rather than international interests, of competing with all one’s might in the arts and machinery of warfare, and of emulating the practices of the more successful competitors. It is an environment, as Britain’s Foreign Secretary Canning soon realised subsequent to the collapse of the European alliance system in the 1820s, where the dictum of “[e]very nation for itself” reigns supreme (quoted in Woodruff, 1981:85). Why such an environment is bound to be one anathema to the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory is not overly difficult to illustrate. Recall from Chapter 3 some of the (Waltzian) propositions advanced: “To expect states of any sort to rest reliably at peace in a condition of anarchy would require *the uniform and enduring perfection of all of them*” (Waltz, 2001:x; emphasis added); and, one

constraints”. This is all the more the case if the focus falls on providing detailed explanations of states’ foreign policies.

“cannot begin to behave decently unless he has some assurance that others will not be able to ruin him” (Waltz, 2001:6-7). We can add to these two the proposition that the conditions of international politics militate against statesmen thinking and acting in accordance with the legal and moral principles appropriate and practicable within domestic politics (Waltz, 2001:38).

Underscoring all three of the above-mentioned propositions, however, is the more general one that the structure of the international-political system creates a condition in which the individual units of the system are victims of what Alfred E. Kahn has described as the ‘tyranny of small decisions’. Accordingly, while the units of the international-political system are free to behave as they like⁶⁴, they are nonetheless constrained in significant ways. It is, essentially, another way of saying that the *requirements* of state action are defined not by the individual units, but by the circumstances (or environment) in which they all operate (Waltz, 2001:16). Thus, in expounding the difficulties inherent in ‘the tyranny of small decisions’, Waltz (1970:108) notes that “[s]ome courses of action I cannot sensibly follow unless you do too, and you and I cannot sensibly follow them unless we are pretty sure that many others will as well” (Waltz, 1970:108). In *Man, the State and War*, the proposition is stated with equal vigour. With each state being the arbiter of its own cause, and with the ready availability of the use of force to implement their policies, the possibility that some states may use force implies that *all* must be ready to do so or suffer the consequences (Waltz, 2001:160). Along similar lines, a great many states may implicate themselves in a game where the *preference* is for all the states to cooperate in transcending problems of maximization; other states, while cognisant of this preference, may prefer to have no part in this game at all. The net result, accruing from the structure of the system in which the states are embedded, is that the freedom of choice of any individual state is significantly restrained by the behaviour of *all* the other states – and, importantly, the limitation “applies as much to the process of deciding which game to play as it does to the actual playing of the game” (Waltz, 2001:204). As we shall further recall from Chapter 3, in international

⁶⁴ One often hears the charge that Adolf Hitler’s behaviour fits this mould, i.e. that he was essentially an irrational actor – a madman – whose behaviour lends little in the way of stating something generalizable about international politics. Yet, as various scholars have indicated, his foreign policies proved remarkably similar to his predecessors and reflected “straightforward power calculations” (Kelanic, 2016:196).

politics, the game to be won and the kind of player likely to excel therein, is defined by the structure of the international-political system (Waltz, 1979:75).

Although we have provided one or two practical illustrations of the limitations inherent in this proposition, i.e. the tyranny of small decisions (cf. Chapter 3, p. 90-91), it might serve our purposes well to provide still a few more. As a matter of course, in assessing their vehicular options concerning commuting to and from work, each of many persons may opt to commute by private car instead of by train or bus. Private cars, their drivers would argue, remove a great many barriers in terms of rigidity of schedule and limitations concerning choice of destination; yet under certain conditions, say bad weather or congested roads, commuting by train or bus may provide a delightful convenience (Waltz, 1979:108). Also, in weighing their options concerning where to buy their groceries, i.e. either at supermarkets or the corner grocery store, consumers may opt for the former owing to their sheer size and lower prices; yet under certain conditions, say the preference of avoiding exhaustively long supermarket queues, the corner grocery store provides a delightful convenience (Waltz, 1979:108). In exercising these choices, the general preference of individuals for commuting to and from work by private car and for shopping at supermarkets has the effect of reducing the overall need for passenger service and decreasing the number of corner grocery stores (Waltz, 1979:108). These outcomes, we should note, probably fly in the face of what most people would like to see happen and, in desperately trying to prevent these services from disappearing, they may be more than willing to pay for their continuance. And yet, as Waltz, (1979:108) notes, in both cases the individual units can scarcely do anything to affect the outcomes: “[i]ncreased patronage *would* do it, [but not increased patronage by me and the few others I might persuade to follow my example]” (emphasis in original).

One more illustration would suffice to drive the point home. By way of a comparative study of different cultures, anthropologist Margaret Mead reached the conclusion that the period of adolescence need not be one of vexation (Waltz, 2001:54). In Samoan society, notably, this is not the case. Adolescent frustration, she argued, results less from human nature and much more from culturally established patterns of behaviour. With this firmly in mind, Mead then inquired about the possibility of individual American parents using Samoan techniques to facilitate the readjustment of their

children. Her answer neatly captures the limitations of such a practice and, concurrently, reveals once more the inherent difficulties implied by the proposition raised above:

The individual American parents, who believe in a practice like the Samoan, and permit their children to see adult human bodies and gain a wider experience of the functioning of the human body than is commonly permitted in our civilisation, are building upon sand. For the child, as soon as it leaves the protecting circle of its home, is blasted by an attitude which regards such experience in children as ugly and unnatural (quoted in Waltz, 2001:54).

In this illustration, as in those raised above, the gist of the matter is this: if all, or a great many, American families unreservedly followed the Samoan practice, American adolescents would presumably experience a far less vexatious adolescence – yet, with some (more likely, most) American families opting to raise their children on traditional mores, the expected result is a *far more* vexatious adolescence for those children involved (Waltz, 2001:54). These illustrations tell us some big and important things about the limitations of the behaviour of individual units – or, alternatively phrased, the tyranny of small decisions – in *domestic* contexts.

In international politics, as against this, the effect(s) accruing from this proposition is still more pronounced. The game of *international* politics, unlike politico-strategic and/or bargaining games operative in the domestic context, is singularly distinctive in that the stakes involved are deemed to be of unusually high importance and, perhaps more importantly, the use of force as a means of altering outcomes is not excluded (Waltz, 2001:205). Excelling at this game requires of the units of the international-political system to heed the game's cardinal rule: "[d]o whatever you must in order to win it". Here, as in the illustrations cited above, but with the attendant and more vexing problem of the readily available use of force, if some units of the international-political system act in accordance with this rule, or are *expected* to do so, other states must follow suit (Waltz, 2001:205).

The proposition plays itself out – and has played itself out – in a myriad of ways in the conduct of international politics. With this in mind, and against the more immediate backdrop of considerations about possible future contenders for great power status, Kaiser Wilhelm was strongly urged by Admiral Tirpitz at the close of the nineteenth century that Germany's aspirations to great power status – i.e. to be one of the “four World Powers: Russia, England, America and Germany” – are inextricably linked to her (also) building a big navy (Kennedy, 1984:157-158). In thus raising the issue with the Kaiser, he impressed upon the latter's (strategic) mind the sobering thought that a great and expanding battle fleet was

an absolute necessity for Germany, without which it will face ruin...Since Germany is particularly backward in sea power, it is a life-and-death question for her, as a World Power and great cultural state, to make up the lost ground...[T]herefore power, sea power, is essential if Germany is not to go under swiftly (quoted in Kennedy, 1984:157-158).

Similarly, in the context of France's waning power vis-à-vis the other great powers, a Monsieur Darcy admonished the French government that “those who do not advance, go backwards and who goes back goes under” (quoted in Kennedy, 1989:196). A final illustration will suffice for now. In reflecting in his memoirs upon the tumultuous years prior to 1914, Sir Edward Grey lamented the harsh reality that “[i]f there are armaments on one side there must be armaments on other sides. While one nation arms, other nations cannot tempt it to aggression by remaining defenceless” (quoted in Kennedy, 1984:165).

If the illustrations cited above suggest something about the difficulty of action facing states in international politics, in what way(s) do they have bearing on the logic of democratic peace theory? The answer, one presumes, will depend on whom we ask. For realists, these illustrations and the propositions of which they form part are bound to hold a great many implications for democratic peace theory; for liberals, (un)fortunately very little. In justifying their answer, liberal scholars of democratic peace would surely contend that the interplay between liberal ideology and institutions has enabled liberal states to redefine the rules of the game of international politics. They have created among themselves, the argument would

presumably go, a different culture of anarchy, incidentally a notion wholly in keeping with constructivist thought (McDonald, 2013:69). In adopting this line of reasoning, three implications are immediately evident, namely that: one, the general rules of the game of international politics, as depicted within (Waltzian) structural realist thought, is relatively weakly embedded in the fabric and practice of international politics; two, the rules of the game of international politics can easily be altered provided that the actors are of the right kind; and three, in knowing the constraints of the structure of the international-political system, these states are not only able to appropriately adjust their strategies (cf. Chapter 3, p. 90), but to redefine the environment in which they operate altogether. Taken to its logical end, this line of reasoning holds that the adoption of liberal norms and institutions at once endows liberal states with new interests and new ways of behaving – the identity and behaviour of the units, in essence, have been reconstituted. International politics, for this select group of states at least, is then no longer conducted on the basis of the old footing, one where interest more often than not prevails over ideology. While this line of reasoning is undoubtedly an alluring one, we have good theoretical (and, in due time, historical) reasons for doubting its validity.

The difference of politics conducted within structurally distinct realms is however an inordinately pertinent and vexing one. From the above we know that the playing of the game of international politics, unlike politico-strategic and/or bargaining games to be played in the domestic context, is singularly distinctive given the unusually high stakes involved coupled with the ready availability of force to alter outcomes. In the domestic context, with formally organised agencies established to preserve the security of the units (i.e. to counteract the private use of force), individuals and groups can *more readily* couch their identity and behaviour in moral and/or ethical terms. They are free to run the risk of prioritising the moral and/or ethical components in their conduct, knowing full-well that publicly organised agencies are tasked with mitigating the security implications subsequent to the breakdown of such conduct. In international politics, this is hardly the case. With force being not the *ultima ratio* but the pre-eminent and constant one and on account of the absence of any formally established agencies to do anything about it (Waltz, 1979:113), individual units who ignore the fundamental rules of the game of international politics – to wit, ‘take care of yourself’ and ‘do whatever you must to win’ – do so only at their

own peril. The units of the system, unlike in the domestic context, are thus constrained to prioritise national security considerations over moral and/or ethical ones, there scarcely being anyone else to shoulder such burdens. In doing this, in considering their options amid uncertainty about the intentions of the other units of the system, each state plots its course and devises its own strategies in accordance with *its* perception of needs and interests. Moreover, in situations where force is the ultimate arbiter, and in systems in which the units are tightly constrained, acting to change the rules of the game is inordinately difficult. Recall, once more, the proposition advanced earlier, now framed within the context of the structurally distinct difficulties of the international-political system: unless *everyone* acts in morally decent ways, one can scarcely be expected to do so – or, alternatively phrased, if some units of the international-political system act in accordance with these rules, or are expected to do so, other states best follow suit.

Notwithstanding this, are we not justified in saying that two liberal states, in perceiving one another as such, are able to escape the constraints of the international-political system identified above and, where applicable, fundamentally alter the rules of the game of international politics? For the reasons advanced above, and in the light of one more to be identified at this juncture, the answer must be in the negative. We shall recall from Chapter 3 that in international politics the game to be played and won, and the kind of player likely to excel in this game, is defined not by the units themselves but by the structure of the system of which they form part. In an international-political system in which the private use of force is *not* the concern of the units themselves, and one in which the intentions of the units *are* relatively clear, the expectation that liberal relations will be marked by a high degree of peace, trust and respect is, *ceteris paribus*, not a wholly unrealistic one. In international politics, however, all things are never equal – and, more problematic still, the international-political system *is* one where the private use of force is matched by the absence of any formal agencies to do anything about it and the intentions of the units *are* inordinately difficult to gauge. In an environment marked by the absence of any formally established agencies to counteract the private use of force, the old realist saying that “a state cannot be sure that today’s friend will not be tomorrow’s enemy” is much more than a cunningly devised poetic phrase (Waltz, 2000a:10).

In concluding this section, it might serve our purposes to bring one or two more Waltzian principles to bear on the logic of democratic peace theory. In Chapter 3 (Section 3.2, p. 75) of this study, we argued that first and second image analyses of international politics proceed on the basis of the possibility of international peace being inextricably wedded to the “uniform and enduring perfection” of *all* the units. The issue, we argued, is then twofold: one, defining and agreeing on the nature of the ‘good’ state; and two, figuring out both how to get *all* the states to this ideal and how to get them there *all at once*. The first part of the issue, which is defining and agreeing on the nature of the ‘good’ state, is particularly relevant at this juncture. Definitions and assessments of the ‘good’ state, or those directed at unravelling which actors constitute the ‘right’ kind, cannot ever be value-free. Not only are such definitions as a matter of course tainted with the smells and flavours of ideological predilections, but it appears to be the case that they are as much a product of the situation and capabilities of states. The theory as *well* as the story of international politics, we should point out, is written not in terms of the units of the least, but the greatest, capability of an era (Waltz, 1979:72). In competitive realms in which the units of the system are required to fend for themselves, the units of greatest capability are sure to define notions of justice, fairness and, as indicated in Chapter 3, even the ‘good’ state, in accordance with their own conceptions thereof – and such conceptions are never void of power-political considerations.

As an illustration of how the placement of states affects not only the behaviour of the units, but also their perceptions of the moral propriety (or goodness) of one another, consider Thucydides’ account of the Peloponnesian War (Waltz, 1979:127). From the outset of the war, the units of lesser capability (in this instance, the lesser Greek city-states) cast the stronger Athens in the role of tyrant and the weaker Sparta in that of liberator (Waltz, 1979:127). Thucydides, however, found this portrayal “perfectly natural in the circumstances”, yet presciently notes “that the parts of tyrant and liberator did not correspond with any permanent moral quality in these states, but were simply masks which would one day be interchanged, to the astonishment of the beholder, *when the balance of power was altered*” (Jaeger, 1945:397; emphasis added).

From Chapter 3 we also know, however, that there is another side to this issue, that of establishing how good (i.e. morally perfect) the 'good' state must be in order for peace between (liberal) states to become a realistic proposition. With this firmly in mind, we noted that for Kant the proper external behaviour of states was wholly dependent on their reaching a sufficient level of internal perfection (Waltz, 2008a:12). If modern conceptions of liberalism and democracy purportedly speak to this, if they fulfil in essence Kant's desideratum of internal perfection, then one observation is particularly noteworthy here. With this in mind, we should note that very few states (perhaps any and certainly none before the 1960s) have historically fit the bill. As a particularly alarming indictment against democratic peace theory, it is worth pointing out that notwithstanding the pervasiveness of white racism in the domestic and/or foreign policies of Western (liberal) democratic states, the majority of scholars of democratic peace persistently fail in disqualifying them as (liberal) democracies (Henderson, 2002:79). Thus we find Belgium coded as a democratic state from 1830 onwards (with the exception of the period in which it was occupied), notwithstanding Belgian King Leopold II committing an egregious genocide in the Rubber Terror of the Belgian Congo in which a purported 10,000,000 Africans were slaughtered in a period spanning 40 years (Henderson, 2002:79).

More troubling, the US is from the 18th century onwards consistently portrayed by democratic peace scholars as the quintessential paragon of democracy, this notwithstanding the well-documented and deeply entrenched racialized nature of American society and political life. It is against this backdrop that Henderson (2002:82) contends that "perhaps states that have racism as a central element of their state's domestic and foreign policies are not really democracies".⁶⁵ Again, only from the mid-twentieth century onwards were headway really made in dealing with and repealing racially driven discriminatory laws and practices. While this problem has received the attention it deserves, it is worth mentioning that other equally vexing problems have surfaced in recent years. Following the events of 9/11, liberal democracies – with the US, again, the pre-eminent example – have adopted anti-

⁶⁵ One should perhaps add that any state in which the systematic suppression and/or denial of women's rights is the order of the day is equally undeserving of the label 'liberal democratic'. On this score, note that women's suffrage became a constitutionally guaranteed right in the US only since 1920 and that Harvard College, for instance, only admitted female undergraduate students since 1973 (D'Anieri, 2017:106).

terror legislation which has steadfastly sacrificed human rights on the altar of security (Conversi, 2006:247). Consequently, as was variously argued in Chapter 3, if the quintessential 'good' state(s) is still not good enough, we are led to question the validity of any prescription for peace based exclusively on the second image of international relations. Yet with situations of conflict arising not only from defects in the units of the international-political system but also from the environment in which they conduct their affairs, it is at any rate doubtful whether the internal perfection of the individual units (however defined) would suffice to bring forth harmony in anarchy (Waltz, 2001:119).

4.5 Promises, promises? Waltzian structural realism, democratic peace theory and the weight of history

In bringing history to bear on the divergent set of expectations identified above, where ought we to start? In light of the special consideration of democratic peace theory thus far in this study, one is tempted to say that either the advent of democracy (circa 1789) or, more particularly, the Anglo-American War of 1812, would serve as a most judicious point of departure. While we have delimited our study principally to the conduct of international politics circa 1789 and onwards, we have nonetheless cautioned from the outset against a too narrow interpretation of the historical record and, by implication, democratic peace theory. It might be advantageous, as the reader will shortly see, to briefly touch on pertinent historical events preceding the late eighteenth century, especially those that permit us to shed some light on the expectations identified above. In undertaking such an endeavour, we are invariably once more confronted by the question raised above: where ought we to start? Although there are marked differences between the Hellenic international system of classical antiquity and the later (European) Westphalian international system, there is arguably much to learn from an engagement with the conduct of (international) politics among the relatively independent and self-sufficient city-states of Ancient Greece (Jackson & Owens, 2005:48-55). There is, likewise, much to be learned from probing the interface between democratic peace theory and the historical record of Republican Rome.

In turning our attention towards the first of our cases, two considerations are of paramount importance: one, given that each city-state had to fend for itself (i.e. provide for its own security arrangements and economic wellbeing), the structure of the Hellenic international system resembles that of the anarchic international system of the modern era in marked ways (Nel, 2005:21); two, and still more important, if the assumption holds that there is something inherently peaceful about liberal and/or democratic regimes, we should expect the relations between the democracies of classical antiquity to be marked by a high degree of trust and respect and, in the final analysis, peace⁶⁶. We should add to the latter point the expectation that in this period, as in others, democracies' engagement with their non-democratic counterparts is bound to be marked by war. The historical record of this period is, however, replete with examples confirming, at the very least, three alarming proclivities: one, the bloodthirsty nature of democratic dyads; two, their warlike behaviour towards their non-democratic counterparts; and, three, their conciliatory and accommodative policies towards non-democracies.

In fact, and in respect of the first point amplified presently, the evidence seems to suggest that Greek democracies, in the words of two proponents of democratic peace theory, “were *not* necessarily more peaceful in general than were oligarchies” (Russett & Antholis, 1995:44; emphasis added). More to the point, there is credible evidence that shows that Greek democracies were more likely to engage in war with one another than their non-democratic counterparts (Gat, 2005:80). This is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the Athenian war with Syracuse (415-413 BC) during the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) – a case which Russett and Antholis (1995:55) happily accept as one in which “democracies really did fight each other”.⁶⁷ It is particularly striking that Athenian democracy is depicted by the latter authors as the

⁶⁶ This is all the more important given the contention of democratic peace scholars that within the confines of the modern era democratic peace is practically a universal phenomenon (Gat, 2005:80). What, then, do we find if we expand our horizon beyond the modern era? Accordingly, as Gat (2005:80) correctly points out, the applicability of democratic peace theory to cases of war and peace in classical antiquity continues to puzzle ardent supporters of democratic peace theory.

⁶⁷ We should point out that, in this period, Russett and Antholis (1995:56) concedes that at least five more cases exist in which Athens waged war “against *clear* democracies” (emphasis added). Both Owen (1997a) and Doyle (1996), notably, fail to even consider the applicability of democratic peace theory to this period.

quintessential paragon (i.e. the archetype) of democracy within this period⁶⁸, with the comparable democratic depth of Syracuse perhaps falling short of Athenian democracy in some respects (Russett & Antholis, 1995:54-56). The point is a vitally important one, especially in the light of the later practice of proponents of democratic peace to summarily dismiss as non-democratic cases where states in some respects fall short of the archetype of democracy⁶⁹, with the case of Wilhelmine Germany being a prime example (cf. Section 4.2, p. 120).

We can add to the Athenian War with Syracuse still a few more events shedding light on democratic peace theory. In Thucydides' account of Greek history and culture, he notes that the rise of Athenian power had its mainstay in Persia's defeat (Jaeger, 1945:387). Attempting to deter any future Persian threats, Athens opted for a two-pronged strategy by which it, on the one hand, greatly increased its naval capabilities and economic clout throughout the Aegean Sea region and, on the other hand, created a defensive alliance system (viz., the Delian League) consisting of roughly 200 city-states (Alonso, 2007:220; Nel, 2005:21). The subsequent expansion of the Athenian Empire by way of the accession of the islands and various Greek city-states formerly part of Asia Minor meant that Sparta's dominance was bound to be challenged (Jaeger, 1945:387). As time went on, Athens appeared to grow, in the words of one historian, "dauntingly strong", a fact definitely not unbeknownst to the Spartans (Cawkwell, 2001:24). The ensuing competition between the Athenians and Spartans, marked by various incidents and conflicts, eventually culminated in the calamitous Peloponnesian War (Jaeger, 1945:387). While Thucydides' account of the "true cause" of the war is quite revealing – he concluded that "the Athenians became powerful, filled the Spartans with fear, and forced them to go to war" (Rhodes, 2011:88; Jaeger, 1945:395) – various other events within and beyond the confines of this war more nearly shed light on democratic peace theory.

⁶⁸ In fact, as Cawkwell (2001:25) correctly observes, Athenian democracy was lauded as "a model for others and the whole city was an 'example to Greece'".

⁶⁹ This practice of excluding certain states on the basis that they are not democratic enough produces an unassailable conundrum for democratic peace theory: the higher the bar is set for what counts as democratic, the less likely we are to find a critical mass of states conforming to this archetype. The result, ultimately, is that the theory become vacuous: "there *can* be no disconfirming evidence, but for that very reason there also can be no confirming evidence" (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:161; emphasis in original).

With this in mind, we know of course that a great many of the democratic city-states in Ancient Greece formed part of the Athenian Empire, with Athens' democratic allies ranging from Argos, Corcyra, Mantinea, the Megaran exiles, Miletus, Samos, to Scione (Russett & Antholis, 1995:54). The Athenian Empire of the fifth century BC was however a brutally coercive and oppressive one, with the empire using (perhaps more aptly, abusing) its overwhelming force to compel city-states to either join the empire or prevent them from leaving⁷⁰ (Gat, 2005:80). Those members of the alliance that rebelled against Athenian power were summarily crushed. Athens, moreover, used its overwhelming force to suppress any conflict between alliance members, even the democratic ones (Gat, 2005:80). We wish to point the reader here to the striking parallel between the use of Athenian (military) might as a guarantor of inter-democratic peace and later claims by critics of democratic peace (cf. Section 4.2, p. 124) that the absence of war between (liberal) democracies is wholly dependent on American military might. That obvious differences between the eras, and the actors themselves, abound is beyond dispute, but the striking continuity in behaviour irrespective of spatial and temporal differences is nonetheless particularly noteworthy. With the subsequent decline of Athenian power during the closing stages of the Peloponnesian War, Athens was once more confronted with crushing an increasing number of rebellions from its alliance members – and, importantly, its democratic alliance members are to be counted among the rebellious (Gat, 2005:81).

We should most certainly also mention, with the eye towards democratic peace theory, that the wellspring of Athens' war-prone and imperialistic policies during the fifth century BC is consistently to be found in the Athenian *demos* and *not* the aristocratic members of society (Gat, 2005:81). Interestingly enough, not only was the *demos* consistently at the forefront of agitating for war, but they were the ones incurring the material and human costs, a fact wholly incompatible with Kant's (and Doyle's) reasoning in which those who both suffer from and decide on war are inclined to pursue peace (cf. Section 4.3, p. 126) (Gat, 2005:83). Public opinion, the reader shall recall, provides not only a measure of the institutional constraint of

⁷⁰ The extent to which this behaviour has repeated itself in the modern era is striking. By the turn of the nineteenth century, as the reader will recall, (liberal) democratic Great Britain found itself waging war against the Boer Republics in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

(liberal) democratic institutions, but also tells us something about the trust and respect (liberal) democracies ostensible afford one another. In this respect – i.e. the belligerent nature of the *demos* – another striking parallel with the modern era is again discernible. Accordingly, as the diplomatic historian of British foreign policy, Muriel Chamberlain (2014:14), has noted:

[T]he intervention of public opinion in foreign affairs was by no means necessarily a benevolent force. It nearly caused war with France over the Tahiti incident in 1844. It played a major role in bringing about the Crimean War in 1854 [...] Not for nothing did the nineteenth century believe that democracies could be more dangerous mavericks in foreign affairs even than absolute monarchies.

Lest we should think that this state of affairs was exclusive to nineteenth century *British* foreign policy, we may point the reader to the somewhat uncomfortable fact (for democratic peace theory at least) that an analysis of French foreign policy between the period 1815 and 1848 renders a like verdict (cf. Layne, 1997:67-77). As Layne (1997:90) has noted, an analysis of the Near Eastern Crisis of 1838-41 (also sometimes referred to as the Second Mehemet Ali Crisis)⁷¹ thus reveals how French public opinion drove Britain and France to the brink of war. In this case, as in the ones mentioned above, public opinion served not the ends of governmental restraint and peace, but rather to drive (liberal) democracies to the precipice of war. We will, as a matter of course, add to these examples in the succeeding chapter.

If the Athenian Empire of the fifth century BC offers scant evidence for democratic peace theory, does the fourth century BC fare any better? Unfortunately it does not. It does, however, provide us with a more critical test for democratic peace theory,

⁷¹ In broader geostrategic terms, the crisis had its origin in the progressive decline of the Ottoman Empire and the strategic threat this posed to Britain's maritime and economic interests. The more immediate cause can be traced to the Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali's, announcement to the Consul-General at Alexandria in May 1838 that he intends to declare independence from the Ottoman Sultan in Constantinople (Layne, 1997:82-84; Webster, 1951:340). The crisis impinged heavily upon Palmerston's mind (Bourne, 1967:85). For him, the fate of the Ottoman Empire was intertwined with British and European interests: "the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire are necessary to the maintenance of the tranquillity, the liberty, and the balance of power in the rest of Europe" (Palmerston quoted in Layne, 1997:83). France had different views, opting to support Mehemet Ali instead. On its part, Britain found a useful ally in Russia – both had sufficient strategic interests in the preservation of the Ottoman Empire (Layne, 1997:85).

and in two respects principally: one, this century witnessed a significant increase in the number of Greek democracies; and two, the formation of a second Athenian-led alliance in 377 BC was, this time round, not coercive but voluntary (Gat, 2005:81). In an attempt to weaken its rival, Sparta, the Athenians sought vigorously to restore Thebes' independence, which in due time became a democracy (Gat, 2005:81).⁷² With Thebes now become independent *and* democratic, the general (international) political order, to about the year 360 BC, was one in which Athens, Sparta and Thebes took turns in shooting for hegemony, with Persia consistently in the background to be called upon by any of the other powers only to bolster their bid for hegemony (Rhodes, 2011:224).

As part of Thebes' new democratic disposition, she set out to re-establish the Boeotian League, and subsequently did this on a democratic basis (i.e. on the basis of the principles of freedom and autonomy) (Gat, 2005:81; Rhodes, 2011:231). With the Boeotian League firmly established, General Epaminondas in 371BC steered the Boeotian army to a resounding victory over Sparta in the Battle of Leuctra, resulting in turn in a dramatic shift in the balance of power of fourth century Greece (Gat, 2005:81). The concurrent decline of Spartan hegemony and, obversely, the rise of hegemonic Thebes, eventuated in General Epaminondas' invasion of the Peloponnese, with the end game the rendering of assistance to Sparta's satellites to become independent democracies and the establishment of regional democratic leagues among themselves (Gat, 2016:81). These commendable acts in service of democracy, while obviously also serving Theban interests, were interestingly enough "vigorously opposed" by, alarmingly (again, for democratic peace theory), *democratic* Athens (Gat, 2005:81). Still worse, not only did Athens vigorously oppose Thebes, but in 369 BC it joined in the war-effort against its former ally (Gat, 2005:81). In doing this, Athens not only engaged in a protracted (seven-year long) war with democratic Thebes, with the Battle of Mantinea (362 BC) as the preeminent culmination point, but it placed itself squarely against the ideals of Greek freedom by allying itself with the likes of various oligarchic and oppressive regimes (notably, its old rival Sparta), Greek tyrants (ranging from Dionysius of Syracuse to Alexander of Pherae), and autocratic Persia (Gat, 2005:81).

⁷² By 379 BC, as Rhodes (2011:231) notes, Spartan power had apparently reached new heights.

It should also be mentioned that although we have cast a rather dark shadow over democratic Athens' behaviour vis-à-vis democratic Thebes, the latter succumbed to similar tendencies in conquering its old *democratic* rival, Plataea, in 373 BC (Gat, 2005:82). With the above in mind, two observations are particularly salient. One, we cannot otherwise but note that Athens' casting of the roles of friend and foe was not engraved in stone. In the course of less than two decades, Athenian perceptions of Thebes had changed from friend to foe and, concerning Sparta, from rival to alliance partner. Two, it appears to be the case that Athenian perceptions of friend and foe, and who counts as which, were wholly uninformed by moral and/or ideological considerations. In service of weakening Sparta's power, Athens happily donned the democratic hat by working for the restoration of Theban independence; shortly thereafter, however, with the rapid ascendancy of Theban power, Athens appeared more than willing to throw in its weight with autocratic and oppressive Sparta (and an array of other unsavoury characters) against democratic Thebes.

What, we may ask, accounts for Athens' behaviour? In answering this question, recall the argument advanced above (cf. Section 4.4, p. 142): as an illustration of how the placement of states affects not only the behaviour of the units, but also their perceptions of the moral propriety (or goodness) of one another, we may with good cause consider Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War. From the outset of the war, the units of lesser capability (in this instance, the lesser Greek city-states) casted the stronger Athens in the role of tyrant and the weaker Sparta in that of liberator (Waltz, 1979:127). Thucydides, however, found this portrayal "perfectly natural in the circumstances", yet presciently notes "that the parts of tyrant and liberator did not correspond with any permanent moral quality in these states, but were simply masks which would one day be interchanged, to the astonishment of the beholder, *when the balance of power was altered*" (cf. Section 4.4, p. 142; emphasis added). A similar conclusion can be drawn in our present case. The change in the Greek balance of power in the wake of the Battle of Leuctra in favour of Thebes and to the detriment of Sparta held that Athenian fears and attempts at balancing now had their mainspring not in Spartan, but Theban, hegemony (Gat, 2005:81). For Athens, the power-political realities of Theban hegemony held "[t]hat in this new world...it was now in Athens' interests to support Sparta rather than Thebes" (Rhodes, 2011:233).

It is surprisingly easy to find comparable examples in the modern era, especially those that underscore the notion that states' perceptions of one another, and who is to be counted as friend or foe, is primarily informed by balance-of-power and politico-security considerations. Although the list of examples is rather lengthy, it will suffice for now to mention but two. In the first of our examples, that of the Second Mehmet Ali Crisis (see above, p. 148), we noted how the convergence of British and Russian interests forged an unlikely alliance – i.e. irrespective of vast ideological differences⁷³ – in the face of democratic France's challenge to the former states' Near Eastern interests (Ingram, 1999:273). Yet, scarcely a decade later with the outbreak of the Crimean War (1854-1856), the *combined* Anglo-French assault – again, we should emphasise, an unlikely alliance – served to check the common Russian threat in Crimea (Kennedy, 1989:173).

The second of our examples, a still more recent one, further illustrates the point that strange bedfellows are often born amid common fears and/or common interests. In the face of growing apprehension over China's territorial claims in the strategically important South China Sea (as well as, of course, the Paracels and Spratly Islands and various others), US-Vietnamese relations have now undergone a volte-face (Hart, 2016).⁷⁴ The relationship, as David Brown (2015) poetically describes it, is one in which Vietnam has turned from “Foe to Frenemy [sic]”. During 2015, there appeared to be strong indications, and good national security reasons, that the US would eventually lift its four-decade long arms embargo against the Vietnamese; by November 2016, such indications became reality, with the US lifting the ban on lethal weapons sales to the Vietnamese (Hart, 2016; Geopolitical Monitor, 2016; Carter, 2016:70-71). A leaked intelligence report by the US Office for Naval Intelligence cautioned in 2010 that “the balance of forces in the region is changing” and that it is set to change still further over the next two decades (Fillingham, 2010). By January 2016, however, barely six years later, the pace of change has greatly intensified, with a study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies thus noting that “the balance of military power in the region is [now] shifting *against* the United

⁷³ We should further keep in mind that, in the nineteenth century European context, France and Russia were Britain's primary rivals (Frederick, 1999:307).

⁷⁴ During 2013, the Philippines brought a case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration to decide on Chinese claims of ownership of the disputed islands. Three years later, during June 2016, the tribunal ruled in Manila's favour, thus rejecting *all* Chinese claims of ownership (Rapp-Hooper, 2016b:76).

States” (Green, Hicks & Cancian, 2016:4; emphasis added). Accordingly, the rapprochement between the erstwhile enemies, coming as it does 20 years after the formal restoration of diplomatic relations in 1995, is pre-eminently grounded in checking (i.e. *balancing*⁷⁵) Chinese power in the Asia-Pacific region (Hart, 2016). Both sides, interestingly enough, have admitted as much: for the US, Chinese encroachment in the South China Sea threatens vital US maritime, economic and security interests and thus also goes some way in undermining US military hegemony and influence in the region; for the Vietnamese, control over the South China Sea is strategically important for maritime defence as well as its future energy needs (Hart, 2016).

Against the backdrop of the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory (cf. Section 4.3.1 above), an analysis of the record of fifth and fourth century BC Greece ought to have given us sufficient grounds for validating the theory. Did it? From the above we know that the picture ensuing from an analysis of the period is in almost every respect not a particularly rosy one. Democratic relations *inter se* were generally bloodthirsty and void of any pretensions of mutual trust and respect. Moreover, not only was democratic belligerence driven at the behest of the *demos*, but the democracies appeared more than willing to align themselves with non-democracies *against* the ideals of Greek freedom and, consequentially, fellow democracies. The behaviour witnessed in select cases, and the conduct of (international) politics across the two centuries, appear to be more suggestive of balance-of-power and politico-security considerations than moral and/or ideological ones – behaviour, we have seen, that persists strikingly well in the modern era of international politics.

With this task completed, one more task demands our attention in the present chapter. Although we have probed the applicability of democratic peace theory to fifth and fourth century BC Greece, we have yet to inquire whether the record of Republican Rome, and in particular its wars in the Italian peninsula, validates the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory. Within the ambit of the

⁷⁵ As Rapp-Hooper (2016a) convincingly argues, and as Waltz’s theory leads us to expect, US strategy towards the South China Sea crisis, and towards Asia in general, is pre-eminently grounded in balancing behaviour. We will return to this issue in Chapter 6 of this study.

democratic peace literature, this matter has received scant attention. The much-debated and often contentious question of how democratic Republican Rome really was is partly to blame for this.⁷⁶ Although classical scholars disagree on this question, recent scholarship seems to suggest that Republican Rome might very well have been more democratic than we have been led to believe (Gat, 2005:82; Posner, 2010). It was, notably, not that different from nineteenth century conceptions of (liberal) democracy and, in some respects (most conspicuously, deliberation on issues of war and peace), it might very well be still more democratic than modern (liberal) democracies (Gat, 2005:82-83). In respect of the latter, we can merely consider the formal institutions and procedures by which the question of war was decided upon:

A popular assembly of the people in arms, the *comitia centuriata*, was called to vote for war, but such a motion could be brought before the assembly only by the appropriate magistrate, a consul (and theoretically a praetor) – annually elected in highly competitive elections – after a decision for war had been debated and reached by the senate (Gat, 2005:83).

That such deliberations are constitutive of a far richer and deeper (liberal) democratic process than that implied by modern (especially, nineteenth) century conceptions of (liberal) democracy ought to be self-evident.⁷⁷ With this point established, what does the historical record tell us? It tells us, in short, that between the fourth and first centuries BC the doors of the temple of Janus were shut but twice (Rosenstein, 2007:226). This is of particular moment because within Roman culture the closing of the temple's doors signalled that Rome was no longer at war (Rosenstein, 2007:226). The period between the fourth and first centuries BC was, accordingly, one in which Rome's conquests reached its zenith (Rosenstein, 2006:226). Whereas this provides us with a general picture of the bloodthirsty nature

⁷⁶ The question, we might point out, is not whether or not Republican Rome contained elements of a (liberal) democratic order, but the extent to which such elements penetrated Republican Rome's political life.

⁷⁷ Consider, furthermore, the anti-democratic nature of US deliberations on war during the twentieth century. Although the US Constitution grants Congress exclusive power to declare war, successive US administrations have brazenly rejected this provision. Harry Truman, notably, dragged the US into the Korean War (a war, incidentally, which claimed 54246 wartime deaths) without obtaining Congressional approval. When subsequent American administrations did seek and obtain Congressional approval, these "blank-check authorizations [were] often based on deceptive arguments" (Shapiro, 2013).

of Republican Rome during the above period, more light needs to be shed on the interface between this behaviour and the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory.

We can, with this in mind, draw the reader's attention to Rome's ferocious crushing of *democratic* Capua and Tarentum during the Second Punic War (also sometimes referred to as the Second Carthaginian War, 218-202BC), in the wake of the latter's decision to defect from Rome (Gat, 2005:82). In this war, moreover, Rome's principal rival, Carthage, was judged by contemporary observers to have been "a mixed polity, in which the *demos* (which supported the Barkaide war party) dominated *more* than it did in the Roman Republic itself" (Gat, 2005:82; emphasis added). In these cases, as in *all* others involving Republican Rome, there is no evidence that Rome's deliberations on war and peace made even mention to, or were in any sense informed by, the enemy's regime type (Gat, 2005:82). Contra democratic peace theory, the *demos* once more agitated for war and this against fellow democracies. In this situation, mutual trust and respect between fellow democracies was hardly the order of the day. As with the various Athenian wars during the fifth and fourth century BC, Republican Rome's Second Carthaginian War does little to support the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory. We will in Chapters 5 and 6 probe the extent to which the behaviour identified here persists in the modern era.

4.6 Evaluation

Have we indeed, as the heading of this chapter suggested, Waltzed once last time with democratic peace theory? That is, have we offered the reader, on the one hand, sufficient grounds for casting doubt on the validity of democratic peace theory and, on the other hand, confirmatory evidence of both the striking continuity of international politics and the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism? The question, one would venture to say, is to be answered in the affirmative, although with the attendant qualification that a fair amount of work still remains. We have throughout this chapter seen that there are pervasive shortcomings in respect of democratic peace theory. Above and beyond the overtly theoretical limitations identified in Chapter 2 of this study, we have further pointed the reader towards a myriad of conceptual, theoretical *and* empirical challenges for democratic peace

theory. There are, then, persuasive theoretical and empirical reasons for doubting the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory. Yet, as was also noted, there is unfortunately a strong sense in which no amount of theoretical and empirical rigour would suffice to dislodge the prestige of democratic peace theory in Western academia and policy circles. Democratic peace theory has, it seems, been likened to a faith, something beyond the reproach of falsifiable scientific theory. This is unfortunate, most especially in the light of recent developments in various fields of study in which an alarming number of wide-ranging and impressive claims – previously accepted as dogma by the scientific community – have now with great fanfare been retracted. Such developments, we must strongly urge, ought to induce caution in any and all pronouncements of the universality of democratic peace theory.

The chapter commenced by providing the reader with an overview of the key arguments and counter-arguments of democratic peace theory. As should be evident, the case for democratic peace theory is far weaker than we have often been led to believe. Issues of causation, measurement, data-sets, conceptual ambiguity, the (theoretical and empirical) import of perceptions and public opinion, are but some of the issues that cast a long shadow over the validity of democratic peace theory. We attempted throughout this section and where applicable to develop our critique of democratic peace theory alongside pertinent historical illustrations, with the case of Wilhelmine Germany constituting a good case in point. The subsequent section attempted to infer a number of claims and expectations from both democratic peace theory and Waltz's structural realist theory. This was followed by furnishing a Waltzian critique of democratic peace theory on the basis of some of the principles advanced in Chapter 3 of this study. We noted, again with pertinent historical illustrations, how the conduct of *international* politics, as against that of *domestic* politics, poses singularly distinctive challenges for its constitutive units, such that the internal perfection of the units (itself, perhaps, a fanciful proposition) would remove but one of the causes of war. The final section of this chapter set out to provide a brief account of the intersection between theory and history. Not only did this illustrate the limitations of democratic peace theory, but it also set the scene for one of the other principal aims of this study: the striking continuity of international politics across time and space.

CHAPTER FIVE

‘THE THING THAT HATH BEEN, IT IS THAT WHICH SHALL BE’: MULTIPOLAR AND BIPOLAR SYSTEMS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The undermining of functioning democracy is one of the contributions of the neoliberal assault on the world’s population in the past generation. And this is not happening just in the U.S.; in Europe the impact may be even worse.

Noam Chomsky (in Chomsky & Dispatch, 2016)

[W]e are not a young people with an innocent record and a scanty inheritance. We have engrossed ourselves...an altogether disproportionate share of the wealth and traffic of the world. We have got all we want in territory, and our claim to be left in the unmolested enjoyment of vast and splendid possessions, mainly acquired by violence, largely maintained by force, often seems less reasonable to others than to us.

Winston Churchill, January 1914 (in Woodruff, 1981:134)

Our [i.e. US] schools and our press have taught us to perceive all of our actions as altruistic.

John Perkins (Perkins, 2004:16)

5.1 Introduction

So much of the history and conduct of international politics, and that of great-power politics pre-eminently, is mere repetition. It is, then, somewhat surprising that international politics is often depicted, as Waltz (1979:65) scathingly observed, as “the realm of accident and upheaval, of rapid and unpredictable change”. Although we can freely admit of the fact that changes abound, one will be hard pressed to say that in international politics change is the norm. In fact, the very existence of and accessibility to a body of “objective, general truths” stretching across time and space is, in Morgenthau’s (1959:19) mind, what makes the (scientific) study of (international) politics possible. Much of course can be said about the terms ‘scientific’, ‘objective’ and ‘truth’, but the point to be stressed is that in international

politics continuities are often far more engrained, and far more impressive, than change (Waltz, 1979:65). Moreover, not only are continuities in international politics rife, but states throughout history, it seems, have found it rather difficult to learn the lessons from the past. Prior to World War I, notably, the staunch proponent of liberal economic policy, Norman Angell, brazenly declared that war no longer pays: extremely high levels of economic interdependence between states had made war virtually inconceivable and, most certainly, irrational (Waltz, 2010:91). In much the same way, British historian G.P. Gooch concluded in 1911 that “we can now look forward with something like confidence to the time when war between civilized nations will be considered as antiquated as the duel”, with Sir Thomas Barclay, writing in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in the same year, adding that “in no distant future, life among nations” would be marked by “law, order and peace among men” (quoted in Mueller, 2009:297).

The lesson that war no longer pays, as compelling as it might have appeared at the time, proved an inordinately difficult one for states to learn. During and after World War I, cries of ‘never again’ and, as H.G. Wells famously wrote, “the war that will end war” were widely heard (Johnston, 2014; Freedman, 2014). Yet scarcely 21 years later, with the horror and destruction of World War I still deeply engrained within the collective European memory, European states once more found themselves embroiled in war (Waltz, 2010:91). One can scarcely say, it should be added, that this case is unique to history. In the wake of the horrors of the Holocaust, post-World War II policy makers almost everywhere seemed to agree that such egregious acts of violence must never again be perpetrated and tolerated. The clamour of ‘never again’ was, once again, widely heard. With this issue, as with so many others in international affairs, historical reflection provides much-needed perspective. Although the numbers differ owing to divergent interpretations about what class of actions constitute genocide, scholars now agree that we have been witness to as few as seven and as many as 37 cases of genocide following World War II (Lamb, 2005).

If we then say, as was briefly done in Chapter 3 of this study (cf. Section 3.1), that international politics continues to be a realm of repetition, what do we mean to suggest? Although we will deal with this question far more conclusively as the

chapter unfolds, we can however stimulate the reader at this juncture to a number of particular observations, each of which seems to point us towards the impressive continuity of international politics. With this in mind, we have time and time again throughout history seen the ease with which the preferences of states are sacrificed on the altar of politico-security considerations. For example, during the early years of the nineteenth century, Winston Churchill was utterly convinced that the British-German naval race was destined to be an outright disaster *and* that Britain could not otherwise but be a fervent participant in it (Waltz, 1979:110). The disjuncture between what the units of the system want (i.e. their preferences) and, contra this, what is required of them to survive and/or prosper, finds of course expression in a myriad of ways. Accordingly, and to use a somewhat different example, with its military continuing to suffer devastating losses during 1864 and 1865, the Confederate Congress, in “a final act of desperation”, was forced to enact legislation approving the limited emancipation of black slaves as well as their induction into the Confederate Army (Tscheschlok, n.d.). When Confederate fortunes were looking up earlier in the war-effort, any mention of enlisting black slaves in the Confederate Army was met with outright scorn: “If slaves will make good soldiers our whole idea of slavery is wrong” (Tscheschlok, n.d.).

Almost a century and a half later, and this time around within the geopolitical context of the Middle East, American policy makers continue to experience some sense of the difficulties the units of the international-political system are confronted with in balancing preferences (moral and/or ideological) with perceptions of their politico-security needs. In a noteworthy break from past (US) practice, President Obama decided in July 2013 to unilaterally suspend all military aid to Egypt – one of the biggest recipients of US military aid for the past few decades – following the military coup to overthrow Egypt’s first democratically elected president, Mohamed Morsi. This moralistic course of action, although ostensibly informed by the US preference for democracy promotion, freedom and human rights, was however short-lived. By April 2015, in an equally noteworthy about-turn and in the midst of “imminent security concerns”, the US government decided to resume its annual \$1.3 billion military aid to the Egyptians, thus once more sacrificing the ideals of freedom and democracy on the altar of politico-security considerations (Hamed, 2015). One consideration that must have informed the volte-face in US policy, undoubtedly a big one, was of

course the increased instability in North Africa and the Middle East, ranging from the increased threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to a failing Yemen (Hamed, 2015). Another reason, though a secondary one for now, was the stark reality that while the US was busy pursuing its moralistic crusade in suspending military aid to Egypt, the Russians made good use of the opportunity to thrust itself into the Middle East, signing various arms agreements with the Egyptians (Urchick, 2016b). In the absence of the Americans and owing to a rather large shortfall in its defence budget, the Egyptians could not otherwise but heartily welcome the all-too-eager outstretched Russian hand. This is but one way in which the conduct of international politics continues to be marred by debilitating continuities.

We have also seen – again, throughout the course of history – how strange bedfellows (i.e. ideologically, politically, and economically disparate units) are often born when states are pressed hard enough or, at times, seemingly not even that hard at all. Thus we noted in the previous chapter of this study (cf. Chapter 4, Section 4.5 above) the ease with which erstwhile enemies Athens and Sparta (during the rapid ascendancy of Theban power), Britain and Russia (in the Second Mehemet Ali Crisis), Britain and France (because of the Russian threat in the Crimea) and, more recently, the US and Vietnam (owing to the Chinese threat in the South China Sea) were able to put their vast ideological differences aside in the face of common politico-security concerns. Two more examples shedding light on this particular feature of international-political life ought to suffice for now. In the midst of an increasingly volatile Middle East, Amos Yadlin and Prince Turki al-Faisal, the former Israeli and Saudi Arabian spymasters respectively, met for an unofficial (yet sanctioned by both states' leaders) *and* unprecedented conversation on May 26, 2014, discussing the possibility of an Israeli-Arab alliance (Klein, 2015). By June 2015, five secret meetings had already taken place (Lake, 2015). Whether any real fruit is set to emanate from this conversation is, for our purposes, beside the point. Of far greater moment to us is the way in which the strategic mind of both states seems to drift ever closer to conformity with the observations identified above and the proposition(s) gleaned from our theory. When pressed hard enough or, in this particular case, inordinately hard, we have good theoretical *and* historical reasons to believe that an unlikely alliance could yet be forged. The second of our examples is equally informative. With the threat of ISIS gaining momentum, and irrespective of

their vast ideological differences, archenemies Iran and the US ostensibly found common cause, much to the chagrin of the Israelis for whom American-Iranian cooperation promises nothing good (Walker, 2014; McInnis, 2015). Although one hardly needs to labour the point that such cooperation is bound to be fraught with limitations, it remains unusually interesting to observe the ease by which states find common ground when pressed hard enough. One would do well to remember that chants of 'death to America' have often rung well and true from Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei himself, with the clamour of American disdain for the Iranian theocracy being equally widespread.

Although we contend that the fabric and quality of international life has remained fairly constant throughout the centuries, that "patterns recur, and that events repeat themselves endlessly" (Waltz, 1979:66), we know of course that international politics has seen its fair share of (equally impressive) changes, especially those occurring in the middle and towards the end of the twentieth century. The shift from multipolarity to bipolarity, and then from bipolarity to unipolarity, produced distinct changes in the behaviour of the units of the system and the outcomes resulting from their interactions. Coinciding with the coming of the bipolar world was of course another great change, in this instance a purely unit-level one. The development and subsequent spread of nuclear weaponry transformed international politics from a realm of great-power war to great-power peace. Scholars and practitioners do not always appreciate this transformation, hence the constant and vigorous clamour by world leaders for the necessity of creating a world without nuclear weapons (consider, in this regard, Obama (2009b) and Cirincione (2012)). We too easily forget that, prior to the advent of bipolarity and nuclear weaponry, great-power politics was riddled with conflict and war, with more or less 50 to 64 recorded great-power wars in the period preceding 1945 (Roser, 2016; Goldstein, 1988:234).⁷⁸ For the past 70 odd years, then, we have thus been in the fortunate position of living in a world without great-power war, a world wholly unfamiliar to earlier (i.e. pre-1945) generations (Tobia & Waltz, 2012).⁷⁹

⁷⁸ The variance in the number of great-power wars result from differing criteria for measuring great powers.

⁷⁹ For an illustration of the impressive decline of great-power war, compare Roser (2016). We take issue, however, with Roser's classification scheme according to which certain states (for instance, Great Britain, France and Germany) are (erroneously) included as present-day examples of great

Proponents of democratic peace theory are usually quite keen to point out here that the absence of great-power war must however be seen alongside another development of the post-1945 world: i.e. the absence of war between *all* (liberal) democracies, especially those (liberal) democratic and industrialised states of (Western) Europe who fell from the rank of great-power status at the close of World War II. While no longer great powers, these (Western) European states, liberals argue, were able to construct among themselves a zone of peace that has (seemingly) endured remarkably well, one predicated on (liberal) democratic norms and/or institutions and underpinned by high degrees of (economic) interdependence. We will, however, see in the course of this chapter that there are far more compelling reasons than shared (liberal) democratic norms and/or institutions, as well as the ostensible peace-inducing effects of economic interdependence, in accounting for the absence of war between these states. In fact, owing to the groundwork laid in previous chapters concerning the theoretical and historical limitations of democratic peace theory, we already have some grounds for doubting the veracity of (liberal) democratic norms and/or institutions in explaining the pacification of (Western) European international politics.

The peace-inducing qualities of nuclear weapons, coupled with the old (and recurring) liberal arguments of economic interdependence and (liberal) democratic pacifism, could easily create the impression that the possibility of a future great-power war (or wars) is *wholly* unrealistic. This would be a false impression. We have already illustrated, and will endeavour to do still more presently, that there are persuasive theoretical and historical arguments for doubting the veracity of the peace-inducing qualities ascribed to (liberal) democracy. We are then left with nuclear weapons as the ultimate guarantor of great-power peace. Is a future great-power (and perhaps nuclear) war possible given the peace-inducing qualities of these weapons? Answering in the affirmative, we should point out, detracts nothing from the peace-inducing qualities of nuclear weapons or Waltz's particular views on the wisdom of keeping these weapons around. We will, as this chapter unfolds, point the reader towards the extent to which such a war (or, again, wars) is possible, a task to be fully completed only in Chapter 6 of this study. For now, we might ease the

powers. This notwithstanding, the illustration does nicely show the marked decline in great-power war. For an illustration of the great powers throughout history, compare Table 1.1 (p. 285).

reader's mind that while a future great-power (nuclear) war can never be discounted, the probability appears to be quite low at this stage of the game. It is, however, quite interesting that scenario planners, policy makers and nuclear strategists continue to talk in terms of the possibility of World War III or full-scale nuclear conflict (Sunter, 2016). Accordingly, a former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, has in recent times repeatedly sounded the alarm that the "view of World War III appears on the horizon with its two ends, which are the United States on the one hand and China, Russia and Iran on the other" (Al-Fuzai, 2015), and former NATO Deputy Supreme Commander of Europe, General Sir Richard Shirreff, has on his part cautioned that "nuclear war with Russia is a possibility" (Nazaryan, 2016). It is also worth pointing out that the Russians, following the decision by the Obama administration in 2013 to upgrade America's B61 tactical nuclear weapons capability, seem confident that in the event of such a war their new generation of tactical nuclear weapons⁸⁰ would be enough to ensure a Russian victory (Morris, 2013; Conca, 2014). The escalation in tensions between the US, on the one hand, and China and Russia, on the other hand, *ostensibly* lends credibility to such fears.

Yet while the probability of a great-power war for the foreseeable future seems fairly low, competition between states continue unabated as before. This is especially true in economic affairs and in the art and machinery of warfare. Thus, as Soko and Qobo (2016:98) conclude, contemporary international politics bears witness to "growing and intense political and economic competition" between, on the hand, developed and developing states *and*, on the other hand, among developing states. One should, perhaps, add a third and equally important category: that of the persistence of economic and military competition between developed states. This of course should come as no surprise, given that the (anarchic) structure of the international-political system has remained unchanged. The persistence of competition (economic and/or military) in the contemporary world of international

⁸⁰ The weapons – commonly called the B61-12 – boast of a new inertial guidance system (hence, the dependence on navigational satellites during wartime is no longer an absolute necessity) as well as the ability to target well-fortified command and control centres buried deep underground (Majumdar, 2015; Mizokami, 2016a). The upgrade forms part of a \$1 trillion nuclear upgrade initiative undertaken by the Obama administration, an initiative that, ironically enough, squarely contradicts president Obama's oft-repeated nuclear abolitionist aims (Harshaw, 2016). It is today common to hear that the increasing sophistication of *tactical* nuclear weapons increases the prospect of war, yet observers of military affairs easily forget that such fears were often raised during the Cold War and with no less vigour.

politics, an issue to be fully dealt with in the succeeding chapter, thus forms part of a much larger pattern in which states have throughout the course of history relentlessly competed with one another.

The concerns thus far raised in the introduction of this chapter, and in varying degrees in preceding chapters, turn on two intractable forces of international life, namely that of continuity and change. Against the backdrop of these two forces, this chapter will attempt to provide a validation of Waltzian structural realist theory within and across different international-political systems and, as a corollary, provide further vindication of the poverty of democratic peace theory. From what we have said in previous chapters (see, in particular, Chapter 3 and Section 4.3.2, p. 133), we know both that a basic continuity in the behaviour of the units of the international-political system is discernible across time and space *and* that we can expect the behaviour of the units and the outcomes of their interactions to vary in accordance with different international-political systems. We will, accordingly, frame our inquiry against the backdrop of the interface between the expectations gleaned from our theories and the conduct of international politics within and across multipolar and bipolar systems. In respect of the latter system, we will of necessity take stock of the (revolutionary) development of nuclear weaponry and the ways in which its development and use has shaped the conduct of international politics, and great-power politics in particular. In doing this, we will provide the necessary groundwork for critically assessing the possibility of World War III, a task to be undertaken and completed in the succeeding chapter.

5.2 Multipolarity: diffusion of dangers, confusion of responses

Compared with earlier periods in world history, the post-1945 international system has been remarkably peaceful, for the great powers at any rate. Up and until August 1945, we should remind the reader, war had pretty much been a constant feature of international life (Keck & Waltz, 2012). Whereas the post-1945 world has been one of great-power peace, the preceding (multipolar) international system most definitely was not, with some 64 recorded great-power wars and, in still broader terms, more or less 119 international wars (i.e. wars with one or more of the great powers as

belligerents) (Goldstein, 1988:234; Mearsheimer, 1984:711).⁸¹ That the Eurocentric multipolar international system was one of peril and doom is hardly an exaggeration, a point that can be illustrated in a myriad of ways. We need merely consider, for instance, that in the period 1689 to 1815 the British and French went to war on no fewer than seven occasions, with some of these wars being, as Paul Kennedy (1989:76) aptly phrased it, real “struggles of endurance”. To this we can of course add the Anglo-Dutch Naval Wars (1652-1655; 1665-1667; 1672-1674), the Franco-Spanish War (1683-1684), the Second Northern War (1700-1721), the Seven Years’ War (1755-1763), the War of the American Revolution (1778-1784), the French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1802), the Crimean War (1853-1856), the Austro-Prussian War (1866), the two World Wars and a host of others (Goldstein, 1988:236-237). Seen against this backdrop, the multipolar (European) international system proved to be one dominated by protracted and frequent (coalition) wars, shifting alliances, intense commercial, political, and military rivalries, and one in which European states’ decisions on war and peace were increasingly informed by *national* political, economic and military considerations – in short, national interests (Kennedy, 1989:xvii, 73). This, however, is to be expected. In line with the theory advanced in previous chapters, we know that multipolar systems promise a greater measure of great-power war: as numbers grow, the reader might recall, complications accelerate. Within multipolar systems, alliances are not only flexible, but managing them is inordinately difficult. The vice of great-power politics in multipolar systems, as we learned from previous chapters, is miscalculation or inattention.

⁸¹ Within the confines of the multipolar international system, at least 16 cases of war between two or more (liberal) democracies are evident. The wars are: the American Revolutionary War, 1775 (Great Britain vs. US), the Wars of the French Revolution, especially the years 1793 and 1795 (France vs. Great Britain), the Quasi War, 1798 (US vs. France), the War of 1812 (US vs. Great Britain), the Texas War of Independence, 1835 (Texas vs. Mexico), the Mexican War, 1846 (US vs. Mexico), the Roman Republic vs. France, 1849, the American Civil War, 1861 (the Northern Union vs. Southern Confederacy), the Ecuador-Columbia War, 1863, the Franco-Prussian War, 1870, the War of the Pacific, 1879 (Chile vs. Peru and Bolivia), the Indian Wars, throughout much of the nineteenth century (US vs. various indigenous Indian nations), the Spanish-American War, 1898, the Anglo-Boer War, 1899 (Great Britain vs. Transvaal and the Orange Free State), World War I, 1914 (Germany vs. Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and the US), Chaco War, 1932 (Chile vs. Argentina), and 1941 war between Ecuador and Peru (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:160-161). We have already dealt with the (liberal) charge that some of these states might not have been (liberal) democratic enough (cf. Section 4.5, p. 146).

We will, however, be remiss if we fail to point out that, notwithstanding the general sense of doom and peril, the multipolar system of European states was also one exceptionally rich in the currents of optimism and idealism. For better or worse, and unfortunately mostly for the latter, periods of great optimism interlaced with a peculiarly *national* consciousness and, at times, an ostensibly divinely appointed *national* destiny. Among the (European) great powers, the belief that some had a special (and, again, divinely appointed) moral and political position among the nations of the earth was commonplace (Kennedy, 1989:246). That we do not have to search far and wide to illustrate this point should come as no surprise. Speaking in the House of Commons in 1846, British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston remarked that it is his opinion “that the real policy of England is to be the champion of justice and right” (quoted in Heath, 1969:39). In acting with these ends in mind, Britain would, as Giuseppe Mazzini argued, not only bring liberty to all humankind, but would gain for itself “the sympathy and gratitude of the nations she has benefited” (quoted in Waltz, 2001:109-110). Still further, in considering the marvels of British civilisation, Kingsley was moved to tears of pride, waxing poetically that the great progress of the British had its origin in a cosmic destiny being at work:

The spinning jenny and the railroad, Cunard’s liners and the electric telegraph, are to me...signs that we are, on some points at least, in harmony with the universe; that there is a mighty spirit working among us...the Ordering and Creating God (quoted in Kennedy, 1989:155).

Such lofty ideas were further buttressed by the conviction that the ideals of increasing prosperity and world peace were wholly dependent on Britain adopting, advocating and, when necessary, enforcing the (liberally grounded) principles of classical political economy, principles strenuously advanced by free trade proponents such as John Bright and Richard Cobden (Kennedy, 1989:156-157). Britain was of course not unique in claiming that it had the answers to the political-economic maladies of the day. Regardless of whether we gaze our eyes towards the nineteenth or twentieth century, the Russians, too, firmly believed that their actions were geared towards the betterment of all mankind, or the peoples of Europe at the very least. Writing in the period 1876 to 1880, Russian novelist Dostoyevsky waxed lyrical about the depth of Russians’ love for their European brothers: “Oh, the

peoples of Europe have no idea how dear they are to us!" (in Waltz, 2001:111). In writing this, he also noted that it was the undeniable duty of future generations of Russians to save the European peoples from themselves, i.e. from the crass materialism and spirit of selfishness that had enveloped them (Waltz, 2001:111). Future Russians, those imbued with wisdom and courage, must thus take it upon themselves "to seek finally to reconcile all European anguish in our all-humanitarian and all-unifying Russian soul, to embrace in it with brotherly love all our brethren, and finally, perhaps, to utter the ultimate word of great universal harmony" (quoted in Waltz, 2001:111-112). Liberating the European people, not conquering them, would be the driving force of any such war (Waltz, 2001:112). With the rapid ascendancy of German power at the close of the nineteenth century, the Germans too believed that they had something worthwhile to offer human civilisation. "The German race brings it", remarked publicist Friedrich Naumann at one stage (quoted in Kennedy, 1989:211). Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, the fact remains that *all* of the great powers of the time engaged in such elevated perceptions of self and destiny, a condition that has persisted alarmingly well into the present era. The idea of American exceptionalism, as Gans (2011) correctly points out, is one that persists to the present day. The problem, as we have pointed out in preceding chapters, is that in international politics, with the behaviour of states unregulated, notions of justice, right, and fairness and, yes, even the 'good' state cannot be objectively defined. Each state is bound to define these terms in accordance with its own conceptions thereof and, as evidenced throughout history, the conceptions clash.

That such lofty ideals, especially those which emphasised that humanity was finally marching towards peace, were short-lived needs very little substantiation. Where periods of peace between the great powers did break out, it was almost invariably due to the sheer exhaustion (financially and militarily) of war. Moreover, in a very short time, proclamations of (impending) peace or of an international harmony of interests were usually followed by another round of war, with states thus quickly discovering some sense of the difficulty of action in an environment where each is the arbiter of its own cause and where each must take care of itself as best it can. This harsh reality of international-political life the French revolutionaries had to learn rather quickly, when upon making pacifism the official policy of the state, other states were emboldened to intervene (Woodruff, 1981:77). On their part, the British, who in

some sense formed the mainstay of (liberal) optimism and grandiose ideas of peace, were also keenly aware of the international-political realities of the time. This is perhaps nowhere more clearly illustrated than comparing Lord Palmerston's idealism above with his statement, made in the exact same speech before the House of Commons in 1848, that England has "no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow...With every British Minister the interests of England ought to be the shibboleth of his policy" (quoted in Heath, 1969:39).

Almost a century later, in the latter half of 1935, the interests of England appeared still to be the shibboleth of its policy. With the German threat gradually gaining momentum, and amid differing Anglo-French perceptions of the European security problem, Britain opted to unilaterally increase its security at the expense of the French (wary as they were of the gradually developing German threat on its flank) by committing itself to the Anglo-German naval agreement of June 1935 (Kennedy, 1989:335). The French, on their part, and with the German threat thus also impinging upon their mind, similarly took unilateral steps "to gain extra security", by renewing its relations with the Russians, who at that stage were eager to be allied to the so-called Stresa Front (consisting of Britain, France and Italy), essentially an anti-German alliance (Kennedy, 1989:335-336). In both these cases, as in so many others throughout the course of history, the proposition that each state plots its own course and devise its own strategies in accordance with *its* perception of needs and interests is evidently borne out.

There is, however, another pearl of great wisdom in Lord Palmerston's remark that the British have neither eternal allies nor perpetual enemies but only eternal and perpetual interests. The old adage of international-political life, viz. that today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy, turns out to be pretty much borne out by history – and, interestingly enough, tends to suggest something about how the environment in which states act condition their behaviour. This is why states, even so-called friendly ones, have throughout history spied on one another, behaviour that persists to the present day. When news of an extensive US spying programme targeting foreign governments, including so-called friendly ones, broke in 2013, US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, much to the chagrin of European allies, simply

defended the US programme on the basis of “everyone does it” (Jakes & Pace, 2013; Martinez, 2013). Clapper is right. We might do well, with this in mind, to point the reader to at least four occasions in history of so-called friendly nations spying on one another, with the attendant qualification that there is bound to be many more.

Firstly, in the mid-sixteenth century, and amid preparations for the Spanish Armada, Spain’s pious King Philip II and the pope thought it proper to keep a wary eye on one another: the former believed that the pope might secretly be hedging his bets, while the latter questioned the king’s resolve (Sims, 2013). Secondly, while finding itself embroiled in World War I and desirous of the (neutral) US to enter the war on its side, the British intelligence service MI6 devised various overt and clandestine operations with the aim of gauging and influencing American political opinion about the war (Sims, 2013). To this end, British intelligence operative Sir William Wiseman manoeuvred himself into the highest echelons of the White House, becoming a confidant of both US president Woodrow Wilson and Colonel Edward House, Wilson’s closest advisor (Sims, 2013).

Three, with World War I over and formal peace negotiations now underway, the Americans thought it proper to keep a wary eye (or, perhaps more apt here, ear) on the communications of the delegates. Cryptologist Herbert Yardley was accordingly hired to create and run a signal and cipher unit with its primary aim the collection of intelligence on the various parties during the negotiations. Lest one should think that this was a once-off event, Yardley acted in a similar capacity during the Washington Naval Conference. Through the rendering of his service, the US succeeded in getting the upper hand during the negotiations. The result was that the US reached its primary objective, which was to drastically reduce the naval presence of foreign powers in the Pacific (Sims, 2013). And, lastly, because of a general sense of distrust among the allies during World War II, and with the US developing its nuclear weapons programme, the supposedly special Anglo-American relationship felt the strain of the long shadow of the future, with both governments carefully watching each other – and, as Sims (2013) points out, with good reason. Not long after World War II came to a close, previously classified information showed how the US through its Venona Project, tasked with decrypting Soviet war-time messages, identified the

exchange of sensitive information between Moscow and the British embassy in Washington (Sims, 2013).

That this behaviour has occurred throughout history and persists to the present day is of course not surprising. In realms in which the units of the system have to fend for themselves and in which the (future) intentions and actions of other states are inordinately difficult to gauge trust is an extremely scarce commodity. This, however, is but one of those propositions which endure remarkably well across different international-political systems. In addition to this proposition, we have also pointed the reader towards another one, one that suggests that each state's calculations of its actions and strategies are done in accordance with *its* perceptions of needs and interests, as the French and British examples proffered above conclusively suggest. We will as a matter of course find these and other types of behaviour repeating itself *across* different international-political systems (i.e. in multipolar, bipolar *and* unipolar systems), while also knowing full-well that we can expect *distinctive* types of behaviour *within* different international-political systems. We know, for instance, that balancing proceeds in markedly different ways *within* multipolar and bipolar systems and that the problem of alliance management is an inordinately more difficult one in multipolar than in bipolar systems. The reader will be informed accordingly when cases are dealt with where the structure of the international-political system leads us to expect *distinct* structural effects.

Turning then to the multipolar great-power system prior to World War I the question arises in what way or ways has the anarchy of the international-political system constrained the behaviour and actions of the units of the system? In answering this question, at least four factors vie for attention, with an additional one to be discussed briefly in the present. The four factors, exhaustively discussed below and in succeeding chapters, are: the existence of strange bedfellows across time and space; emulation, competition and socialisation; balance-of-power theory and difficulties of alliance management; and democratic peace and war.

The additional factor to be discussed holds that throughout the course of modern history states entering the rank of the great powers, or had been forbiddingly close to entering, tended to fight more. Conversely, as they decline – i.e. as they backslided

into the second rank – they tended to become more peaceful (Waltz, 1979:187). In the period ranging from Louis XIV's usurpation of power in France during 1660-1661 to Napoleon Bonaparte's decisive defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815, the Ottoman Empire, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden all fell from the rank of the great powers (Kennedy, 1989:73). In due time, Austria, Great Britain and France followed suit, though for the latter two it occurred much later. As history shows, and as our theory leads us to expect, their falling into the second rank of states brought qualitative changes in their external behaviour. For instance, as the Anglo-French rivalry over the North American colonies heated up during the 1750s, and with the prospect of war edging ever closer, Spain and the Netherlands were constrained to adopt a policy of neutrality. This they did, knowing all too well that yet another round of Anglo-French war would seriously imperil their commercial activities, upon which the Dutch in particular were highly dependent (Kennedy, 1989:111). And yet for both states there was scarcely any real alternative: with both having fallen from the rank of the great powers, each was gripped by the fear that they would be grinded down between the "two colossi in the west" (Kennedy, 1989:111). The case of Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century is equally instructive. With the rising German threat at the turn of the century, and as British decision makers gradually realised that Britain was no longer the colossus it used to be, they pursued various diplomatic initiatives aimed at deescalating and/or appeasing long-standing rivalries with France, Russia, and the US (Thompson, 1999:12). In these two instances, as in others where states have slipped into the second rank, their lesser involvement in wars appears to be less a product of their national characters than their position in the international-political system (Waltz, 1979:187).

5.2.1 War makes for strange bedfellows

War, it seems, really does make for strange bedfellows. History is replete with examples of ideologically, politically and economically disparate actors finding common ground when pressed hard enough or, as argued above, seemingly not even that hard at all. With World War II raging, the head of the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the CIA, William Donovan hired a diverse group of German Jewish Marxists, with the explicit purpose of eliciting information about the Nazis (Scheuerman, 2013). Prominent among the members of this group was the

Marxist lawyer and political scientist, Franz Neumann, who was entrusted by Donovan and his team with the critical security task of advising the OSS about the Nazis (Scheuerman, 2013). Neumann was subsequently given the responsibility of heading the Research and Analysis Branch of the OSS and was later joined by two other leftist academics and members of the so-called Frankfurt School, the philosopher Herbert Marcuse and the prominent legal scholar Otto Kirchheimer (Scheuerman, 2013). For both Donovan and Neumann their political views – put differently, their “vast political and cultural gap” – carried little weight in forging an unlikely alliance (Scheuerman, 2013).

Similarly, in the years preceding World War I, socialists of all the European powers appeared to unite in their mutual disdain for and opposition to the war. War in general, as well as the impending one, was decried as having its origins in capitalism and deserving only of the strenuous opposition of all fully-fledged socialists everywhere (Waltz, 2001:131). German workers, in particular, forthrightly declared that they had neither an interest nor any business in fighting for German capitalists (Waltz, 2001:131). The peace resolutions of the Second International reflected this much, undergirded as it was by the conviction that the impending war would create fertile grounds for the socialist parties of the different states to unite in an international movement against war, thus providing evidence of a spontaneous harmony of interests among the different national socialist parties (Waltz, 2001:134, 136). Socialists, accordingly, could and would have no interest in defending their bourgeois governments. However, with the pressures of World War I mounting, the behaviour of the workers and the socialist parties of which they form part changed abruptly. By August 1914, with the war now raging, the behemoth of European socialist parties, the German socialist party (viz., *The Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD)), had not only failed to oppose the war but had approved various financial measures in support of the war-effort of the bourgeois government, something the socialist parties in other states also wholeheartedly did (Waltz, 2001:129). At the end of the day, as Waltz (2001:135) aptly remarks, World War I clearly suggests that “there was no *international* proletariat, but only *national* socialist parties whose actions would be determined by their own definitions of their particular interests” (emphasis in original). Internally and externally, the politics of power had

worked against the much sought-after unity envisioned by socialists in more placid times (Waltz, 2001:135).

The examples cited here, though undoubtedly illuminating ones, unfortunately more nearly tell us something about the conduct of politics at the level of individuals and/or parties than that of states. Our immediate concern is more specifically aimed at the level of states, in particular how ideologically, politically and economically disparate *states* seem to find common ground in the face of common fears and/or interests. Numerous examples have been furnished (cf. Section 5.1 above) to illustrate the veracity of this proposition, to wit, that the environment in which states conduct their affairs, and the great-powers pre-eminently among them, constrains them to make calculations over possible alliance partners less on the basis of ideology and more on that of interest.

We can and should however point the reader to a few more historical illustrations of this proposition. There are many. To say that the multipolar (European) great-power system was one suffused by “short-term, shifting alliances” and one in which *Realpolitik* considerations weighed heavy in states’ calculations of policy is hardly an exaggeration (Kennedy, 1989:73). States who in one war considered each other the bitterest of enemies found themselves fighting with one another in the next war (Kennedy, 1989:73). But this is to be expected. From what we have learned in preceding chapters, we know that uncertainties about threats, and confusion about who is likely to respond to them, multiply when numbers increase; they decrease as numbers fall (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2, p. 97). There is here an important distinction that the reader needs to bear in mind, one cautioned about earlier. Where strange bedfellows are born, we tend to find confirmatory evidence of the continuity of international politics *across* different international-political systems – in essence, it tells us something about the anarchy of the international-political system. As against this, the *shifting* nature of alliances *within* multipolar systems suggests something about the *distinctive* structural effects of such a system. To bring the point home, consider the following: in multipolar systems, *flexibility* of alignment has the effect of producing rigidity of strategy and limitations of one’s ability to decide for oneself; in bipolar systems, as against this, *rigidity* of alignment enlarges one’s freedom of choice and produces flexibility of strategy (Waltz, 1979:169-170). In both systems,

however, owing to the anarchy of the international-political system, we can expect to find strange bedfellows – i.e. confirmatory evidence that states' calculations over possible alliance partners more nearly proceed on the basis of interest than ideology.

Noting this, what do we see when we veer toward the multipolar (European) great-power system? It might serve our purposes well to start off our discussion by turning our eyes to the period preceding World War I. Why this period provides an extremely useful point of departure is not difficult to sustain. In testing theories, the reader will recall from Chapter 2 of this study (cf. Section 2.3, p. 49), we argued that one of the better tests of a theory is for theoreticians to subject their expectations to hard cases, i.e. cases in which sufficient grounds exist for an entity to behave in ways contrary to what one's theory leads one to expect. The period preceding World War I provides such a test for our theory. In particular, it points us towards numerous instances where states allied with one another, even though there were sufficient *ideological* grounds for them not to. One thinks in this regard of the Franco-Russian Dual Alliance (consummated in 1894), a political and military commitment directed towards balancing the 1879 Dual Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary, which in due time culminated in the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy (Kennedy, 1989:250). Although ideological differences meant that the drift towards one another was initially slow, things quickly heated up as soon as the behaviour and actions of Kaiser Wilhelm II's government became more threatening (Kennedy, 1989:250). We should also keep in mind here that many had believed that in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, the possibility of the 'Republican' and the 'Cossack' coming together was well-near impossible (Waltz, 1979:166). And yet they did, this notwithstanding their vast ideological differences – and, in due time, the Franco-Russian Dual Alliance culminated in the Triple Entente (consisting of Russia, France and Great Britain), with the French and British (during April 1904), on the one hand, and the British and Russians (during August 1907), on the other hand, in quick succession resolving their longstanding and, at times, bitter animosities (Waltz, 1979:166).⁸²

⁸² The Anglo-French *rapprochement* was in many ways a significant break from the past. So entrenched was the Anglo-French antagonism in the discourse on international politics that "by the nineteenth century it was accepted virtually without question as an axiom of international politics" (Rock, 1989:91). Consider, furthermore, that by the late 1880s Anglo-French relations were consistently in a state of deterioration. The French were not only challenging Britain in various areas

In respect of the Anglo-French *entente* in particular, the “ambitious and dangerous” aims of the Germans impinged heavily on the British and the French, with Kaiser Wilhelm II and Chancellor Bülow boisterously proclaiming that the “German century” was at hand (Kennedy, 1989:252).⁸³ Moreover, in considering the range and construction of the German High Seas Fleet, it became blatantly obvious to the British that the Germans were directing their strategic efforts with them chiefly in mind – and with the German fleet rapidly increasing in strength, the British were once more driven into a compromising position, on this occasion having to conclude the Anglo-French naval agreement of November 1912 (Kennedy, 1989:253). The British, it seemed, had thus found in Germany a new rival, one to be feared more “than France and Russia, her traditional enemies” (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:229). It is, to bring the point home, Germany’s bid for world power status, not her ideological disposition, which turned her into a rival for the British (Thompson, 1999:13). The Anglo-French *entente*, then, can best be explained by considering the constraining effects of the *international* environment of Britain and France (Rock, 1989:122). It is appropriate here to juxtapose this setting with that of some fifty years earlier. The reader shall recall that in the Second Mehmet Ali Crisis, British and Russian interests converged to forge an unlikely alliance in the face of democratic France’s challenge to the former states’ Near Eastern interests (Ingram, 1999:273). And, with the outbreak of the Crimean War (1854-1856), the *combined* Anglo-French assault – as was argued, an unlikely alliance – served to check the common Russian threat in Crimea (Kennedy, 1989:173). In this setting, as in the one preceding World War I, common threats and/or interests, not ideology, determinedly influenced states’ calculations over possible alliance partners.

There is, however, far more to be gleaned from the immediate period preceding World War I. Consider, once more, the case of Britain. In his House of Commons speech in 1848 (see above), Lord Palmerston had strongly urged current and future British decision makers to heed the cardinal rule of British foreign relations: we (i.e.

of strategic interest, but the pair was also embroiled in an escalating naval race as well as had their hands full in having to deal with numerous and frequent colonial quarrels (Kennedy, 1989:219).

⁸³ The Anglo-French *entente* was accordingly not a fixed alliance, but a clear understanding that the two would work together in the face of the common German threat (Pratt, De Santis & Siracusa, 1980:229). Yet with Germany’s High Seas Fleet perilously expanding and amid British fears of a German strike westward through the territory of neutralist Belgium, the possibility of further and future British support of the French dramatically improved (Kennedy, 1989:224).

the British) have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies; our interests, as against this, are however eternal and perpetual (cf. Section 5.2, p. 167). The diplomacy of Britain in the decade or so prior to World War I strikingly illustrates this point. Although Britain was according to many indicators probably still first among equals during the late 1880s, it had been surpassed industrially by both the US and Germany, and faced fierce competition on numerous strategic issues and in various areas of vital strategic interest. The British, however, gradually became aware of its rather unfavourable strategic position as the century drew to a close. The oft-cited argument that British isolation was a grave consideration in its diplomacy is one that is unfortunately all too true and one that has been met with wide approval by diplomatic historians of the period (cf. Sloan, 1938:501; Blake, 1942:276; Garvin, 1934:69). With Britain becoming increasingly aware of its overextension and strategic isolation, it became all the more clear that it could *and* would only fight in defence of vital strategic interests – and even such interests had to be placed within its larger context and weighed up against some of Britain's other vital interests (Kennedy, 1989:232). It is in this context that British Foreign and Prime Minister Lord Salisbury strenuously “opposed a fixed military commitment *with* Germany in 1889 and 1898-1901” and, obversely, Lord Grey pressed exceedingly hard “to avoid a fixed military commitment *against* Germany in 1906-1914” (Kennedy, 1989:232; emphasis in original). In both instances, Britain's *shifting* positions tell us something about how the international-political environment constrains the behaviour and actions of the units of the system. Given this reluctance on the part of the British to militarily commit itself to possible alliance partners, their subsequently doing so in the first decade of the twentieth century becomes all the more remarkable – and, once more, suggests something about how their *international* situation impinged on their behaviour and actions. It is, moreover, this precariousness in Britain's strategic position that helps explain British overtures to the (ideologically distinct) Japanese, which eventually culminated in the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 (Kennedy, 1989:251). The impressive performance of the Japanese during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 had the further effect of Britain expressing its willingness to extend the terms of the Anglo-Japanese alliance for 10 more years (Woodruff, 1981:108-109). Interestingly enough, both the British and Americans provided support for the Japanese in the latter war, supplying the Japanese navy with British-built battleships and, in respect of the Japanese army, Krupp guns (Kennedy,

1989:209). Yet scarcely two years later, with Britain's strategic position becoming increasingly untenable, Britain and Russia resolved their animosities (see above).

Consideration of Italy's position within the period prior to World War I is also extremely enlightening. With Italy becoming a united kingdom in 1861, it quickly discovered its relative weakness vis-à-vis Britain, France and Germany, which, much to the chagrin of the Italians, basically ignored her (Woodruff, 1981:137). This reason, coupled with France's annexation of Tunis (a sought after possession for the Italians), had the effect of prompting the Italians to join forces with the Germans and Austrians in May 1882, thus becoming the third member of the Triple Alliance (Woodruff, 1981:137). The settling of the longstanding Anglo-French rivalries in the early years of the twentieth century led, however, to an earnest reconsideration on the part of the Italians of their commitment to the Triple Alliance. As Kennedy (1989:251) has noted, Italy's "coastlines were simply far too vulnerable to allow itself to be placed in a camp opposite to an Anglo-French combination". Moreover, the Italians were at any rate gradually drifting away from its Triple Alliance members in the direction of the betterment of its relations with France, with each state having sufficient financial and North African reasons for seeking each other out (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:229; Kennedy, 1989:251). It is in this context that Italy's volte-face from a strict policy of neutrality in 1914 to its 1915 decision to join in the war-effort against the Central Powers must be understood (Kennedy, 1989:256-257). The fact that Italy's defection from the Central Powers scarcely affected the relative strength of their alliance and, conversely, added very little to the cause of Britain, France and Russia, suggests something of the relative unimportance of Italy during this period (Waltz, 1979:168; Kennedy, 1989:257).

The period prior to World War II is equally instructive. The general European setting in the decade prior to Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 is one marked (or marred) by the failure of Britain, France, Italy, and the Soviet Union to forge a meaningful coalition to oppose the rising German threat (Waltz, 2008c:xiii). An examination of Britain's position in the years preceding World War II provides us however with a useful point of departure. The British and, for that matter, most of the other European great powers, only really responded to the German threat when it was well-near too late. It was, for instance, only by 1936 that the British started to

increase their defence expenditures. Full-scale rearmament only followed by 1938 (Kennedy, 1989:317). When Hitler subsequently seized Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia in 1938 no European power was adequately prepared to stand up militarily to him (Woodruff, 1981:163). In Britain's case, in particular, it had some catching up to do. By 1936-1937, the German *Luftwaffe* had overtaken the British air force, its (i.e. Britain's) army was perilously weak in Europe, and the British navy was no longer the behemoth of the seas as it used to be (Kennedy, 1989:317). Even more problematic for Britain was that although its defence planners and chiefs of staff gradually realised the necessity of Britain finding potential allies to balance the German threat, such allies were few in number. Of the great *ententes* and *rapprochements* which marked British diplomacy in the first decade or so of the twentieth century precious few could now be found: the Japanese changed from ally to foe, signing the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany in November 1936⁸⁴ (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:332); the Italians had similarly tossed the proverbial hat of friendship and were now donning one of enmity; the Russians were set on pursuing a policy of diplomatic isolation, while at the same time having deep misgivings about the intentions of the Western democracies; and the US, supposedly that great British friend to the West, "was persistently dislocating British grand strategy" in very much the same way as the British were doing in terms of the French's eastern European strategy (Kennedy, 1989:317-318). Britain was then left with France, whose security concerns did not really rank very high on the overall British strategic agenda. Recall (cf. Section 5.2, p. 167) that both Britain and France, incidentally *both* (liberal) democracies, took unilateral steps to gain extra security, and that at the expense of the other.

In was in this context of strategic isolation that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, having replaced Prime Minister Baldwin in May 1937, undertook an ill-fated policy of appeasement, one evidently driven by selfish fears, with the hope of meeting some of the grievances and demands of the dictator states (Kennedy, 1989:338). As part of his attempt to appease Hitler, Chamberlain made two visits to Hitler during 1938, tabling various proposals aimed at placating the German leader (Pratt *et al.*,

⁸⁴ This followed Mussolini's proclamation of the Rome-Berlin Axis in October 1936 (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:332). In November 1937, Germany, Japan and Italy signed their Anti-Comintern Pact (Kennedy, 1989:337).

1980:337). Hitler, however, continued unabated. It was only in the spring of 1939, with the German threat now acutely real, that Britain and France were able to forge a proper military alliance, and even then the alliance between these two (liberal) democracies was fraught with mutual *and* enduring suspicions (Kennedy, 1989:315). Between Washington and London, especially during the mid-1930s, mutual suspicions similarly appeared to be the order of the day – and that at critical times when the dictator states needed to be kept in check (Kennedy, 1989:330). By 1938, with the challenges of Japan and Germany impinging on both states' minds, secret Anglo-American naval talks were finally underway (Kennedy, 1989:330). Here perceptions of a common threat much more than ideological affinity brought the pair together.

And what about Soviet diplomacy in the years preceding Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939? During the early years of the 1930s, Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov in effect said that the Soviet Union was willing to ally with anyone, Hitler's Germany included, if it served the end of improving the Soviets' security situation (Waltz, 1979:166). As with Lord Palmerston's admonition during the 1850s that Britain had no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies, Litvinov was now making a strong case for the Soviets to pursue a similar grand strategy:

We certainly are sympathetic towards the suffering of our German comrades; but it is possible to reproach us Marxists least of all with permitting our sympathies to rule our policy. All the world knows that we can and do maintain good relations with capitalist governments of any regime including fascist. That is not what matters. We do not interfere in the internal affairs of Germany or of other countries, *and our relations with her are determined not by her domestic but by her foreign policy* (quoted in Moore, 1950:354; emphasis added).

Not long after Litvinov made his speech, Stalin touched on the exact same theme, agreeing with every word uttered by his foreign minister: "Of course we are far from being enthusiastic about the fascist regime in Germany. But fascism is not the issue here, if only for the reason that fascism in Italy, for example, has not prevented the USSR from establishing the best relations with that country" (quoted in Moore, 1950:354). With this in mind, Soviet diplomacy vis-à-vis the European (great) powers

during the 1930s was one of alternating periods of friendship and hostility (Moore, 1950:350). There is, however, nothing unusual about this: the proposition that the roles of friend and foe are *not* permanently cast in stone appears to be a fundamental axiom of international politics and one that finds expression not only in Soviet diplomatic history (Moore, 1950:350). External circumstances, once more, help to explain the various changes in Soviet diplomacy during the pre-war period. During the early 1930s, the Soviet Union found itself in a much weaker position than a decade or so earlier: not only was its air force obsolete and had its armoured units been disbanded, but Germany and Japan were rapidly arming themselves and becoming increasingly aggressive (Kennedy, 1989:325). It was only with the post-1937 Five Year Plan that Soviet rearmament gained momentum – but such rearmament was bound to be slow. Meanwhile, Stalin's twin concerns (*viz.*, Japan's aggressive behaviour in Manchuria and, perhaps more so, Hitler's increasingly belligerent posture), coupled with his distrust of the Western democracies lingering in the back of his mind, raised the spectre of a two-front war in two geographically distant theatres of operation, a strategical dilemma that the British were all too familiar with (Kennedy, 1989:326).

To allay his fears and to improve the Soviet security situation, Stalin grudgingly made a number of overtures to the West during the mid-1930s (he negotiated the Soviet Union's entry in the League of Nations during 1934 and concluded treaties with France and Czechoslovakia in 1935). The overtures did not have the desired effect. By 1938-1939, the external situation of the Soviet Union worsened: the Munich settlement (September 1938) confirmed that Hitler's east-central European intentions were all too real; the West was apparently unwilling and unable to do anything about it; and consistent border clashes between the Soviets and Japanese in the Far East required of the Soviet Union to ramp up its military presence in Siberia (Kennedy, 1989:326). It is in this context that Hitler and Stalin concluded the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 (*i.e.* the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) – in every sense, as Kelanic (2016:210) has remarked, a marriage of convenience rather than any intimation of a deep-seated friendship or ideological affinity. The two states were in almost every respect ideological foes (Kennedy, 1989:326). This was followed, in February 1940, by the two states concluding the Nazi-Soviet economic pact, whereby the Soviets undertook to provide the Germans with oil in exchange for

“massive military support” (Kelanic, 2016:210). For both states, the alliance served the purpose of (temporarily) addressing each state’s two-front war problem: for the Soviets, the spectre of a two-front war, with the Germans and Japanese as the principle belligerents; for the Germans, it appeased Hitler’s fears of a repeat of the two-front war problem that proved to be devastating to the Germans during World War I. The alliance, however, came to an abrupt end when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 (Kelanic, 2016:211).

In the Soviet case, as in the others identified above, we once more gained some sense of the difficulties states face in an environment where the units of the system have to fend for themselves and wherein force is the ultimate arbiter. In such an environment, as the cases cited here suggest, states are constrained to make calculations over possible alliance partners less on the basis of ideology and more on that of interest. That states are willing to ally with anyone when pressed hard enough can, as a final thought, be illustrated by considering Winston Churchill’s remarks to his private secretary on the evening prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union: “If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons” (quoted in Waltz, 1979:166). The veracity of Churchill’s argument is nicely illustrated if we consider that he, as well as American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, subsequently worked closely with Stalin, “who was not simply a tyrant, but was also one of the greatest mass murderers of all time” (Mearsheimer, 2011b:82).

5.2.2 Emulate or die: competition, emulation and socialisation

From the expectations drawn from our theory (cf. Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, p. 134), we have sufficient warrant for believing that the limits imposed by anarchic realms on an international division of labour constrain states to fulfil similar functions and, owing to this, a great deal of emulation occurs. We thus find among states, most especially the great powers, high degrees of competition in the arts and machinery of warfare and, among the lesser ones, emulation of the military policies, weapon systems and capabilities of the great powers (Waltz, 1979:127). Within self-help and competitive systems, accordingly, such behaviour is to be expected: those who fail to effectively provide for themselves, or do so less effectively than others, subject

themselves to all manner and forms of peril. Moreover, in competitive and self-help systems, the units who are likely to do well – i.e. those who survive and prosper – are those who are able to adapt to the environment in which they find themselves (Waltz, 2008f:236-237). Being successful in such systems thus requires of the units to adopt ways that for internal reasons they would perhaps prefer not to (Waltz, 2008f:237). Because of such pressures, states tend to veer their eyes towards the practices and modes of behaviour of the more successful competitors and, in finding these, seek to emulate them. The behaviour, interestingly enough, is not merely confined to international politics. In testimony before the US Senate Committee on Banking and Currency during March 1955, then-president of General Motors, Harlow Curtice, noted the peculiar difficulties confronting firms in a competitive marketplace where falling behind is simply not an option:

The only way that a company like General Motors can ever stay where it is competitively is to work as aggressively as possible to better its position. To relax for a moment would be only to lose position. For a period of 4 years in the early 1920's, one company sold between 55 and 60 percent of all automobiles in the American market. It offered the lowest-priced car in the industry, yet could not withstand the competitive drive of other companies. This could happen again. Therefore, there can be no compromise between full, aggressive competition and loss of competitive position through any tendency to rest on one's laurels. General Motors has no assured markets. We have no protection against competition. Nor do we have any guaranteed rate of return on our capital (quoted in Waltz, 2001:195).

In international politics, however, the pressures identified by Curtice are further compounded by the absence of any formally established agencies to counteract the private use of force. That international politics, and the multipolar (European) great power system in particular, has been marked by relentless competition and states consistently adjusting their behaviour and strategies to that of the more successful competitors is not overly difficult to illustrate. We have already gone to some length in previous chapters (cf. Chapter 4, Section 4.4, p. 139) to illustrate the veracity of this proposition. Recall, for instance, that in the context of considerations about possible future contenders for great power status, Kaiser Wilhelm was strongly urged

by Admiral Tirpitz at the close of the nineteenth century that Germany's aspirations to great power status cannot be divorced from her (also) building a big navy, with Tirpitz earmarking the latter task as "an absolute necessity for Germany, without which it will face ruin" (quoted in Kennedy, 1984:157-158). We can add here that early on in the twentieth century, German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg reiterated this sentiment, noting that for Germany to be a really great power it "*must* have a fleet, and a strong one...not merely for the purpose of defending her commerce but for the general purpose of her greatness" (Layne, 2015; emphasis in original).⁸⁵ And, in the context of France's waning power vis-à-vis the other great powers, a Monsieur Darcy admonished the French government that "those who do not advance, go backwards and who goes back goes under" (cf. Chapter 4, Section 4.4, p. 139). Both Tirpitz and Darcy as well as Von Bethmann would surely have experienced a sense of the contemporaneity of Catherine the Great had they considered her remarks made during the eighteenth century, noting as she did that "he who wins nothing, loses" (quoted in Waltz, 2001:195). And Catherine the Great would surely have experienced a sense of the contemporaneity of Indian philosopher Kautilya had she considered his *Arthashastra* (literally, the Science of Polity) written some 300 BC, with the treatise directed at providing various rules that a ruler would do well to follow if he wished to acquire or maintain a position of power (Solomon, 2012:66; Modelski, 1964:549; Elman, 2007:11).

During the eighteenth century, some of the most significant changes in military and naval affairs came by way of changes in organisation. In France, in particular, this took various forms: the creation of a French war ministry charged with overseeing the financing, supply and organisation of troops; the creation of the position of inspector-general, with its primary task the imposition of strict discipline among the troops and a rigorous training regimen; the creation of logistic support in the forms of depots, barracks, hospitals and training grounds; and the large-scale development of a competitive and centrally organised battle fleet (Kennedy, 1989:75). Critical infrastructure such as shipbuilding yards and war academies quickly followed (Kennedy, 1989:75). In due time however, and with an eye towards the practices of

⁸⁵ As part of its quest for great-power status, the Germans felt similarly constrained to vigorously pursue territorial expansion, with Chancellor Bülow declaring in 1895 that the "question is not whether we want to colonize or not, but that we *must* colonize, whether we want it or not" (quoted in Kennedy, 1989:211; emphasis in original).

the more successful competitors, the other (great) powers followed suit, believing that they had to “*if they did not wish to be eclipsed*” (Kennedy, 1989:75; emphasis added). Peter the Great, for instance, in response to the Russian defeat at the Battle of Narva (1700), thus undertook a series of reforms aimed at modernising the Russian army, and with this end in mind veered his attention to the military expertise of the West (Kennedy, 1989:107). In later reflecting on military history subsequent to the development of new formation regimes, Peter the Great acknowledged that the origin of the crushing defeats of the Russian army lay in its inability to adapt to and adopt newer forms of military organisation (Anisimov, 2015:58). The future success of the Russian army thus depended on it changing “the very basis on which the military organization had been founded” (Anisimov, 2015:58).

Such pressures to compete with each other in respect of the arts and machinery of warfare, and the push to emulate the practices of the more successful competitors, were similarly acute during the nineteenth century. Within a very short time following Bismarck’s decisive victories over the Austrians (1866) and the French (1870), the continental powers of Europe (and, eventually, Japan) set out to imitate the Prussian military staff system (Waltz, 1979:127). That the US and Britain bucked the trend merely suggests that they found themselves on the periphery of the immediate arena of competition (Waltz, 1979:127). Some thirty odd years later, in addition to pointing the Kaiser to the necessity of a large-scale German fleet, Admiral Von Tirpitz cautioned that Germany’s success in the impending Anglo-German naval race depended on her adopting a naval doctrine and weaponry similar to that of the British (Waltz, 1979:127). In all the wars of the nineteenth century, moreover, the necessity of adjusting one’s military strategies and organisation to the practices of the more successful competitors proved to be a decisive factor in determining their outcomes. This was all the more true from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, when the forces of military organisation and power interlinked with developments accruing from the industrial revolution:

Yet all of these wars – whether fought in the Tennessee Valley or the Bohemian plain, in the Crimean Peninsula or the fields of Lorraine – pointed to one general conclusion: the powers which were defeated were those that had failed to adopt to the “military revolution” of the mid-nineteenth century, the acquisition of new

weapons, the mobilizing and equipping of large armies, the use of improved communications offered by the railway, the steamship, and the telegraph, and a productive industrial base to sustain the armed forces (Kennedy, 1979:191-192).

If the Germans were feeling the twin pressures of expanding their fleet as well as emulating the naval doctrine and weaponry of the British, the Japanese, too, were not excluded from such concerns. To this end the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hayashi Tadasu, in an article written in the journal *Jiji Shimpō* during June 1895, remarked that the Japanese “must continue to study and make use of Western methods...If new warships are considered necessary we must, at any cost, build them; if the organisation of our army is inadequate we must start rectifying it from now; if need be, our entire military system must be changed” (quoted in Storry, 1979:30). The Japanese, it seems, had rather quickly internalised the lesson that the other great powers had reluctantly learned: adapt or die. In the interwar-period (i.e. between the two world wars), such behaviour continued unabated. In 1940, for instance, with Stalin increasingly anxious to avoid a war with the Germans, the Soviet leader pleaded with his countrymen to keep the productive gap with the West in check: “To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten” (quoted in Kennedy, 1989:327).

The examples cited here suggest to us some of the ways in which the structure of the international-political system works its effects, thus rewarding, punishing, limiting and moulding the behaviour of the units. In doing so, it tends to bring the outcomes of the behaviour and actions of the units of the system within definable ranges. Each state, as we know, is of course free to buck the trend and follow its every whim. Yet we also know that structures act as selectors – i.e. states select behaviour in accordance with their consequences. In selecting them, they cast their eyes towards the practices and modes of behaviour of the more successful competitors and, in finding these, seek to emulate them. Moreover, as we have established in previous chapters, breaking out of this competitive system is exceedingly hard. Consider, as a final example, some of the difficulties the Soviet Union in its early years experienced in striving to avoid becoming socialised to the system. The case, we should add, presents us with another hard test for our theory, and in particular by asking of us to look for confirmatory evidence where states (in this instance, the Soviet Union)

conformed to commonly accepted international practices “even though for *internal* reasons they would prefer not to” (Waltz, 1979:127; emphasis added).

Accordingly, in the early years of the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks pushed the agenda of international revolution and, in doing so, preached their indifference to the prevailing conventions of diplomacy. In pondering the future direction of Soviet foreign policy in his capacity as foreign minister, Trotsky thus remarked that he “will issue some revolutionary proclamations to the peoples and then close up the joint” (quoted in Waltz, 1979:128). He was, in effect, saying that the Soviet Union had no desire or inclination to be socialised to the system. In competitive and self-help environments, however, the individual units of the system often require the assistance of others, and with some members forging alliances and working deals, others must follow suit – or risk their destruction (Waltz, 1979:128). Thus, with the pressures of competition in the back of his mind, Lenin instructed Foreign Minister Chicherin to “[a]void big words” at the Genoa Conference of 1922, with the endgame the working of deals and the forging of alliances, irrespective of the ideological bearings of those states offering them (quoted in Waltz, 1979:128).

5.2.3 ‘Balances disrupted will one day be restored’: balancing and alliance management in multipolar systems

From what we have learned about balance-of-power theory in preceding chapters (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, pp. 91-94), we know that the theory gives rise to at least three expectations: one, it leads us to expect that states are likely to act in ways that lead towards balance in the system, whether or not they intentionally act with this end in mind; two, the system will tend towards balance; and, three, given that states have to fend for themselves in a competitive arena, a great deal of emulation will occur such that states will come to display common characteristics. In anarchic systems, balancing behaviour is thus required by states; yet we also know that within systems marked by different levels of (military) interdependence, balancing proceeds in markedly different ways. In multipolar systems, balancing is conducted through alliance formation and internal efforts; in bipolar systems, with (military) interdependence at low levels, balancing proceeds primarily through internal efforts. The implications following from this are sweeping. In multipolar

systems, and owing to the presence of too many great powers within the system, drawing clear and fixed lines between allies and adversaries becomes exceedingly difficult, a proposition already borne out by the historical illustrations advanced above; yet, within such systems, there are concurrently too few powers to render insignificant the effects following from defection.

The problem within multipolar systems is then that there “are too many [great powers] to enable anyone to see for sure what is happening and too few to make what is happening a matter of indifference” (Waltz, 1979:168). Moreover, within multipolar systems, competition becomes a more complex business. The increase in numbers accelerates both uncertainties in gauging the relative military capabilities of states and difficulties in estimating the relative strength and cohesion of alliances (Waltz, 2000a:6). As against this, the security of great powers in bipolar systems is entirely dependent on self-generating means, for the security of each cannot be assured by any other state or combination of states. Internal balancing, as against the situation prevalent with external balancing, is at once more reliable and precise (Waltz, 1979:168). Uncertainties about threats, and confusion about who is likely to respond to them, multiply when numbers increase; they decrease as numbers fall (Waltz, 1979:171-172).

With this being said, what do we see when we veer towards an examination of the multipolar (European) great-power system? Owing to the work done above, we already have a number of examples at hand illustrative of the workings of balance-of-power theory. Consider in this regard, once more, the Franco-Russian Dual Alliance (consummated in 1894), essentially a political and military commitment by the alliance members to one another, with its chief aim balancing the 1879 Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary. That it took the Russians and the French well-near fifteen years to balance the alliance between the Germans and the Austro-Hungarians is for all intents and purposes theoretically trivial. We have to this end already established that one of the limitations of balance-of-power theory – one, incidentally, peculiar to *all* social science theories – is that it can more nearly tell us *what* will happen than *when* (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, p. 93 & Waltz, 2000a:27). Other examples abound however. One thinks in this regard of the Anglo-Russian alliance during the Second Mehmet Ali Crisis with its principal aim checking the

belligerence of democratic France; the combined Anglo-French alliance to check the common Russian threat in Crimea in the 1850s; the coming together of the French and British during April 1904 and the British and Russians during August 1907; the Japanese decision to join the allied powers in the face of the common German threat during World War I (Paterson *et al.*, 2010:277); and the reactions of the European great powers and Russia during Hitler's drive for domination.

While these examples tend to confirm our suspicions about the veracity of balance-of-power theory, can we offer the reader other comparable ones? In answering in the affirmative, we can, for instance, note that the century and a half after 1500, a rather lengthy period, was characterised by a dynastic-religious bloc under the authority of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs making a bid for European mastery, with the other European great powers striving endlessly to check its ambitions (Kennedy, 1989:xvii). Moreover, a cursory examination of the behaviour and actions of the (European) great powers during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries similarly fits the pattern identified above. One merely needs to consider that France's extended drive for dominance, initially under Louis XIV and in due time under the leadership of Napoleon, was almost always checked by some or other combination of the great powers of the day (Kennedy, 1989:xvii). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, notably, this took the particular form of a motley bunch of maritime and continental neighbours waging war against the French in order to keep its west-central European ambitions in check (Kennedy, 1989:74). The British, too, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under various threats to the Baltic naval stores on which the operation and success of its Royal Navy and the mercantile marine depended, regularly took action to preserve the balance of power, as did the French in the nineteenth century to prevent Britain from enjoying an outright monopoly of influence alongside the coasts of Africa and China (Kennedy, 1989:74, 169). And, in the early years of the twentieth century, with the impressive nature of American economic growth becoming unmistakable, Kaiser Wilhelm and several other European leaders intimated of the need to combine and balance against the American trading colossus to its west (Kennedy, 1989:245). Whether one looks then at seventeenth century great-power relations, or veer one's attention to the nineteenth or twentieth centuries, balance-of-power theory appears to be vindicated.

We have, accordingly, strong theoretical *and* historical reasons for believing that unbalanced power is bound to be restored. Whether we have similar grounds for believing that the problem of alliance management in multipolar systems *is* an inordinately vexing one is an altogether different question, one to be answered in the present. We know, of course, that the greater (military) interdependence typical of multipolar systems has decisive implications for the formation, maintenance and disruption of alliances. The period preceding and during World War I is, once again, instructive. From what was said above, we know that multipolar systems suffer both from difficulties in gauging the relative military capabilities of states as well as difficulties in estimating the relative strength and cohesion of alliances. Accordingly, from 1880 onwards, two rival blocs gradually emerged (Kennedy, 1989:xviii). By July 1914, quite tellingly, even with the two blocs gearing themselves for war, there was hardly any warrant for believing that the two alliance systems would not break down: within both the Entente and the Central Powers, questions about the durability of the alliances abounded, creating in turn distrust and uncertainty within *and* between the rival camps (Freedman, 2014). By September 1914, with the prospect of war now indubitable, alliance members on both sides still fretted about the durability of alliances (Freedman, 2014). Yet there is nothing unusual in any of this. In multipolar systems, irrespective of the formation and existence of rival blocs, the possibility that one's alliance partner may defect to the other side always looms large (Waltz, 1979:166). At times, one member of an alliance may wish to settle differences or cooperate with a member of the opposing camp, causing in turn all sorts of anxieties for its own alliance partners. Anglo-German cooperation during 1912 and 1913, with its chief aims the dampening of Balkan crises and the resolution of various colonial questions, presents one such case, one that undoubtedly left the alliance partners of both sides sufficiently worried (Waltz, 1979:166-167). The subsequent reactions of both sides' alliance members to this joint venture had the effect of dissuading the British and Germans from fulfilling similar roles in Southeastern Europe during 1914, yet for both states the prospect of the other's alliance breaking down now seemed stronger than ever (Waltz, 1979:167). Had there existed a greater measure of cohesion within each bloc, then a greater measure of flexibility in policy would undoubtedly have been permitted (Waltz, 1979:167). Yet the cohesion of blocs is dependent on the careful and skilful management of alliance leaders – and this

difficulty multiplies among alliance members of near-equal size given the requirement that cohesion must be cooperatively contrived (Waltz, 1979:167).

The rough equality (or close interdependence) between alliance members thus holds that the cohesion of blocs is not only inordinately difficult to bring about, but also that the strategy of each alliance member is inextricably linked to that of the weakest or more adventurous members of its bloc (Waltz, 2001:218). In the context of World War I, this in essence meant that while any one member of an alliance could drag its alliance partners into war, no particular or individual member of the two camps would be able to exercise control (Waltz, 1979:167). The effect accruing from this was that if the Austro-Hungarians decided to enter the fray, the Germans could not otherwise but follow suit, for the military defeat of Austria-Hungary would have left the Germans without any friends in the middle of Europe; if France, on its part, committed to war, the Russians, too, were constrained to follow, for a French defeat at the hand of the Germans would in turn have meant sure defeat for the Russians (Waltz, 1979:167). These kinds of *external* pressures, we must point out, were part and parcel of the calculations of *all* the European states. Given that the defeat or defection of a major alliance partner would have tilted the balance, the strategy and the use of its forces of each alliance member could not otherwise but be inextricably wedded to the strategy, aims and fears of its alliance partners (Waltz, 1979:167). The close interdependence between the alliance members of both blocs had the further effect of prolonging the war far longer than was perhaps needed. Thus, owing to this close interdependence, if one member of an alliance suffered heavy military and/or economic losses and were unable to sustain the war-effort, it was nonetheless emboldened to stay the course given the hope and promise of the other alliance members' coming to its aid (Kennedy, 1989:256). The difficulties laid bare above, though framed here against the backdrop of World War I, are bound to be present in all situations where two or more great powers compete for security and where the alliance members constitutive of each camp are closely interdependent.

5.2.4 Democratic peace, democratic wars and the multipolar (European) great-power system

One of the principal aims of this study, the reader might recall, is to make a case for the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism in an international-political world composed of progressively high numbers of (liberal) democratic states. In labouring with this task in mind, we have already taken great strides to point the reader towards the striking continuity of international politics across time and space. The completion of this task is, however, bound to tell us something about the *general* conditions under which states conduct their affairs and the various constraints each faces. Given, however, that the (qualitative) literature on democratic peace theory deals with *particular* historical events, we have accordingly promised the reader to say a bit more about select historical events, a task to be more fully undertaken in the present. Lest we fail however to heed the instructions advanced in Chapter 2 of this study, care should be taken to point out that theories located at one level of generality cannot and should not explain matters located at another level of generality. Thus, as was variously argued (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.2, p. 36), in constructing a theory, and owing to the desirability of fostering theories of great generality, great care is taken in abstracting from the complexity of reality, in eliminating as much as possible from the subject matter. Conversely, in *applying* a theory to specialised circumstances, a theory is supplemented by introducing additional assumptions as necessitated by a given occasion. With this in mind, Waltzian structural realism therefore freely admits that explaining and/or understanding international politics requires of us to pay attention to both national *and* international politics. A theory of international politics, and balance-of-power theory in particular, thus points us towards the expectation of a marked similarity in outcomes of similarly situated states, about the outcomes resulting from the uncoordinated actions of states and, importantly, about the constraints all of them are subject to. In asking and answering how a particular state would react to such constraints, one would require both a theory of international politics *and* a theory of foreign policy.

With this thought firmly established, and while keeping in mind that multipolar systems yield distinctive structural effects, we can now turn our attention to the

waging of war and peace by (liberal) democratic states during the period of multipolarity, and in particular from 1789 onwards. The claim that (liberal) democracies have not waged war against one another is obviously an erroneous one (cf. Section 5.2, fn. 81, p. 164). World War I, for instance, presents us with a rather large and glaring case of (liberal) democracies waging war against one another. The oft-cited argument that Germany was not a (liberal) democracy is not only in error, but it simultaneously fails to appreciate how Germany *being* a democracy contributed to the outbreak of the war (Waltz, 1991:669). Thus in the years leading up to the war, German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg cautioned about the extent to which vested interests in support of the ruling majority were agitating for policies destined to create more enemies than friends for the Germans (Waltz, 1991:669). One thinks in this regard, for instance, of the Junkers pushing for protectionist policies in relation to Russian grain and the various north-western industrial and commercial interests in support of the railroad from Berlin to Baghdad and the construction of a first-rate German fleet intended to rival that of the British (Waltz, 1991:669-670). Moreover, such policies and those adopted by the Germans in attempting to consolidate the Triple Entente had the double effect of frightening the Russians and the British and, perhaps more importantly, created fertile grounds in German military circles for believing that Germany could wage and emerge victorious in a preventive war before its enemies would become sufficiently strong (Waltz, 1991:670).

The knowledge that processes inherent in (liberal) democracy often serve the ends of pushing states to war is, of course, nothing new. We have to this effect already pointed out (cf. Chapter 4, Section 4.5, p. 148) how the belligerence of British public opinion brought France and Britain to the brink of war during the Tahiti incident of 1844 and, some five years earlier, how it similarly acted to drive the pair to the precipice of war during the Second Mehemet Ali Crisis. We can of course add to these two examples numerous others: popular majorities urged US President James Madison to attack Canada; in wishing to wage war against Mexico, US President James K. Polk found that “massive” Democratic support was already present and, that in respect of the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuela boundary dispute, he had to labour with all his might to resist popular pressure to fight the British; to the extent that public opinion constrained the British during the latter boundary dispute,

“it was regarded mainly as an *obstacle* to accommodation” (Rock, 1997:111; emphasis added); and US President William McKinley had no desire to wage war against Spain, but eventually capitulated owing to the public’s clamour for war (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:168). The Anglo-French crisis of 1898 over control of the Nile (i.e. the Fashoda crisis) proceeded along similar lines, with British public opinion *and* the liberal opposition in Parliament supporting the government’s unwavering and confrontational policy towards the French, with the latter only backing down upon considering their relative military (and, especially, naval) weakness vis-à-vis the British (Layne, 1996a:184-185; Kennedy, 1989:220).

Added to these examples is the case of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) where the Conservative-Unionist government of Britain waged war against the two democratically elected Boer Republics and enjoyed so much popular support that the incumbent government won the next round of elections by a huge majority (Larison, 2012). Furthermore, in the interwar years between the First and Second World Wars (1919-1939), with public opinion now believed to be a sufficiently strong constraint on states’ foreign policies, the disjuncture between liberal theory and praxis was impressive. While public opinion did come to exert strong influence on states’ foreign policies during this period, it was not altogether what liberals had hoped for: “the problem with “public opinion” after 1919 was that many sections of it did *not* match that fond Gladstonian and Wilsonian vision of a liberal, educated, fair-minded populace, imbued with internationalist ideas, utilitarian assumptions, and respect of the rule of law” (Kennedy, 1989:284; emphasis in original). As against this situation, we also find examples of (liberal) democratic publics and/or domestic interests agitating *for* peace in situations where democratic peace theory leads us to expect the contrary. In the crisis year of 1938, for instance, with Hitler’s belligerence almost reaching its apex, the British government found itself sufficiently constrained to commit to full-scale rearmament owing to “[t]reasury controls and politicians’ worries about domestic opinion” (Kennedy, 1989:317).

The Anglo-American War of 1812 provides us with another clear example of two (liberal) democracies waging war against each other – with this case being all the more impressive given that the two quintessential paragons of nineteenth century (liberal) democracy chose to fight one another. For Britain, the war was nothing more

than a “strategical sideshow”, diverting for a brief moment its attention from the belligerence of France (Kennedy, 1989:137). Both sides evinced the ability to sufficiently hurt, yet not wholly defeat, the other (Kennedy, 1989:137). In conducting the war however and, eventually, in suing for peace, (liberal democratic) ideological factors had decisively little, if any, bearing on the decisions and actions of both states – realist factors, as against this, greatly influenced the calculations of the decision makers of both. To this war we can add that of the American Civil War (1861-1863), a peculiar case where the northern democracy waged war against its southern (and democratic) counterpart (Waltz, 1991:670). The case is an unusually interesting one. Here we have a group of highly interdependent (no, highly *integrated*) people waging war against each other, a proposition that flies in the face of democratic peace theory. As Christopher Layne (1996a:192-193) reminds us, the war between the north and the south speaks to the core of democratic peace theory: if (liberal) democratic norms and institutions have proven insufficient to prevent the outbreak of (civil) war *within* a (liberal) democratic state, what warrant do we have for believing that they would sufficiently restrain war *between* two (liberal) democracies, especially given the competitive and self-help environment characteristic of international politics? The answer, unfortunately, is ‘none’.

An examination of the American Civil War is however instructive for quite another reason, that of the *Trent* affair. In November 1861, amidst a keen sense of desperation and failure concerning the Union government’s war against the Confederacy, United States Naval Captain Charles Wilkes boarded the British mail steamer *Trent*, with the explicit intention of removing the Confederate agents James M. Mason and John Slidell, and their secretaries, en route to seek Confederate diplomatic recognition in England and France respectively (Coetzee, 2011:108). In approaching the *Trent* during November 8, 1861, Wilkes brought the British mail steamer to an abrupt halt by discharging a shell across its bows and, upon boarding, demanded at once the release of Mason and Slidell and their secretaries (Foreign Office, 1972a[1861]:476). This Wilkes did despite fierce protestation by the British commander and without any prior authorisation from the Union government. What followed was an Anglo-American crisis in which the two sides came precipitously close to war, and in which Britain demanded restitution after the indignity suffered to

the British flag, the release of the envoys and the offering of a suitable apology (Pratt *et al.*, 1980:138-140).

Although Wilkes acted without prior governmental authorisation, his actions were favourably and enthusiastically received in the Union. In the public mind, as well as in governmental circles, Wilkes was held in the highest possible esteem (Adams, 1912a:546), with many British observers sensing that the Union government “was spoiling for a fight” (Rock, 1997:114). Here is but one more example of democratic processes (in this instance, public opinion) *driving* pairs of (liberal) democracies to the brink of war, a situation that, curiously enough, prevailed on both sides of the North Atlantic (Rock, 1997:115, 117). In reflecting upon the American mood subsequent to Wilkes’ actions, Adams (1912b:37) thus noted that he could “not remember in the whole course of the half century’s retrospect...any occurrence in which the American people were so completely swept off their feet, for the moment losing possession of their senses, as during the weeks which immediately followed the seizure of Mason and Slidell”. Although the Union government initially considered rejecting the demands issued by the British, they eventually appreciated the stark realities (internal *and* external) confronting them and thus acquiesced to the British demands.

The Union government’s decision to capitulate to British demands vindicates the theoretical expectations proffered in preceding chapters, especially those derived from Waltzian structural realism. Not only was the Union government confronted by an unfavourable distribution of capabilities vis-à-vis the British, but war with Britain would undoubtedly have resulted in the independence of the Confederacy and, accordingly, the permanent dissolution of the Union (Coetzee, 2011:109). The nakedness of the Union government’s position is aptly conveyed by Layne (1996a:172): “The United States bowed to London because, already fully occupied militarily trying to subdue the Confederacy, the North could not also afford a simultaneous war with England, which effectively would have brought Britain into the war between the States on the South’s side”. The Union government, and President Lincoln in particular, was all too aware of these realities. In addressing Congress on December 3, 1861, he thus reminded its members that it should stand to reason that “in the peculiar exigencies of the times, our intercourse with foreign nations has been

attended with profound solicitude, chiefly turning upon our own domestic affairs” (Lincoln, 1861:3). Scarcely a year later, in his reflections upon the internal and external pressures confronting Union diplomacy, Lincoln (1862:2-4) once more remarked that a confrontational foreign policy “would certainly be unwise”. American Attorney General Edwards Bates held similar views, remarking that “in such a crisis, with such a civil war upon our hands, we cannot hope for success in a...war with England, backed by the assent and countenance of France” (quoted in Rock, 1997:117).

It is relevant to point out here that the forces driving British policy in this episode and, subsequently, in its later refusal to intervene in the American Civil War, speak much more nearly to realist factors than (liberal) ideological ones (Rock, 1997:118, 123). As Claussen (1940:516) has noted, British policy was deeply embedded in calculations of “national interest, with the corollary of commercial self-preservation”. There was, furthermore, no reluctance on the part of the British to either threaten or prepare for war in the event of the refusal of the Union government to meet its demands (Rock, 1997:118). For them, vital interests were clearly at stake and, owing to this, the British cabinet saw it fit to adopt a strategy of compellence (Rock, 1997:118). In devising this strategy, there appears to be scant evidence that democratic institutions played any part in constraining the cabinet and we know of course that British public opinion was as belligerent, if not more so, than in the US (Rock, 1997:118). Consider for instance, in respect of British public opinion, the communication between an American citizen residing in Great Britain and a relative of his in New York on November 29, 1861, writing that the “excitement consequent upon the insult to the British flag...has entirely monopolized the public mind. I have never seen so intense a feeling of indignation exhibited in my life. It pervades all classes, and may make itself heard above the wiser theories of the Cabinet officers” (quoted in Adams, 1912a:544). US Secretary of State William H. Seward was on his part informed by an American residing in London that “there never was within memory such a burst of feeling...The people are frantic with rage, and were the country polled, I fear 999 men out of a thousand would declare for immediate war” (quoted in Rock, 1997:115). And the US representative to the Court of St. James, Charles Francis Adams, while noting that he believed the British government wished

to avoid war, nonetheless strongly cautioned that British leaders appeared to be “powerless” in resisting the widespread clamour for war (Rock, 1997:115).

There is, perhaps, one more lesson to be learned from consideration of the American Civil War, with the promise of an additional one flowing from it. The lesson to be learned, one incidentally to which the history of Western Europe bears witness, is that we have little warrant for believing that closeness of cultural ties provides sufficient grounds for the preservation of peace (Waltz, 2001:49). The more interdependent a people, or the closer their affairs are knit, the greater the closeness of contact and, subsequently, the greater the prospect of occasional conflict (Waltz, 1979:138). We should, accordingly, bear in mind that some of the most intractable civil wars and the most horrific international ones have had as their chief belligerents people who were highly similar and highly integrated (Waltz, 1979:138). If close cultural affinity has not been able to quell the flow of blood, neither then should we expect that increased knowledge and/or understanding of foreign peoples would do the trick (Waltz, 2001:49). In setting course towards Egypt to serve under Sir Evelyn Baring, Alfred Milner had earnestly hoped that the scourges of international hatred and distrust could be allayed through the nations of the world getting to know and “understand one another better” (quoted in Waltz, 2001:50). Sir Evelyn Baring’s reply is, however, instructive: “I’m afraid, my dear Milner, that the better they understand one another, the more they will hate one another” (quoted in Waltz, 2001:50). To this we can add Karl Deutsch’s conclusion that individuals sojourning abroad often return home with a heightened sense of nationalistic fervour, a renewed sense of appreciation for the distinctiveness of their language, culture and people (Waltz, 2001:50). Unfortunately then, increased knowledge often leads to outright arrogance and/or extreme jingoism, not peace (Waltz, 2001:50-51).

If strong cultural ties and/or increased knowledge provide an insufficient basis for the expectation of peace, what about the oft-cited liberal claim that economic interdependence would effectively serve this end? The period prior and during World War I provides striking evidence of the falsity of this claim. From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the states of Europe experienced unprecedentedly high levels of economic interdependence, so much so that Asa Briggs depicted the period as “the *belle époque* of interdependence” (quoted in Waltz, 1979:140). The

extent and depth of this interdependence, even when compared to later periods, is impressive, with the period prior to and during World War I being marked by far higher levels of economic interdependence among the European states than the period succeeding World War II and up until the late 1970s (see Table 1.2, p. 286 and Waltz, 1979:212-215). Consider for instance, in respect of the levels of economic interdependence, that the period of 1909-1913 (i.e. the period *before* the war), yielded far deeper levels of economic interdependence than, say, the periods of 1926-1930 or 1950-1954 (see Table 1.2, p. 286). Moreover, John Maynard Keynes, in reflecting on the economic history of the period prior to World War I, thus noted that the “statistics of the economic interdependence of Germany and her neighbours are *overwhelming*” (Keynes, 1919:8; emphasis added). The Germans were the pre-eminent destination of Russian, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, Italian and Austrian-Hungarian goods; she was the second-best customer of British, Swedish and Danish goods; and the third-best customer of the French (Keynes, 1919:8). German goods, moreover, constituted the largest source of supply to ten nations, including Russia, Italy and Austria-Hungary and the second largest source of supply to three more, including the French and British (Keynes, 1919:9). Yet war ensued.

From the work completed in preceding pages, and in light of the criticism raised presently, we now have in hand a number of persuasive arguments casting doubt on the veracity of democratic peace theory. We have seen in this chapter, as well as in previous ones, how public opinion have often served the end of driving (liberal) democratic states to the brink of war, how strange bedfellows have been born notwithstanding vast ideological differences, how pairs of (liberal) democracies have allied with *and* against one another, how balances have recurred, how states have relentlessly competed with one another, and how states have attempted to emulate the behaviour and practices of the more successful competitors. We also know that, contra the expectations of democratic peace theory, states’ perceptions of one another appear to be far less grounded in objective perceptions of ideology and/or regime type and far more a product of contextual and geostrategic imperatives, and that the closeness of cultural and/or economic ties provides insufficient grounds for the preservation of peace. There is, however, more work to be done and principally by considering two additional cases, that of the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuela boundary dispute and the Anglo-American rapprochement at the turn of

the nineteenth century. Both cases, as should be self-evident, pose a hard test for our theory and have often been held up by proponents of democratic peace theory as confirmatory evidence of the peace-inducing effects of (liberal) democracy. Whether this is indeed the case must be established presently.

In the years 1895 to 1896, the US and Britain once more came dangerously close to war. On this occasion, the crisis turned on the settlement of a long simmering boundary controversy between Britain and Venezuela concerning the boundary line proper of the Venezuela-British Guiana boundary (Layne, 1996a:174; Coetzee, 2011:120). By 1895, the Venezuelans were exhausting all available means to cajole the US into pressuring Britain to submit the dispute for arbitration. For the Venezuelans, much more than for the British, the area in dispute was of considerable importance, turning as it did on access to the strategically salient Orinoco River on which its commercial intercourse depended (LaFeber, 1998:243). The US, on its part, had gradually started taking notice of the dispute from 1887 onwards. The steady increase in British territorial claims in Venezuelan territory, coupled with the renewed inclusion of Point Barima (estuary of the Orinoco River) as part of British territory, had the effect of Thomas F. Bayard, US Secretary of State, providing the Americans' first real intimation of protest by way of a diplomatic note penned to the US Minister in London, E.J. Phelps, during the months of 1887 (LaFeber, 1998:244). The correspondence was, however, never transmitted to the British government, with the Anglophile Secretary of State, Bayard, being rather indifferent about it (Steel, 1967:304).

By 1894, amid renewed vigour on the part of the Venezuelans to embroil the US in the dispute, and given the ongoing nature of British territorial expansion in Venezuelan territory, the Cleveland administration became increasingly apprehensive. In addressing Congress on December 3, 1894, President Cleveland intimated his administration's growing unease with the status quo, stressing the necessity of the reopening of diplomatic channels and, more concretely, the submission of the dispute to an arbitration commission. He added, however, that early resolution of the issue "is in line with our established policy to remove from this hemisphere all causes of difference with powers beyond the sea" (Cleveland, 1895[1894]:x). To this end, the new Secretary of State, Walter Q. Gresham,

instructed Bayard, now American Ambassador in London, to sound out the British government on the question of arbitration (LaFeber, 1998:245). Amid incessant rumours of British encroachment on the mouth of the Orinoco – itself strategically salient to the US – and after eleven days of careful deliberation by the American cabinet, Gresham dictated to Bayard on January 16, 1896, to inform the British government that if they undertook to maintain their “position on that question, we will be obliged, in view of the almost uniform attitude and policy of our government to call a halt” (quoted in LaFeber, 1998:254).

Meanwhile, Congress as well as the American public became increasingly vexed by the issue, agitating for the Cleveland administration to pursue a harder line. To this end, the Congressional representative from the state of Georgia, Leonidas F. Livingston, proposed a Congressional resolution – subsequently unanimously accepted – stressing American discontent with Britain’s unwavering position (Blake, 1942:275). Although desirous that the issue be settled by “friendly arbitration”, members of Congress increasingly urged the Cleveland administration to preserve the Monroe Doctrine⁸⁶. For them, Britain’s disposition towards Anglo-Venezuelan arbitration was seen as nothing more than an encroachment on Latin American territory and, accordingly, an outright violation of the sacred doctrine of Monroe, conceived to be pertinent to American security and welfare. From March 1895 onwards, the American public and press rapidly added their voices to the proceedings (Blake, 1942:262). The situation was further compounded on April 5, 1895, when British Foreign Minister Lord Kimberley confirmed the rumour that Britain was indeed claiming the mouth of the Orinoco as an undisputed British possession, one that would not be submitted to arbitration (LaFeber, 1998:252, 252). This stark reality weighed rather heavily on the president’s mind, knowing as he did that the maintenance of Britain’s position would seriously imperil American commercial and political interests in the region (LaFeber, 1998:254). It is against this backdrop, and

⁸⁶ Articulated by former President James Monroe in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine was to provide the rules of the game concerning the conduct of European nations with the Americas. Two guiding principles were proffered: (i) that the American continents were no longer open to any form of colonisation by the European nations; (ii) European powers were to refrain from interfering “with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have...acknowledged [and, were this principle violated,] we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States” (President Monroe quoted in Pratt *et al.*, 1980:62).

in the growing belief that America was on the verge of great-power status, that the newly appointed Secretary of State, Richard Olney, dispatched his July 20, 1895, note (often termed Olney's "twenty-inch gun") to Lord Salisbury, British Foreign and Prime Minister (Bailey, 1980:411). In writing this note, the Americans thus injected themselves into the conflict, not for the sake of defending the Venezuelan cause, but for the preservation of their own commercial and political interests (LaFeber, 1998:242-283).

The note, in effect, was a stern one, and could justifiably have been conceived by the British as amounting to an ultimatum (Layne, 1996a:175). It commenced by forthrightly stating that "neither of the parties is to-day standing for the boundary line predicated upon strict legal right" (Department of State, 1896[1895]:546). With this fact established, Olney proceeded to reflect on, and subsequently protest, the ever-expanding nature of British territorial claims in respect of the boundary line proper of Western Guiana (Coetzee, 2011:126). With this in mind, and in considering the boundary controversy as a whole, the Secretary concluded that "the United States has not been, and indeed, in view of its traditional policy, could not be indifferent" (Department of State, 1896[1895]:546-548). It was thus an issue, Olney firmly believed, in which US "honor and its interests" were deeply implicated, one which had direct bearing on the sacred principles of the Monroe Doctrine (Department of State, 1896[1895]:552). Were the British or, for that matter, any other foreign power to continue interfering in the workings of American governments, their actions would undoubtedly be "regarded as antagonizing the interests and inviting the opposition of the United States" (Department of State, 1896[1895]:554). By way of various threats and, at times, insults, Olney subsequently demanded from the British to submit the dispute to unlimited arbitration, and asked of them to reply to the note before the president's annual message to Congress (Department of State, 1896[1895]:562). Olney's note, having all the pretensions of an ultimatum, was enthusiastically received by the president, so much so that he called it "the best thing of the kind I have ever read" (LaFeber, 1998:259). Given the bellicose nature of the message thus sent, both Olney and Cleveland firmly believed that the British would promptly reply.

The British, however, refused to acquiesce to Washington's demands. Olney's message, as Grenville (1964:57) has remarked, did little "to thunder in Salisbury's ears". Salisbury, moreover, was "maddeningly deliberate" – it took him more than four months to reply to Olney's message, with the subsequent effect that the message failed to reach Washington before the president's annual message to Congress (Bailey, 1980:441-442). Salisbury's response eventually reached the State Department on December 7, 1895. His rejoinder, overwhelmingly supported by his cabinet, in effect boiled down to this: that the Anglo-Venezuelan boundary dispute was of "no apparent practical concern" to the US, i.e., it was "none of America's 'damned business'", and that the Monroe Doctrine carried no validity in the eyes of international law (Foreign Office, 1896[1895]:564; Bailey, 1980:442). The message thus received failed in every possible sense to impress Cleveland and Olney. Cleveland, as Steel (1967:307) has observed, was "mad clean through". In such an atmosphere Olney undertook to draft the president's special message on the boundary question, to be sent to Congress by no later than December 17, 1895 (Bailey, 1980:443).

The president's message commenced by providing an outright defence of the applicability and validity of the Monroe Doctrine to the Venezuela boundary dispute. Not only was the Monroe Doctrine, he argued, "strong and sound", but its enforcement was inextricably linked to the preservation of "our peace and safety as a nation...the integrity of our free institutions and the tranquil maintenance of our distinctive form of government" (Cleveland, 1896[1895]:542). The US, he argued, could not otherwise but uphold its position on foreign intervention in the Western hemisphere and, by implication, in the Venezuela boundary question as such. He did, however, attempt to leave the British with a bit of room to manoeuvre (Layne, 1996a:175-176). To this end, the president proposed the establishment of a commission of inquiry tasked with the responsibility of investigating and establishing the boundary line proper within the least possible time (Cleveland, 1896[1895]:544). That which was to follow subsequent to the ruling of the commission carried far more weight however: "When such report is made and accepted it will in my opinion be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power as a wilful aggression upon its rights and interests the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands or the exercise of governmental jurisdiction over any territory which after investigation we

have determined of right belongs to Venezuela” (Cleveland, 1896[1895]:545). The president was, in effect, intimating America’s willingness to fight the British if necessary to the end of establishing American predominance in the Western hemisphere, a decision he undoubtedly did not arrive at lightly (Layne, 1996:a176). Thus, in reflecting of the course he has embarked on, Cleveland held that “in making these recommendations I am fully alive to the responsibility incurred, and keenly realize all the consequences that may follow” (Cleveland, 1896[1895]:545).

Cleveland’s message was, as Steel (1967:307) has pointed out, “war-like in tone”, and essentially amounted to “a violent ultimatum” (Garvin, 1934:67). Even though the prospect of an Anglo-American war was for him a “grievous thing to contemplate”, Cleveland nevertheless warned that he is “firm” in his “conviction that...there is no calamity which a great nation can invite which equals that which follows a supine submission to wrong and injustice and the consequent loss of national self respect and honor beneath which are shielded and defended a people’s safety and greatness” (Cleveland, 1896[1895]:545). To this message, the Congress, public opinion and the American press each gave their hearty consent (Bailey, 1980:443-444; LaFeber, 1993:125; LaFeber, 1998:270). Although Grenville (1964:55), notably, has downplayed the risk of war during this episode, Bourne (1967:319) has convincingly argued that the prospect of an Anglo-American war was “very real”. Both sides had to this effect “actively” considered the possibility of war and each had thought it prudent to summon its military planners (Bourne, 1967:319; LaFeber, 1998:270). In reflecting on the depth of hostility during the crisis, Garvin (1934:68) has reminded his generation that “[o]ur age nearly forty years after forgets the momentary blackness of that passing cloud”.

However, by mid-January 1896 the British had reversed course, and was now intimating their willingness for an amicable settlement of the boundary dispute – capitulating, in effect, to the American demand of unlimited arbitration (Coetzee, 2011:139). What, we may ask, accounts for the sudden change in course? Notwithstanding the predominance of British military power vis-à-vis the Americans, Britain’s immediate strategic position in the wake of Cleveland’s warlike message to Congress was not as favourable as one might at first glance presume. Not only was the British merchant marine likely to fall victim to American privateers in the

eventuality of war, but, more disconcertingly, the Royal Navy, while generally considered the hegemon of the sea, was beginning to display all the tell-tale signs of strategic overextension (Bailey, 1980:445; Kennedy, 1981:108). British decision makers, accordingly, grudgingly realised that British naval superiority in the Western hemisphere could only proceed at the cost of abandoning other strategically more important interests (Kennedy, 1981:108). As was variously argued above (cf. Section 5.2.1, pp. 174-175), with Britain becoming increasingly aware of its overextension and strategic isolation, it became all the more apparent that it could *and* would only fight in defence of vital strategic interests – and even such interests had to be placed within its larger context and weighed up against some of Britain’s other vital interests (Kennedy, 1989:232).

Both Ernest May and A.E. Campbell have on account of these factors concluded that owing to the extensive nature of British naval engagements elsewhere, the Royal Navy would have been inordinately hard pressed to mount a credible challenge to the American navy, much less coming to the aid of Canada, the likely “hostage” in the eventuality of an Anglo-American war (Kennedy, 1981:108). Coming, moreover, as the boundary controversy did during the Armenian issue, and given seemingly insurmountable strategic challenges confronting Britain in Africa, China and India, the Cleveland message had the effect of exposing “the complete nakedness of Britain’s isolation in the world” (Grenville, 1964:54; Garvin, 1934:69).⁸⁷ Compounding matters was the news of the failed Jameson raid against the government of the Transvaal, with the German Emperor, Wilhelm II, adding insult to injury by sending a congratulatory telegram to the Boer leader, Paul Kruger, subsequent to the latter’s capturing of the Jameson raiders, praising him for “defending the independence” of the Transvaal Republic without resorting “to the aid of *friendly* powers [i.e. Germany]” (Wilhelm II quoted in Garvin, 1934:92; LaFeber, 1998:276; emphasis added). The Jameson Raid and, subsequently, the Kruger telegram, brought Germany and Britain precipitously close to war (Rock, 1997:128). Yet even in this context of mounting concern over German pretensions in South Africa and, in general, the impending German threat, Britain could not afford to lose sight of its two traditional rivals, France and Russia. Following the Franco-Russian naval alliance of 1894, British

⁸⁷ It is against this background that Chamberlain referred to Britain as the “weary Titan, staggering under the too vast orb of his own fate” (quoted in LaFeber, 1993:126).

decision makers had begun to fret about the inferiority of the Royal Navy in the strategically salient Mediterranean and Western Pacific (Bourne, 1967:340). Given these threats, and owing to the relative insignificance of the Venezuelan boundary controversy to them, British decision makers thought it prudent to steer clear of creating yet another enemy (Layne, 1996a:175).

As should be evident, the outcome of this crisis and the factors leading to its resolution provide scant support for democratic peace theory. Both sides, as was argued above, seriously considered war and made preparations for it. US war preparations were focused on an invasion of Canada, whereas British war plans involved defending it (cf. Bourne, 1967:319-351). Although public opinion on both sides became less belligerent as the crisis dragged on, there is “no evidence in the historical record” that it served the purpose of facilitating peace (Layne, 1996a:178). On the American side, public opinion considered the prospect of an Anglo-American war “not with enthusiasm but, as though regrettable, necessary if there were no other way of establishing the paramount position of the United States in the western hemisphere” (quoted in Layne, 1996a:179). The British public, too, similarly recoiled at the prospect of war, yet there is no historical evidence in support of the claim that public opinion affected the British cabinet’s volte face to sue for peace (Layne, 1996a:178). The genesis of that decision, as we have illustrated above, is to be found in Britain’s rapidly deteriorating *international* situation and, as a corollary, an unfavourable distribution of military capabilities vis-à-vis American arms. As Rock (1997:129) aptly phrased it, the US had not now suddenly become more (liberal) democratic, but what “had changed was Britain’s strategic predicament”. Lord Bryce, in an epistolary communication with the young Theodore Roosevelt during January 1896, thus conceded that Britain had neither the heart nor the means to interfere with American claims of predominance in the Western hemisphere: “Our hands”, he concluded, “are more than sufficiently full elsewhere” (quoted in Layne, 1996a:177).

It is, principally, this stark realisation of the complete nakedness of her position that makes intelligible British overtures to the US at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Anglo-American ‘special relationship’, as Layne (1996a:179) correctly observes, has often been depicted by seasoned observers of international affairs as one of those immutable and deeply engrained facts of international-political life, one that

ostensibly provides confirmatory evidence of the validity of democratic peace theory. Yet there was nothing automatic or inevitable about the turn-of-the-century rapprochement. Not only did it take Britain out of a “strategically untenable position in the western hemisphere”, but the rapprochement itself jarred with the prevailing wisdom of the time concerning the future of Anglo-American relations. Contemporaneous observers were thus stunned by the ways in which the rapprochement unexpectedly and drastically altered one of those self-evident assumptions about international-political life: i.e. that the future of Anglo-American relations was destined to be “cool, grudging, and occasionally hostile”, as it was in the past (Kennedy, 1989:251). While Anglo-American relations appear to be on exceptionally good footing today, the genesis of the great rapprochement is most certainly *not* found in factors underlying democratic peace theory. By 1898, for instance, British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, although normally a prodigiously cautious politician, had to concede that international politics was now “divided into the ‘living’ and ‘dying’ powers” – and that Britain found itself in the unfortunate position of being placed in the latter category (Kennedy, 1989:195). The British Empire, as Kennedy (1984:18) thus concluded, “was becoming...the greatest example of strategical overextension in history”. It is with these realities in mind that the British government’s defence and foreign policy advisers consistently urged it to compromise with other states and to settle longstanding hostilities (Kennedy, 1984:18).

Why Britain chose to ally itself with the US instead of Germany is also not difficult to illustrate, nor is it controversial. Here, too, Britain’s *international* position provides a powerful explanation. By 1898-1899, British strategic planning became increasingly vexed about how to respond to the growing German threat (Frederick, 1999:314). To this end, Britain initially set out to form an alliance with Germany between 1898 and 1901, but owing to their divergent strategic interests nothing ever materialised (Layne, 1996b:356). For the weary and overextended British, Germany displayed all the tell-tale signs of a potential European hegemon, one that could conceivably seriously imperil British security and commerce, while the US constituted, for that time at least, a somewhat distant threat (Layne, 1996b:356). Such were the calculations that confronted British statesmen’s deliberations on possible alliance partners. As a leading historian of the time has concluded, the subsequent British

overtures to the US were “not simply or even perhaps at all significant of any special goodwill towards the United States” (Bourne, 1967:343). In fact, many of the apparent non-strategic (hence, democratic peace) factors ostensibly buttressing the rapprochement – factors such as economic interdependence and Anglo-Saxonism – had existed since at least the 1850s, and had failed to significantly dampen Anglo-American hostility then (Kennedy, 1981:118; Thompson, 1999:209; Bourne, 1967:343). It is, importantly, only in the wake of Britain’s changing *international* situation and, subsequently, its reassessment of its grand strategy, that these factors came to influence Anglo-American relations (Layne, 1996a:179).

In considering what was said here as well as in preceding sections, can we realistically entertain the notion that (liberal democratic) ideological factors have qualitatively changed the nature of international politics? Within the multipolar (European) great-power system, we have seen striking examples of (liberal) democratic states waging war, of (liberal) democracies allying with *and* against one another, of public opinion within (liberal) democracies vociferously agitating *for* war and, on occasion, of the negligible influence of public opinion in (liberal) democracies in constraining decision makers. We have also seen how pairs of (liberal) democracies have recoiled from the brink of war owing to military and/or strategic considerations. In general, the period thus examined provided scant support for the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory. Waltzian structural realism, as against this, provided powerful explanations for the conduct of great-power politics. Whether this situation persists within the confines of the bipolar (Cold War) system is a question to be answered in the following section.

5.3 The post-war world: international politics in a bipolar world

That the international-political world ushered in by the end of World War II has yielded qualitatively different outcomes – for the great powers at any rate – is a point that will meet with wide assent. The multipolar (European) great-power system was one marked by many great-power wars; the ensuing bipolar system, as against this, by none. The latter fact is all the more impressive if we consider that the post-1945 world bore witness to rapid and sweeping changes: various waves of decolonisation; the rapid economic expansion of some states; the formation and tightening of two

blocs and, in due time, the dissolution of one; vast and impressive developments in the field of (military) technology; and the emergence of new and innovative ways to fight guerrilla wars and deter nuclear ones (Waltz, 2013a:4). Presumably, some features peculiar to the post-1945 system and thus absent in previous eras account for the impressive shift from great-power war to great-power peace (Waltz, 2013a:4). As Waltz (2013a:4) has noted, and as we have variously argued above, the two biggest changes in the wake of World War II were, firstly, the shift from the multipolar (European) great-power system to bipolarity and, in due time, to a unipolar world, and, secondly, and undoubtedly constituting a true revolution in military affairs, the development of nuclear weaponry (Hsia & Sperli, 2013). Accordingly, both changes will be subject to scrutiny in the pages to follow, while also considering how they have impacted upon the behaviour and actions of (liberal) democracies.

5.3.1 A world gone M.A.D.: nuclear weaponry and international peace

Testing hypotheses has, it seems, become a fashionable enterprise for social scientists. From what we have seen in the pages above, we know that the democratic peace *hypothesis* falls short in crucial respects. One of the propositions that have proven to hold remarkably well, i.e. that has passed almost every conceivable test, is the proposition that nuclear-armed states have *never* fought each other or attacked one another “in ways that threaten [their] manifestly vital interests” (Waltz, 2010; Waltz in Sagan, Waltz, & Betts, 2007:137). In international politics, as the reader might very well appreciate, to use the word ‘never’, and to do so with ample historical validation, is extremely rare (Waltz in Tobia & Waltz, 2012). Yet for more than 70 years now, the proposition that no two nuclear states have attacked each other in ways that threaten their manifestly vital interests has remained 100 percent true, a truly remarkable feat given the particularly violent history of international politics (Waltz in Sagan *et al.*, 2007:137). We know, however, that while nuclear weaponry make it virtually impossible for their possessors to strike one another’s manifestly vital interests, they do not make it impossible for nuclear states to engage in skirmishes with one another, as the Soviet-China border disputes (1969) and the recent (2008) Mumbai attacks attest (Waltz in Keck & Waltz, 2012; Waltz, 2013b:172-174). Yet such conflicts invariably remain localised and are fought at low levels of intensity, and have thus consistently failed to materialise into full-

scale conventional and/or nuclear wars. Where nuclear weapons have emerged, even in traditional hostile regions (consider the subcontinent), stability has usually followed, with the weapons constraining their possessors to act in more cautious ways (Waltz, 2012a). The weapons, in more ways than one the only *peacekeeping* weapons ever known to man, have thus had the effect of relegating war to the periphery of international politics (Waltz in Keck & Waltz, 2012a).

The coming of the nuclear age and, in due time, the concomitant condition of stable deterrence following the spread of nuclear weaponry to states other than the US, have thus created a remarkably peaceful condition for the nuclear-armed states of the world, one marked by the absence of any major military confrontation between them (Waltz in Sagan *et al.*, 2007:137). Why this condition has obtained can be illustrated by considering the fundamental differences between nuclear and conventional worlds. Within a conventionally armed world, with the size and efficacy of enemy forces inordinately difficult to gauge, problems of miscalculation abound (Waltz, 1990:734). Given the complexity in accurately predicting success or defeat in battle, states' leaders may be tempted into believing that their military adventures would exact little costs or, at the very least, acceptable ones (Waltz, 1990:734). Thus, given these difficulties in gauging the comparative military capabilities and strategies of their adversaries, states in a conventional world are likely to succumb to one of two self-defeating tendencies or perhaps both: one, they are likely to overestimate their own military capabilities and chances of success in battle; and two, they are likely to underestimate the military strength and war-winning capabilities of their adversaries (Waltz, 1981).

The logic of a nuclear armed world stands in marked contrast to that which obtains in a conventionally armed one. The sheer destructiveness of these weapons, coupled with the promise of mutual destruction were states to succumb to an (ill-considered) all-out nuclear exchange, has removed the problem of miscalculation extant in a conventionally armed world. However, one should keep in mind that although mutual annihilation conceivably *could* occur, there is no *a priori* reason why a nuclear exchange *would* inevitably result in mutual annihilation. Deterrence, we should point out, depends not on "what one *will* do" but on one's *capability* to inflict damage (Waltz, 1990:733; emphasis in original). Nuclear weapons thus greatly simplify the

problem of gauging the relative military capabilities of adversaries – i.e. they remove any illusions about what could transpire were a full-blown nuclear exchange to take place. In a nuclear world, and owing to unimaginably high levels of violence thus implied by the use of these weapons, deliberations of war “focuses one’s attention not on the probability of victory but on the possibility of annihilation” (Waltz, 1990:734). Miscalculation and military adventurism, two of the pre-eminent vices of a conventionally armed world, thus jar with the logic of a nuclear armed world in which certainty of calculation and political caution (restraint) hold sway (Waltz, 1981). In the latter world, those who act with prudence and moderation in respect of threatening the manifestly vital interests of other similarly armed states do well for themselves.

Certainty about the relative military capabilities of one’s adversaries, coupled with the exceedingly high expected costs of war, thus acts to greatly reduce the possibility of war in a nuclear-armed world (Waltz, 2013a:6-7). We can perhaps add here that given the unusually high stakes involved, states in a nuclear world are highly unlikely to find themselves running major risks for minor gains (Waltz, 2013a:6). As Waltz (2013a:7) has critically asked, “[w]hy fight if you can’t win much and might lose everything?”. One merely needs to consider Kennedy’s and Khrushchev’s behaviour during the Cuban missile crisis to gain some appreciation of the extreme caution these weapons bring or, in more general terms, how nuclear weaponry caused the US and the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union and China, to behave with moderation and caution towards one another during the Cold War, irrespective of their being the bitterest of enemies (Waltz, 2013a:7, 12). Although we are often told (cf. Chomsky & Dispatch, 2016) that the world was much closer to nuclear war during the Cold War than we might have presumed, the point to be stressed is that such fears were always followed by more sensible and prudent behaviour on the part of states and/or individuals.

Developing a credible nuclear deterrent is, moreover, not as forbiddingly hard as one might imagine. One reason for this stems from the relative ease by which nuclear weapons can be rendered invulnerable to incoming attacks by mounting them, for instance, on submarines. Consider, for instance, that during war-games played between NATO forces off the coast of Florida in 2015, the *Saphir*, a nuclear-powered French attack submarine, eluded virtually all of America’s sub-hunting aircraft to

come close enough to destroy the *Theodore Roosevelt*, the recently upgraded American aircraft carrier (The Economist, 2016). That the *Saphir* was launched during 1981, and thus hardly fits the bill in terms of technological sophistication, merely reinforces the point of the relative invulnerability of submarines to incoming attacks (The Economist, 2016). Another reason relates to the relative ease by which nuclear warheads can be delivered, i.e. the vexing problem of mounting an effective defence against such weapons (Waltz, 1990:732). Also, and contra that which obtains in a conventional world, the relative size of one's forces (i.e., the issue of force superiority) is not a decisive factor in enhancing the credibility of one's nuclear deterrent. As soon as states reach a second-strike capability (i.e. the ability to survive an adversary's first-strike, while having sufficient forces left standing to retaliate and inflict unacceptable damage), anything more than this threshold becomes superfluous (Waltz, 1990:732; 1988:627). In fact, no compelling rationale can exist for comparing forces within a nuclear world (Waltz, 1981). With states having a second-strike capability at their disposal, increases by one side in the size of its arsenal do little to alter the military balance – thus, “more is not better if less is enough” (Waltz, 1990:738; 1981). With the credibility of deterrent forces thus not overly difficult to achieve and with nuclear weapons obviating the old difficulties of military miscalculation extant in a conventional world, peace between nuclear-armed states becomes well-nigh a guarantee, a proposition borne out strikingly well by history.

5.3.2 Bipolarity: clarity of dangers, certainty about who has to face them

Nuclear weapons constitute the first force for peace in the post-war world. The second one, bipolarity, likewise produced strong pressures which strongly encouraged states (viz., the US and the Soviet Union) to act internationally in ways that belied their (national) characters (Waltz, 1979:176). Where closeness of competition rules, as within bipolar systems, the external situation tends to dominate (Waltz, 1979:172). During the 1950s, and amid the tightening of the two rival blocks along ideological lines, John Foster Dulles railed against neutralist states, decrying their behaviour as immoral; the Soviets, on their part, likewise slated such states as utter fools or puppets dancing to the tune of their capitalist masters (Waltz, 1979:172). In due time, however, and with the Soviet-American competition

intensifying, both states not only accepted neutralist states but actively encouraged them: the Soviets providing aid to the Egyptians and Iraqis, both of which jailed their communists; the Americans, from the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, assisting communist Yugoslavia economically and militarily, and making neutralist India the pre-eminent destination of US economic aid (Waltz, 1979:172). In astonishingly quick time, then, the rhetoric of the Cold War – i.e. the ostensible messianic battle between capitalist democracy and godless communism – became subordinated to US and Soviet interest, with both states behaving more along the lines of traditional great powers than the ostensibly fearless champions of messianic causes (Waltz, 1979:172). In a world in which only two great powers are left standing, and in which each is the obsessing interest of the other, the incentives to act in cautious ways and, conversely, sanctions against reckless behaviour, are readily apparent and achieve their greatest possible effect (Waltz, 1979:173). In due time, accordingly, the US and the Soviet Union, both of which have often been guilty of impulsive behaviour, found themselves imbued with a greater sense of wariness, alertness, caution, flexibility and forbearance in their relations with one another (not always, but when it mattered), thus mimicking each other in crucial ways, as close competitors usually do (Waltz, 1979:173). By the 1960s, importantly, the Soviets had not only abandoned their Bolshevik outlook on international affairs, but their views became more or less similar to those of the Americans (Waltz, 1979:173).

5.3.2.1 Balance-of-power theory and alliance management

The closeness of competition, coupled with the low interdependence (economically and, much more so, militarily) of bipolar systems, holds that the principal units of the system find it much easier to adjust their relations to one another. In bipolar systems, with military interdependence at low levels, balancing proceeds primarily through internal efforts. As we have established in previous chapters (cf., in particular, Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2, pp. 96-97), the security of great powers in bipolar systems is entirely dependent on self-generating means, for the security of each cannot be assured by any other state or combination of states. Internal balancing, as against the situation prevalent with external balancing, is at once more reliable and precise. Uncertainties about threats, and confusion about who is likely to respond to them, multiply when numbers increase; they decrease as numbers fall. Within systems

marked by bipolarity, the reduction in uncertainty and the increase in the ease by which calculations are made, become forces for peace. The points raised here can best be illustrated by considering the profound differences by which alliances are managed in multipolar and bipolar worlds. In the world of the former, the concerns of alliance leaders are two-fold: one, they must be concerned with managing their own alliances, since the defection of any one ally could prove destructive to all; and two, they must keep a watchful eye on the aims and capabilities of the alliance members of the rival bloc (Waltz, 1979:168). In bipolar worlds, with alliances constructed on the very basis of *inequality*, alliance leaders need not fret about the faithfulness of alliance members, since the latter often have little choice but to follow anyway (Waltz, 1979:1698-169). The military and economic *independence* of the great powers holds that each need not alter its strategies or make changes to its military dispositions to accommodate its alliance members, a proposition that invariably entails an enlarged sense of freedom of decision (Waltz, 1979:169-170). Not only are alliance members often constrained to follow, but their defection from or addition to alliances thus adds very little, if anything, to the overall great-power military balance. President de Gaulle's decision to withdraw France from NATO's joint military arm during 1966 hardly had any effect on the overall balance between the US and the Soviet Union (Rosato, 2011:66). Neither did the two "losses" of China in the post-1945 world – firstly by the Americans and then by the Soviets – have any profound effect on the overall US-Soviet balance of power (Waltz, 1979:169).

Consider, by way of further illustration, the differences between old-style (multipolar) and (what was then) new-style (bipolar) alliances. In the years prior to World War I, with the parties highly interdependent militarily and economically, the alliance leaders of both blocs could not otherwise but fret about the possible defection of alliance members. Within and across the two blocs, alliance members were keeping a watchful eye on one another, knowing full well that the fate of all was intimately tied to the behaviour and strategies of the individual members. As we have argued above, the fact that Italy's defection from the Central Powers scarcely affected the relative strength of their alliance and, conversely, added very little to the cause of Britain, France and Russia, suggests something of the relative unimportance of Italy during this period (Waltz, 1979:168; Kennedy, 1989:257). The situation between the US and Britain and France during the Suez Crisis of 1956 stands in marked contrast

to the pre-1914 alliance diplomacy of Europe (Waltz, 1979:169). Here the US could stand aloof from the military adventure of its two principal alliance members, subjecting the latter in the process to all manner and sorts of financial pressures (Waltz, 1979:169). Accordingly, not only did President Dwight Eisenhower show total contempt for the invasion, but he in effect forced the belligerents to withdraw their forces, a step indicative of the fact that America alone was now a superpower, “while France and Britain barely qualified for the old title of “great powers”” (Raviv & Melman, 2014:50). Although Britain and France, not unlike Austria-Hungary in 1914, tried desperately to drag its alliance partner into the crisis or, at a bare minimum, to immobilise it by presenting a *fait accompli*, the US, owing to its military and economic predominance, could without much perturbation continue to focus its attention and resources on its main adversary, while disciplining its alliance members (Waltz, 1979:169). The US in 1956, unlike the Germans in 1914, was thus able “to pay a price measured in intra-alliance terms”, an ability highly suggestive of the way(s) in which the principal units of bipolar systems, as against those in multipolar systems, are free to set their policies according to their own calculations of interests and not those of third parties (Waltz, 1979:169-170).

In bipolar systems, as was established above, balancing proceeds primarily through internal efforts. This is but one of the expectations gleaned from balance-of-power theory. A different expectation, one incidentally that poses yet another hard test for our theory, is the expectation that states will tend to act in ways that lead towards balance in the system, *whether or not they intentionally act with this end in mind*. In posing a hard test for our theory, we are then tasked with looking for confirmatory evidence of states strengthening themselves through internal efforts even though for internal reasons they would prefer not to (Waltz, 1979:125). Consideration of the history of the US-Soviet rivalry is, once again, instructive. In the wake of World War II, both states through a series of internal efforts attempted to strengthen themselves, *even though they had demonstrated a strong desire not to*. Thus we find the US rearming itself shortly after it had begun dismantling the world’s most impressive military-industrial machine, even though it had keenly stated its desire not to, and the Soviet Union, notwithstanding the utter devastation wrought by the war, desperately trying to maintain roughly three million men ready for war, while pushing with all its might to enter the nuclear ranks (Waltz, 1979:125).

That states, and the great powers pre-eminently, are constrained to act in such ways is of course not surprising. We have to this effect already established in preceding chapters that within self-help and competitive systems those who fail to effectively provide for themselves, or do so in ways less effective than others, subject themselves to all manner and forms of peril. In seeking to avoid such dangers, states tend to act in ways that lead towards the formation of balances of power. The theory, as the reader might recall, does not turn on any assumptions of rationality or self-willed action on the part of states; however, it does turn on the notion that either states emulate the behaviour of the more successful competitors or they run the risk of suffering the consequences. In a bipolar world, with each state becoming the obsessing danger of the other and with competition inordinately close, each of the principal units of the system cannot remain indifferent to the behaviour, strategies and capabilities of the other. Any event anywhere in the world is bound to be worrisome for both great powers if it involves significant gains or losses for either party (Waltz, 1979:170-171). With the fate and fortunes of each intimately tied to the other, the responses of the one great power are inextricably tied to the actions of the other one and vice versa (Waltz, 1979:171). The extent to which these propositions are borne out by the US-Soviet Cold War history is striking: the operation of communist guerrillas in Greece led to the Truman Doctrine; the extension of Soviet control over the Eastern European states resulted in the Marshall Plan and, in due time, the Atlantic Defence Treaty, which in turn precipitated the Soviet Union establishing the Cominform (i.e. the Communist Information Bureau) and the Warsaw Pact; the plan to establish a West German government gave rise to the Berlin Blockade; and, in the 1960s, the US undertook what must be seen as the world's largest peacetime military build-up (conventional *and* nuclear), with the Soviet Union following suit in due time (Waltz, 1979:171; 1993:46). Almost throughout the entire span of the Cold War, the behaviour and actions of the one superpower were matched by that of the other, which in turn helped solidify the peacefulness of the bipolar world (Waltz, 1979:171).

5.3.2.2 The power-political foundations of European peace and prosperity

Although the behaviour and actions of the two superpowers easily conform to the expectations of balance-of-power theory, what can be said for the other powers,

especially those (Western European ones) that had fallen from the rank of great-power status? The question is a rather important one, especially since the European project – ushered in by the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) during March 1957 and culminating in the Treaty on European Union during February 1992 – has often been proffered by democratic peace scholars as confirmatory evidence of the peacefulness of (liberal) democratic relations *inter se*. In awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU in 2012, the Nobel committee thus lavished praise on the EU for its critical role in transforming Europe “from a Continent of war to a Continent of peace”, one where power-politics no longer hold sway (quoted in Goldgeier, 2012). That praise is due to the EU is of course true, for not only have they created a highly integrated and prosperous economic bloc, but they appear to have been successful at building deep political, cultural and societal ties (Goldgeier, 2012). Yet all of this rather misses the point. In an important sense, accordingly, the *external* situation once more proves paramount in explaining the prosperity and peace of those (Western European) states no longer able to compete at the level of the great powers. In considering the prosperity and peace of EU relations then, one would do well to not only consider but thoroughly appreciate the indispensable role played by the US and NATO. President Obama was undoubtedly correct when he noted during his 2009 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech that the US “has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens *and the strength of our arms*”, as was Ruud Lubbers, former Dutch Prime Minister (1982 to 1994), when he argued that the Netherlands had “greatly benefited” from the (nuclear) security guarantees provided by the US during the Cold War (Obama, 2009a; emphasis added; Morris, 2013). In the absence of US arms and NATO, as Goldgeier (2012) aptly argues, the European miracle would simply have been impossible – or as Robert Art has noted, without the US and NATO, European politics would probably have been (and is likely to be) marked by “security competition” (in Waltz, 2000a:25).⁸⁸ In a recent interview with *Foreign Affairs*, Marine Le Pen, leader of the right-wing French political party the National Front, aptly noted that “it’s not the European Union that has kept the peace [in

⁸⁸ Interestingly enough, US Defence Secretary Ash Carter has in recent times argued that the US has played a similar role in the Asia-Pacific region, ensuring that “economic miracle after economic miracle has occurred there” (Carter, 2016:66). In reflecting on the contribution to Asia-Pacific security, he thus concludes that for “more than 70 years, U.S. service members have helped provide the oxygen – the security that allows hundreds of millions of people around the world to feel safe, raise their children, dream their dreams, and live full lives” (Carter, 2016:75).

Europe]; it's the peace that has made the European Union possible" (quoted in Reid & Le Pen, 2016:5). There is, however, far more to be said about how the external situation engulfing (Western) European states acted to facilitate peace and prosperity in Europe.

In the multipolar world of old, with the European powers constituting the great powers of the day, unity among them was nothing more than wishful thinking: European great-power politics degenerated into the classical mould of a zero-sum game, with each power seeing the gains of the others as highly detrimental to its own cause (Waltz, 1979:70). Cooperation among the great powers was not only limited, but when and where it did occur it was usually directed at bolstering opposition to other stronger powers (Waltz, 1979:70). The end of World War II, and the emergence of the bipolar world, created a situation wholly conducive to more extensive and deeper cooperation among the (Western) European states, with the latter now becoming consumers of security (Waltz, 1979:70). Now, unlike before in modern history, the determinants of war and peace were to be found outside the immediate arena of the states of (Western) Europe, with the means of the preservation of each now largely shouldered by others (Waltz, 1979:70). In respect of the latter point, consider for instance that by the 1960s, in addition to the guarantees provided by the US nuclear umbrella, the US had more than a million uniformed men stationed abroad (Waltz, 1979:206). Although bipolarity did not remove all impediments to cooperation, it did serve to remove one vitally important one: the fear that the economic disparities between states could be converted into military advantage, which in due time could be used against one another (Waltz, 1979:70). With their security concerns now mainly shouldered by others, the (Western) European states could strive for unity unfettered (Goldgeier, 2012). In doing this, i.e. in striving for unity, they needed not fret too much about running the risk of suffering a relative loss (Waltz, 1979:71). In due time Britain, France, Germany and Italy, all living in the vast shadow of the superpowers, realised the outright futility of war and came to believe that war among them had become virtually impossible (Waltz, 1979:70).

Although US guarantees had greatly allayed (Western) European security concerns, it did not automatically imply the termination of conflict – it did, however, significantly

change its content (Waltz, 1979:71). Within the EEC, hard bargaining continued unabatedly, with France's concerns over agricultural policies being but one example of this (Waltz, 1979:71). Within the context of such organisations, to return to a more *theoretical* point, conflicts of interest, though highly unlikely to be resolved by way of military force, are thus likely to endure, a point to be more fully explored in Chapter 6 of this study (Waltz, 1979:71). For now, the reader might benefit from considering that some forty years later, during the last decade of the twentieth century, France was still very much interested in who was gaining more and who was gaining less, with Paris this time round fretting about the prospect of German reunification following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the enormous power the new German state would wield (Wergin, 2012). To allay their own security concerns, Paris thus set as precondition for German reunification the adoption by Berlin of a single currency (in this case, the euro), believing that German acquiescence to this demand would keep it down and prevent it from developing into a fully-fledged power (Wergin, 2012). In thus seeking to understand the (limited) progress made towards (economic) unity in (Western) Europe, and the prosperity and peacefulness of (Western) European relations, one must out of sheer necessity consider the effects accruing from the changed international-political structure (Waltz, 1979:71).

The shift from multipolarity to bipolarity created, as variously argued above, an environment wholly conducive to more extensive and deeper cooperation between the states of (Western) Europe. When great-power relations are locked in a stalemate, as was the case during the bipolar world, lesser states are afforded an increase in freedom of movement, with the impediments to cooperation thus lessened (Waltz, 1979:184). Among the states of (Western) Europe, such cooperation was largely dependent on the US shouldering their security burdens. However, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the US appeared rather unwilling to fulfil this role, desiring instead to disarm its vast and impressive military machine (Rosato, 2011:57). In fact, as Rosato (2011:57) points out, the US did not balance the Soviet Union particularly vigorously in the immediate years after World War II, a point underscored by the fact that it withdrew many of its European forces. The Prague coup and the Berlin Blockade (both in 1948) significantly altered the status quo however, with Washington now moving to solidify its *military* commitment to (Western) European security, a move that culminated in the creation of NATO

(Rosato, 2011:57). With (Western) Europe's security evermore underwritten by US (nuclear) guarantees, attempts at achieving and, subsequently, strengthening (economic) unity between the states of (Western) Europe became more easily attainable.

Between 1945 and 1948 however, and in some attenuated form after this period as well, the extent to which the states of (Western) Europe continued to resort to balance-of-power thinking is quite impressive. With the US disarming and withdrawing its forces from Europe, and with neither France nor West Germany able to mount a credible defence, the Soviet Union emerged in the wake of World War II as the sole great power on the continent (Rosato, 2011:54). By 1946, for example, the Soviets could boast of a 6:1 military advantage and 3:1 economic advantage over the French, a truly venerable position to be in (Rosato, 2011:54). Within such a context, France and West Germany both had good realist reasons to cooperate with one another, believing that their coming together – even to the extent of relinquishing their sovereignty by creating various political and economic organisations – would serve to balance the Soviet Union (Rosato, 2011:54; 2013:802-803). At the heart of German and French decisions to create the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC, 1951) and the EEC (1957) were thus balance-of-power considerations emanating from the Soviet threat, with British support for these organisations rooted in similar concerns (Rosato, 2013:802-803, 810). The self-interest of each state, accordingly, greatly encouraged each state to throw its lot with the others (Waltz, 2008g:29). It is with these reasons in mind that various prominent historians have in recent years pointed towards the “importance of geopolitics” in the formation of the EEC (Rosato, 2013:806). Accordingly, the creation of these organisations, the extensive cooperation among their members and, in due time, the thriving nature of these organisations, are made sensible only by consideration of the effects accruing from the changed international-political structure following World War II and, from 1948 onwards, the ever firmer American commitment to (Western) European security.

5.3.2.3 Strange bedfellows and shifting alliances in bipolar systems

In the multipolar world of old, examples of ideologically, politically and economically disparate actors finding common ground when pressed hard enough or, as was argued in preceding sections, not even that hard at all, were not particularly hard to come by. Whether we are bound to find comparable examples in bipolar systems, and find them in large numbers, is an altogether different question. Given the relative independence (economically and militarily) of the principle units of bipolar systems, i.e. the fact that the great powers generally depend very little on the capabilities and contributions of others, the expectation holds that instances of such behaviour among the great powers are likely to be far less prominent. While we expect to find fewer instances of such behaviour, we do not expect to find none, especially if we confine our attention not only to great power relations *inter se*, but also to the great powers' dealings with lesser states. In fact, the reader has already been pointed towards one or two instances of such behaviour during the early years of the Cold War. Thus we noted (cf. Section 5.3.2, p. 210-211) how both the US and the Soviet Union not only came to tolerate neutralist states, but quickly came to encourage them: the former by assisting communist Yugoslavia economically and militarily, and by making neutralist India the pre-eminent destination of US economic aid; the latter by providing aid to the Egyptians and Iraqis, both of which jailed their communists. We also noted (cf. Section 5.3.2.1, p. 212) how both the US and the Soviet Union allied with *and* against the Chinese at various times during the Cold War. During the 1970s, for instance, with perceptions of the growing Soviet threat weighing heavily on Mao Zedong's mind, the Chinese leader thought it prudent to improve relations with Washington, a move welcomed by the Americans (Xia, 2008). In considering their coming together, both states, we should point out, paid scant attention to the moral justness of the other's regime – instead, balance-of-power considerations seemed to weigh heavily on each state's strategic mind. And, in terms of Sino-Soviet relations during this period, one would do well to consider that irrespective of ideological affinities, tensions between the two states often ran high, in addition to various armed conflicts along the shared Sino-Soviet border (Hill & Lo, 2013).

We can, however, offer the reader still a few more examples. That states are willing to ally with anyone when pressed hard enough is a proposition that was amply

illustrated in previous sections. Recall, for instance, how US intelligence officers found it necessary to cooperate and, subsequently, hire the Marxist lawyer and political scientist, Franz Neumann, and various others leftist academics during World War II. In doing so, the Americans cared very little about the political bearings of Neumann and his colleagues, being much more interested in meeting the exigencies of war. The extent to which this behaviour continued in the post-war world is striking. From the 1970s onwards, by way of various Freedom of Information Act requests, evidence began to emerge that in the decades after World War II the CIA and various other US agencies had recruited more than a thousand Nazis as US intelligence officers and informants (Lichtblau, 2014). Accordingly, from at least the 1950s onwards, the CIA's Allen Dulles and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) J. Edgar Hoover "aggressively recruited" Nazi members of all ranks, believing that their intelligence value in the fight against the Soviets far outweighed any moral and/or ideological considerations (Lichtblau, 2014). In fact, as Richard Breitman, an American University holocaust scholar, has noted, the morality of recruiting such individuals was rarely considered, owing to the American belief that the Soviet Union was "terribly powerful and we had so few assets" (quoted in Lichtblau, 2014). By the 1990s, US intelligence services were still actively trying to conceal the government's ties to Nazi members living in the US, with some of these members probably guilty of war crimes (Lichtblau, 2014).

US military aid to Egypt provides us with yet another case in point. Ever since 1979, with the US-brokered Israel-Egypt Peace Agreement, Egypt has greatly benefited from US military assistance. By 2013, notably, the Egyptian government still received about \$1.3 billion annually in military aid – i.e. one fifth of all US military aid to foreign countries by way of the Foreign Military Funding program is earmarked for Egypt (Tiefer, 2015). That US military aid to Egypt has continued irrespective of the ideological bearings and human rights record of the Egyptians should of course come as no surprise. In fact, former US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel, in reflecting on the history of US military aid to Egypt, conceded this much by noting that the US "wouldn't necessarily agree with the forms of government, the dictatorships, but...we would not want to see the disintegration of a relationship with a large important country like Egypt" (quoted in News24, 2013). As we argued above (cf. Section 5.1, pp. 158-159), President Obama's decision in July 2013 to

unilaterally suspend all military aid to Egypt constituted a noteworthy, yet short-lived, break from the past. For by April 2015, in an equally noteworthy volte-face and amid “imminent security concerns”, the US once more resumed its provision of military aid to the Egyptians (Hamed, 2015). US military support for Egypt, during the Cold War as well as now, forms however part of a much larger US geopolitical strategy wherein “the *realpolitik* of supporting Middle Eastern strongmen that serve the interests of the United States” has for decades taken precedence over democracy and human rights (Hamed, 2015). In respect of the latter point, US support for Iran (prior to 1979), Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Syria and various others thus immediately comes to mind. It is worth emphasising, as Ambrose and Brinkley (2011) have noted, that during the 1970s Iran “was America’s best friend in the Middle East”, with the Shah being “a prime customer for America’s military hardware”.

Consider also the decades-old relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia. That the two states differ in almost every conceivable respect is a point that needs little further substantiation. During October 1973, with the Yom Kippur war just begun (October 6), US President Nixon requested from Congress an amount of \$2.2 billion in support of the beleaguered Israelis (Raviv & Melman, 2014:157; Perkins, 2004:83). The very next day the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed a total oil embargo on the US (Perkins, 2004:83). Although Saudi Arabia secretly provided petroleum for US forces stationed in Vietnam, and the Shah decided to have no part in the embargo, the prospect of the US being vulnerable in the future did not sit particularly well with decision makers in Washington (Kelanic, 2016:191). Therefore, in the wake of the OPEC crisis, and with Washington realising the strategic importance of the Saudi kingdom to the US economy, the US quickly engaged in negotiations with the Saudis, offering them various concessions (ranging from technical support to military assistance and hardware) in exchange for petrodollars and Saudi guarantees that the oil embargo would never repeat itself (Perkins, 2004:83). For both parties, the subsequent agreement proved to be highly advantageous: for the US, it meant that future threats of an oil embargo from oil-rich states such as Iran, Iraq, Indonesia or Venezuela could more easily be dealt with, knowing the Saudis would step in to meet the shortfall; for the House of Saud, it meant unrelenting US political and, importantly, military support, thus ensuring its ability to stay in power indefinitely (Perkins, 2004:89-90).

By way of concluding this section, consider two final examples. The first example centres on Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia (1978) to bring Pol Pot's atrocities to an end. The Vietnamese, on account of various cross-border attacks by the Khmer Rouge regime (i.e. The Communist Party of Democratic Kampuchea, DK), quickly invoked their article 51 (of the UN Charter) right to self-defence, responding to Cambodia's attacks with military force (Chomsky, 1999:75). Washington's reaction is instructive, with the US first backing a Chinese invasion of Vietnam, then responding by way of imposing harsh economic sanctions on the Vietnamese (Chomsky, 1999:75). The US media, quite tellingly, lambasted the Vietnamese invasion, calling it (obviously, erroneously) an outright violation of international law (Chomsky, 1999:75). Irrespective of the blatant atrocities it had committed, Washington formally recognised the expelled DK as Cambodia's official government and, subsequently, continued to support the Cambodian regime's persisting attacks within Cambodia (Chomsky, 1999:75). The second example proceeds along similar lines, and further considers US support for various non-democratic and subversive forces in foreign states. The list, as we have consistently argued, is a rather lengthy one. As the Pike Committee's Report has indicated, the CIA has trained, financed and, in some cases, guided some of the world's "most dreaded and cruel security services", many of which became infamous for their unbridled use of institutionalised torture and murder (Agee, 1976:xiv). We can add to this behaviour the CIA-orchestrated coup of the democratically elected Salvador Allende government in Chile during September 1974, as well as the widespread US support of authoritarian regimes in Central and South America (Agee, 1976:x). The examples cited here lend credibility to the point raised at the outset of this section, viz. that the history of international politics is replete with examples of strange bedfellows.

5.3.2.4 Democratic peace, democratic wars and the bipolar Cold War system

The (European) great-power system of old was not immune to (liberal) democracies waging war against one another. Where conflicts of interest occurred, moreover, traditional (i.e. realist) great-power behaviour much more abounded, with (liberal) democracies issuing threats and ultimatums, adopting hard-lines, making war-preparations, and using big stick diplomacy in their relations with one another. In terms of (liberal) democratic relations *inter se*, especially among the traditional

(European) great-powers, peace has however become a more realistic proposition in the post-war world. In the Cold War period, then, only five recorded cases of war between (liberal) democracies are apparent, none of which involved any European power: the Palestine War, 1948 (Israel vs. Lebanon); the Dominican Invasion, 1967 (US vs. Dominican Republic); the Cyprus Invasion, 1974 (Turkey vs. Cyprus); the Ecuador-Peru War, 1981; and the Nagorno-Karabakh War, 1989 (Armenia vs. Azerbaijan) (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:161; Sontag, 1998). Three observations are, however, pertinent here: one, peace among the industrialised (liberal) democratic states of Western Europe and North America forms however part of a much larger pacific pattern in the post-war world, that of peace amongst *all* states of the First and Second Worlds⁸⁹ (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:160); two, the absence of war between (liberal) democracies during this period appears to be more nearly a product of factors relating to NATO and bipolarity than any (liberal democratic) ideological and/or institutional ones (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:160); and three, the high incidence of covert wars by (liberal) democracies against fellow (liberal) democratic states militates against any confidence in the peace-proneness of (liberal) democratic norms and/or institutions. It would perhaps serve our purposes well to elaborate on these points.

There are, accordingly, two powerful sets of explanations that account for the absence of war between (liberal) democracies during the Cold War period. The first set has its roots in bipolarity; the second one in the various obstacles to war extant between the Cold War (liberal) democracies. In the post-1945 world, as was briefly mentioned above, the *entire* developed world (comprising of the First and Second Worlds) not only experienced elevated levels of prosperity and development, but was internally at peace (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:165). As against this, consider that in every war since the end of World War II, one of more of the belligerents came from the Third World (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:165). In explaining, then, the peace among the First and Second Worlds, where do we look? Bipolarity, as was variously argued in preceding sections, provides an unusually stable and peaceful way of distributing power: with the US-Soviet competition inordinately close, almost every

⁸⁹ The First World generally consisted of the various members of NATO, Spain, those European (liberal) democracies that opted for neutrality (i.e. Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Switzerland) along with Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The Second World, as against this, generally referred to all the members of the Warsaw Pact (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:165).

state comprising the First and Second Worlds found themselves allied to either of the two superpowers, neither of which would risk war with the other, with the neutralist states “clamped in the vice jaws” of NATO and the Warsaw Pact respectively (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:165). In this context, and given the unassailable fact that the post-1945 world lay largely in ruins due to the war, war was highly unlikely to begin with (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:166).

The second set of explanations turn on the pacifying role played by NATO, a role we have already referred to in preceding sections. The majority of the Cold War (liberal) democracies formed part of a North Atlantic cluster directed at confronting the threat emanating from the Soviet Union, with the latter not doing anything to woo any of the (liberal) democracies to its side (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:166). Two effects followed from this: one, it forced the members of the cluster to aim their weapons towards the Soviet Union and, two, it led them to more nearly think in collective security terms, thoughts which eventually culminated in the creation of NATO (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:166). With NATO wholly directed at the Soviet threat, and given the predominance of the US within the organisation (itself, admittedly, an understatement), the start of a war between alliance members would have been forbiddingly difficult (Schwartz & Skinner, 2002:166). To appreciate US predominance within NATO, consider that by the end of the Cold War the US was contributing about 66 percent of NATO’s total military expenditures – and this in the context of a world in which the Soviet Union had just collapsed (The Economist, 2013). That the US shouldered the security burdens of its NATO alliance members during the Cold War, and continues to do so today, is a point that would meet with wide assent.

While the Cold War yielded very few instances of war between (liberal) democracies, we know of course that instances of *covert* wars by such states against their fellow (liberal) democracies were numerous. As we have pointed out in preceding sections, a period of 60 years of American foreign policy produced more than 50 attempts to overthrow foreign governments and, more disconcertingly, the US has been implicated in the suppression of “more than 30 populist-nationalist movements struggling against intolerable regimes” (Blum, 2006:1-2). We have, with this in mind, already pointed out how the American government sanctioned and, in due time,

actively supported the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge regime, behaviour that has often repeated itself in American support of authoritarian regimes in Central and South America, how the CIA has trained, financed and, in some cases, guided some of the world's most infamous security services, and how the CIA conspired to overthrow the democratically elected Allende government in Chile during September 1974. We can add to these interventions numerous others in which the CIA either actively supported non-democratic governments and/or movements or attempted to overthrow or suppress democratically elected ones: CIA intervention in Italian elections *since* 1948 up and until at least 1972 (Agee, 1976:xiii); CIA paramilitary support of the Kurdish rebellion against the Iraqi government (1972 to 1975) (Agee, 1976:xiii); CIA intervention in the Angolan civil war in support of the forces of Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi (Agee, 1976:xiii); the CIA-orchestrated coup of "the highly popular, democratically elected" Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh, in 1953, subsequently replaced by the pro-American *dictator* Mohammed Reza Shah (Perkins, 2004:18; Kelanic, 2016:191); the CIA-orchestrated coup of Jacobo Arbenz, the democratically elected Guatemalan president, in 1954, subsequently replaced by the right-wing dictator Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas (Perkins, 2004:73); the CIA-orchestrated coup in 1973 which helped put the Chilean dictator, General Augusto Pinochet, in power from 1973 to 1990 (Perkins, 2004:200); in the 1980s, various Reagan administration officials were indicted for their part in trying to subvert Nicaragua's leftist regime by selling arms to Iran in exchange for cash (Perkins, 2004:200); and, in March 1949, the Syrian army's chief of staff, Colonel Hosni Zaim, successfully plotted to overthrow the government, a move enthusiastically supported by the CIA (Raviv & Melman, 2014:45). And so the vicious cycle continues, a point to be more fully illustrated in Chapter 6 of this study. It is, however, noteworthy how the US has at various times supported *and* subverted democratic *and* authoritarian governments, with the behaviour suggestive of both the inadequacy of reductionist approaches to the study of international politics and the extent to which states' perceptions of one another are mainly driven by politico-security considerations.

Not only have (liberal) democracies, and the US pre-eminently among them, often intervened in one another's affairs, but (liberal) democratic relations *inter se* have often been marred by mutual suspicions. It has been noted in preceding sections (cf.

Section 5.2, p. 168) how during the First and Second World Wars both the US and Britain thought it prudent to keep a watchful eye on each other. The extent to which such behaviour has persisted in the Cold War era is particularly sobering. US-Israeli relations provide a striking example. In August 1983, for instance, after receiving credible intelligence that an attack was about to be carried out against US forces stationed in Beirut, the Israeli intelligence organisation, the Mossad, decided against informing the Americans, arguing that they (i.e. the Mossad) “are not here to protect them [i.e. the Americans]. They can do their own watching” (Thomas, 2012:83). The attack subsequently claimed the lives of 241 US marines (Thomas, 2012:83; Bollyn, 2005:7). Furthermore, during June 1967, in the days prior to the Six-Day War, the US Sixth Fleet ship *Liberty* embarked from Spain on a reconnaissance mission to the eastern Mediterranean waters. The Israeli military intelligence organisation, AMAN, fearing US electronic surveillance of strategically important Israeli communications, torpedoed the *Liberty*, which resulted in 34 US sailors losing their lives and more than 70 injured (Kahana, 2001:413). Although the Israelis have often claimed that they mistook the *Liberty* for a Soviet vessel, recent evidence confirms that the Israeli Air Force (IAF) was acutely aware that the ship belonged to the US (Melman, 2007). And, during the latter part of 1954, Unit 131, an ultra-secret Israeli intelligence unit specialising in sabotage, recruited various Egyptian Jews to attack American and British institutions in Egypt, hoping that in doing so they would succeed in driving a wedge between, on the one hand, the US, Britain and France and, on the other hand, the Egyptians (Raviv & Melman, 2014:28). Such examples, as the reader might very well appreciate, militate against democratic peace theory expectations of the mutual trust and respect that ostensibly exist between pairs of (liberal) democracies.

That Israel has been guilty of spying on the US and stealing American economic, scientific and military secrets is of course nothing new. In fact, in 1986 the Israelis created a special unit – codenamed ‘Al’ (Hebrew for ‘above’) – tasked with penetrating US economic, scientific and technology data (Thomas, 2005:5). In the 1980s, moreover, by way of Jonathan Pollard (a Jewish-American US Navy employee convicted of espionage) and other Israeli intelligence assets, Israel had managed to obtain American nuclear secrets and naval nuclear codes (Walker, 2005:2). As the former director of the Mossad, Meir Amit, has explained, such

behaviour, though perhaps abhorrent to some, constitute the lifeblood of statecraft: “Keeping up with an enemy’s advanced weapons system is a priority with any intelligence service” (quoted in Thomas, 2012:47). The fact that such behaviour is considered a priority to begin with should of course come as no surprise. As we have argued before, where trust is scarce and competition close, and where the logic of self-help reigns, each state plots its own course and devise its own strategies in accordance with *its* perceptions of needs and interests, a point aptly illustrated by the Israeli intelligence credo of “Israel first, last, and always. Always” (Thomas, 2012:64). In many ways, secrecy, espionage and distrust have been the hallmarks of US-Israeli relations. In the Suez Crisis of 1956, for instance, the Israelis concluded a secret military pact with Britain and France aimed at regaining control of the Suez Canal, with the explicit intention of keeping Washington in the dark lest their actions would anger the Americans (Collins, 2011:4). We should, however, keep in mind that Israeli intelligence operations aimed at penetrating American economic, scientific and military secrets hardly constitute a *sui generis* case for, as Charles Kupchan has noted, everyone is doing it (Martinez, 2013). During the height of the Cold War, William Martin and Bernon Mitchell, two National Security Agency (NSA) employees, defected to the Soviet Union, with both subsequently revealing how the US was spying not only on rivals, but also allies, behaviour that has persisted remarkably well in the post-Cold War world (Martinez, 2013). Yet, as has been variously argued in these pages, this is the kind of behaviour one can expect in a world in which trust is scarce and competition rife, and in which the units of the system have to fend for themselves.

5.4 Evaluation

The bipolar Cold War system was one of unprecedented peace, for the great powers at any rate; the multipolar (European) great-power system, as against this, was not. In the world of the former, with the pressures accruing from bipolarity acute, war became exceedingly difficult to start, a proposition reinforced by the destructiveness of nuclear weapons; in the multipolar (European) system of old, with the number of great powers at four or more, uncertainties in gauging the relative military capabilities of states and difficulties in estimating the relative strength and cohesion of alliances multiplied, a proposition which greatly increased the prospect of war. While each

system produced distinctive pressures and behaviours, we also saw how certain actions on the part of states repeated themselves *across* different international-political systems. We saw to this effect how strange bedfellows were often born amid common fears and/or common interests, how states were constrained to make calculations over possible alliance partners more on the basis of interest than ideology and, ultimately, the relative ease by which states' moral or ideological beliefs were sacrificed on the altar of national security. In both systems, moreover, competition was rife, with states relentlessly seeking to emulate the military policies, weapon systems and capabilities of the more successful competitors.

In the multipolar world of old, as in the bipolar system of the Cold War, confirmatory evidence of democratic peace theory was, at best, negligible. Instead, we have emphasised various cases, illustrations and (theoretical) arguments casting doubt on the historical *and* theoretical validity of democratic peace theory. With this in mind, we noted, for instance, how (liberal) democratic public opinion have throughout history (stretching from the (liberal) democracies of Ancient Greece to more modern ones) often served the end of driving (liberal) democratic states to the brink of war, how pairs of (liberal) democracies have allied with *and* against one another *and* with and against authoritarian regimes, and how (liberal) democratic relations have often been marred by mutual suspicions. When faced with war-threatening crises, moreover, (liberal) democracies have more often than not behaved like traditional (i.e. realist) great powers, resorting to military threats and military build-ups, ultimatums and so-called big-stick diplomacy. And, in the post-war world, the absence of war between pairs of (liberal) democracies has coincided with numerous instances of (liberal) democracies intervening either to subvert or suppress democratically elected governments or movements or to provide support for authoritarian ones – behaviour that leads one to question the mutual trust and respect ostensibly underlying (liberal) democratic relations *inter se*. As the reader will shortly see, such behaviour has persisted remarkably well in the post-Cold War world. We have, in the final analysis, also subjected one of the pre-eminent post-World War II examples of the validity of democratic peace theory – to wit, the EU – to scrutiny, arguing that power-political factors, not (liberal) democratic ideological ones, provide more powerful explanations for the origin and subsequent development of the union.

CHAPTER SIX

THE NOT-SO-NEW NEW WORLD ORDER: INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN A UNIPOLAR WORLD

[S]pies do not keep friends who are not worth their while...[T]he access to intelligence services was not determined by ideological preferences and alliances, but by how good the intelligence service was: the value and reliability of its information.

Niël Barnard, former head of South Africa's National Intelligence Service (NIS)
(Barnard, 2015:75-78)

You have said that you think this is the most dangerous the world has ever been [stated Foreign Affairs editor Gideon Rose]. It's the most dangerous period in my lifetime [replied Martin Dempsey].

Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Rose & Dempsey,
2016:2)

In this new system, the European Union is a superpower that relies upon soft power to express itself and to achieve its objectives, and that finds itself at a moral advantage in an international environment where violence as a means of achieving influence is increasingly detested and rejected.

John McCormick (McCormick, 2007:6)

It stands to reason that if something is so important that it must be acquired at all costs, there are few (if any) rules for how it should be done.

Niël Barnard (Barnard, 2015:101)

We have to be able to cope with the argument that the U.S. is inconsistent and hypocritical in its promotion of democracy around the world. That may be true.

Chester Crocker, former US Assistant Secretary of State (in Blum, 2013a)

6.1 Introduction

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent collapse of the bipolar Cold War order, signalled to many not only the end of the decades-old East-West ideological confrontation, but the triumph and ascendancy of (liberal) democracy and, by implication, liberal (i.e. second-image) theories of international relations. In this context, Francis Fukuyama confidently asserted that the removal of the Soviet Union from the centre of international politics meant that “there is no struggle or conflict over ‘large’ issues, and consequently no need for generals or statesmen; what remains is primarily economic activity” (quoted in Mearsheimer, 2002:24). In echoing Fukuyama’s sentiments, John Mueller in *Retreat from Doomsday* added that “major war – war among developed countries – has gradually moved towards terminal disrepute because of its perceived repulsiveness and futility” – in essence, a restatement of the classical liberal argument that war is nothing more than an antiquated institution, one that no longer pays (quoted in Mearsheimer, 2002:24). And in considering the *theoretical* vindication of liberal theories of international relations in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Harvard professor of European Affairs Stanley Hoffman self-assuredly concluded that realism “is utter nonsense today” (quoted in Friedman, 1993). Democratic peace scholars also added their voices, noting that the existence of a separate peace between pairs of (liberal) democracies illustrated that states, contra realist thought, “are not doomed to exist in a state of war” (Lynn-Jones, 1996:xi). “Democratization”, as Michael Doyle and G. John Ikenberry (1997:vii) noted triumphantly in the mid-1990s, “is changing the face of world politics”.

Political office-bearers, too, quickly became enamoured with the ostensible triumph of (liberal) democracy and the promise of peace implicated in the spread of (liberal) democratic institutions and norms. From the Clinton-administration to Barack Obama’s, US politicians have consistently tied US national security to the spread of (liberal) democracy across the globe. For as the former US ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, has recently insisted, “[n]ot every democracy in the world was or is a close ally of the United States, *but no democracy in the world has been or is an American enemy. And all of America’s most enduring allies have been and remain democracies*” (quoted in Diamond, 2016:154; emphasis added).

The claim that realism, and Waltzian structural realism pre-eminently, has bitten the dust is one that has been made repeatedly in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The claim is an odd one, one very much divorced from history and reality. While the end of the Cold War did indeed bring various changes to international relations, these changes unfortunately did not produce the desired effects envisioned by liberal scholars of international relations and, by implication, proponents of democratic peace. In the first decade following the end of the Cold War, the rate of democratic expansion was indeed impressive and unprecedented; by 2016, however, as Larry Diamond (2016:151) has conceded, “much of this progress has steadily eroded”. Between the years 2000 and 2015, for instance, democratic processes broke down in at least 27 countries, with the bastion of democratic peace, i.e. the EU, likewise experiencing all manner and sorts of problems (Diamond, 2016:151). The problem is further compounded by the twin facts that democracy itself has seemingly lost its appeal and by the recognition that economic growth and prosperity are not inextricably linked to liberalisation, as the case of China conclusively suggests (Diamond, 2016:151). And, in the wake of 9/11, the quintessential paragon of *liberal* democracy, i.e. the US, as well as various other liberal democracies (think, for instance, of Germany and France), has engaged in intrusive foreign *and* domestic surveillance operations that threaten the core of processes inherent to liberal democracy.

There are, however, far better grounds for rejecting the claim that realist thought, and Waltz’s structural realist theory in particular, is nothing more than an anachronism of the Cold War period. Accordingly, in looking at the post-Cold War world, two observations are particularly striking. One, with only one great power left standing following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Waltzian structural realism leads us to expect that the lone great power is bound to act in capricious, sporadic and self-willed ways, a proposition borne out strikingly well by consideration of US behaviour in the post-Cold War world. Two, the end of US predominance and, by implication, unipolarity seems to be forbiddingly close, with a multipolar international-political system dimly discernible. In 1993, Charles Kegley rather sensibly remarked that the emergence of a new multipolar international system from the post-Cold War unipolar one would vindicate the claims and expectations of realist theory and, at the same time, thrust us back into a world of great-power war (Kegley, 1993:139). By the

late 1990s, as Waltz (1997:215) has noted, signs of vindication were already all too apparent: “To all but the myopic, it [i.e. multipolarity] can already be seen on the horizon. Moreover, it is emerging in accordance with the balancing imperative”. In the international-political world of the present, we should perhaps add, tell-tale signs of the return to multipolarity are even more conspicuous, a proposition to be more fully explored in this chapter.

In other respects, too, structural realist theory appears to be vindicated. In the multipolar and bipolar worlds of old, continuities in the behaviour and actions of the units of the system were rife; in the post-Cold War world, such continuities are as impressive, if not more so. One thinks in this regard, for instance, of how in the post-Cold War world alliances between ideologically, politically, and economically disparate units (i.e. strange bedfellows) continue to be forged amid common fears and/or common interests. We have to this effect already pointed the reader towards two striking instances of such behaviour (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.1, pp.159-160), both of which jar with the logic of democratic peace theory: firstly, the possibility of an Israeli-Arab alliance in the midst of an increasingly volatile Middle East and, secondly, US-Iranian cooperation in the face of the growing threat posed by ISIS. We can, for now, add two more.

In September 2004, after almost two decades of relentless opposition from successive US administrations, the Bush administration lifted economic sanctions levelled against the Gaddafi regime, a step subsequently followed by the restoration of full diplomatic relations almost two years later (Ensalaco, 2011). The decision, we should point out, went against the grain of the established American position concerning the Gaddafi regime. Accordingly, in response to the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 and various other terrorist acts allegedly perpetrated and/or sanctioned by the Libyan government from the late 1980s onward, successive US administrations have done very little to get on a better footing with the Libyans, with President Reagan calling Gaddafi the “mad dog of the Middle East” (Ensalaco, 2011). The events of September 11, 2001, went some way however in changing American perceptions of the Gaddafi regime. Following 9/11, the Bush administration initiated secret talks with Gaddafi, subsequently followed by various “surreal” meetings conducted by the CIA with Libyan intelligence chieftains (Ensalaco, 2011).

In establishing intelligence ties with the Libyans and, in due time, in lifting economic sanctions and restoring diplomatic relations, American political and security interests once more prevailed, this time round turning on the particular exigencies of 9/11 and how to respond to it. Here, as in so many other instances, moral or ideological factors carried very little weight in swaying US perceptions and behaviour, with the Americans hardly saying anything about Gaddafi's repression of the Libyan people. The second of our examples is equally enlightening, and directs our attention to South African-Israeli intelligence cooperation. The post-Apartheid South African government has in no uncertain terms been an outspoken critic of the Jewish nation, especially concerning the latter's treatment of the Palestinians. In recent years, however, evidence has emerged showing that, despite the South African government's rhetoric, clandestine manoeuvring between the two state's intelligence agencies was very much alive and well (Torchia, 2015). The release of the so-called 'Spy Cables' by Al Jazeera (essentially a large volume of documents and cables exposing the South African intelligence community's dealings with foreign intelligence services) highlighted that the South African intelligence community is extensively cooperating with Mossad despite the government's anti-Israel rhetoric (Szabo, 2015). The latter behaviour becomes all the more interesting if we compare it with the accumulated wisdom of Niël Barnard, the former head of South Africa's National Intelligence Service (NIS) during the Apartheid era: "[s]pies do not keep friends who are not worth their while...[T]he access to intelligence services was not determined by ideological preferences and alliances, but by how good the intelligence service was: the value and reliability of its information...It stands to reason that if something is so important that it must be acquired at all costs, there are few (if any) rules for how it should be done" (Barnard, 2015:75-78, 101). As the reader might appreciate, the vast ideological differences between the Apartheid government and the post-Apartheid African National Congress (ANC) did little to alter the behaviour of that state's intelligence service.

Other continuities are also discernible. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, and irrespective of the fact that we believe the probability of World War III is for the foreseeable future quite low, states *are* arming themselves with the latter end in mind. The British intelligence service MI6 has accordingly warned that the Russian military is undergoing various modernisation efforts in preparation for an Eastern

European war, with former NATO Deputy Supreme Commander of Europe, General Sir Richard Shirreff, as indicated in the pages above, cautioning that “nuclear war with Russia is a possibility” (Hargreaves, 2016; Nazaryan, 2016). Today, as throughout the entire course of modern history, security competition is rife, with both the Russians and the Americans going to great lengths to upgrade their conventional arsenal as well as upgrade their (tactical) nuclear weapons capability (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.1, p. 162); both states, in addition to the Chinese, are also spending vast amounts of money on and relentlessly competing with one another in developing their offensive and defensive cyber-weapons capabilities, an essential requirement of modern warfare and one that is set to be still more important in the future. The Russians, moreover, have over the last couple of years invested in the construction of new underground bunkers able to withstand a nuclear attack, a clear indication that Putin is either bluffing (which apparently he is not) or preparing for nuclear war (Coleman, 2016). Compounding matters further is the unequivocal fact that while Russia is preparing for war, Europe appears to be disarming (Meotti, 2016). To gain some sense of the predicament confronting the Europeans, consider that while Putin’s Russia has seen an increase of 79 percent in military spending over the past decade, European states have cut their defence spending by 10-15 percent since 2008 (Meotti, 2016). As our theory has led us to believe, and as we may caution even at this juncture, those who fail to keep up fall behind, and those who fall behind risk their own destruction. Now, as before during the Cold War, the US is expected to (and indeed does) shoulder Europe’s security burdens, a responsibility, we should perhaps mention, that no longer sits comfortable with officials in Washington. One merely needs to consider that while the US accounts for 46 percent of NATO’s aggregate GDP, its military contribution to the organisation stands at about 75 percent (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2016). This, as Barry Posen has correctly pointed out, truly is “welfare for the rich” (quoted in Mearsheimer & Walt, 2016). With the Americans increasingly reluctant to foot Europe’s security bill, and with European armies becoming increasingly dysfunctional, Russia is likely to be emboldened to act more aggressively in the future.

The continuities laid bare above, and those to be identified in the course of this chapter, form however part of a much larger pattern. Accordingly, throughout history, and irrespective of factors relating to political and/or economic organisation, the units

of the international-political system have been at war, have relentlessly competed with one another in the arts and machinery of warfare, have concerned themselves much more with relative gains than absolute ones, and have forged alliances with strange bedfellows when pressed hard enough or, as was argued, not even that hard at all. Even within the so-called liberal zone of peace, trust and respect have been scarce commodities, with factors other than (liberal) ideological ones accounting for the pacification of the (liberal) democratic world. In important respects, and against this backdrop, this chapter will endeavour to bring to completion the work begun in Chapter 5 of this study, and principally by labouring in defence of two propositions raised there: one, that a basic continuity in the behaviour of the units of the international-political system is discernible across time and space and, two, that we can expect the behaviour of the units and the outcomes of their interactions to vary in accordance with different international-political systems. We will, accordingly, frame our inquiry against the backdrop of the interface between the expectations gleaned from our theories and the conduct of international politics *within* unipolar systems. We will also, in light of the rise of some powers and, conversely, the decline of the US, consider issues relating to the future structure of the international-political system and, by implication, the future of international politics.

6.2 The vice of unipolar systems: “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”⁹⁰

From the theory developed in preceding chapters, we know that the vice of great-power politics in multipolar systems is miscalculation or inattention; in bipolar systems, as against this, it is overreaction. What can be said about systems in which only one great power is left standing? In such a world, as variously argued in these pages (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2, pp. 97-99), international politics becomes, for the dominant power at any rate, almost entirely domesticated, with the vice of unipolar systems thus turning on the desultory use and abuse of power by the unipole. A system of one, moreover, denotes that for the dominant power few external constraints exist. Though obviously not possessing a free hand in all matters, the important point to note is that for the unipole the major constraints and

⁹⁰ The aphorism is generally attributed to Lord Acton (cf. Heywood, 2002:7).

threats are *internally* generated. The dominant power is free to follow its every whim, to set policies and make strategies with little regard for those of allies and to exert pressure on others with a vast range of tools at its disposal.

The extent to which this proposition is borne out by history can be illustrated in a number of ways. Economically and, much more so, militarily interdependence is low – or has been for the last 25 years or so. By the turn of the twentieth century, as was argued elsewhere (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2, p. 98), the US, Japan and the EU exported about 12 percent or less of their total GDP; by 2015, the figures did indeed change, but certainly not in the direction one would presume, with only the EU countries experiencing a significant increase in exports as a percentage of their GDP. By 2000, significantly, US exports constituted roughly 10.7 percent of its total GDP; by 2015, this figure had only increased to 12.6 percent (The World Bank, 2015). This hardly constitutes *interdependence*. Today, as before, the US remains very much independent of the external world, with the rest of the world much more dependent on American goods and services than the other way round. Compare the situation of the US with that of Japan, Germany and China. Japanese exports as a percentage of GDP increased from 10.9 percent in 2000 to 17.9 percent in 2015; German exports, during the same period, increased from 30.8 percent to 46.9 percent; and Chinese exports during this period increased from 20.7 percent to 22.4 percent (The World Bank, 2015). The US, moreover, boasts extensive natural resources and, by May 2016, was still considered the largest producer of oil and natural gas (Thornberry & Krepinevich, 2016:28; EIA, 2016). The position of the US is, accordingly, an enviable one, a proposition that rings all the more true if we gaze our eyes towards the military realm. Here, much more so than in economic affairs, the lopsided nature of American capabilities are far more conspicuous. By 2000, the American defence budget was larger than the defence budgets of the next eight states combined (Waltz, 2008b:248); by 2015, it was still larger than the defence budgets of the next seven states combined (Tharoor, 2016; SIPRI, 2015). This situation becomes even more impressive if we note that while the US is spending about \$596 billion on its military, second-placed China is spending less than half (\$215 billion) of the US amount, Russia more or less one tenth (\$66.4 billion), and the Germans roughly one fifteenth (\$39.4 billion) (SIPRI, 2015; O’Hanlon & Petraeus, 2016:10). As Joseph Nye has concluded, it is very easy “to forget what a

global behemoth the U.S. remains today....The U.S. Navy controls the seas, and the country's military has troops on every inhabited continent" (quoted in Walsh, 2015).

The figures are equally lopsided if we consider gross national spending on research and development (R & D), ordinarily a pretty good measure of the current and future trajectory of homebased firms. US spending on research and development increased from 2.44 (as a percentage of GDP) in 1996 to 2.81 during 2012 (The World Bank, 2012). Russia increased its spending from 0.97 percent in 1996 to 1.13 percent during 2012; Chinese expenditure increased from 0.57 percent to 1.93 percent; and Germany's expenditure increased from 2.14 percent to 2.88 percent during the same period (The World Bank, 2012). Although Germany, for instance, now spends about as much as the Americans do on research and development, if measured as a percentage of GDP, their *absolute* expenditures lag, a situation that, interestingly enough, also prevailed during the Cold War (Waltz, 1979:149).

While our theory leads us to expect that "a country disposing of greater power than others do cannot long be expected to behave with decency and moderation" (Waltz, 1991:668; 2011), what do we see when we veer towards an examination of the historical record? To a dismaying extent, US behaviour from the 1980s onwards has reflected this condition, and lent credibility to the notion that the behavioural vice of unipolar systems is overextension (Waltz, 2000a:13). Although estimations often differ, many observers now believe that there are currently between 800 to 1000 US military bases across the globe, with the US military present in more than 150 countries (Vine, 2015). More troubling, from the mid-1980s onwards, the US has invaded weak countries on no fewer than six occasions, beginning with Lebanon (1982), Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), Iraq (1990) and culminating in the post-9/11 wars in, once more, Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan (2001) (Waltz, 2008c:xii). Since 1989, if framed differently, the US has thus "been at war for a startling two out of every three years" (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2, p. 99). Even the much-vaunted US-led intervention in Kosovo (1999), ostensibly a humanitarian mission, did little to mask the self-willed and self-interested nature of US policy in the post-Cold War world (cf. in this regard, Chomsky, 1999). The US decision to intervene in Serbia to halt, in the words of Madeleine Albright, "this kind of barbaric ethnic cleansing" stands in marked contrast to its sympathy for and, at times, outright support of

Turkey's slaughter of the ethnic Kurds, with the discrepancy turning on the latter's unwillingness to acquiesce to the US-dominated global system as against the former's support of and contribution to it (Chomsky, 1999:13). One would do well to keep in mind, as Chomsky (1999:51-52) has scathingly remarked, that some of the most horrific instances of ethnic cleansing during the 1990s, beyond that attributable to Milosevic in Kosovo, occurred *within* NATO itself, with the US merely turning a blind eye to these events.

That the US has acted in this way, and continues to do so, is to be expected. In the old bipolar Cold War world, the global reach of the Soviet Union had the effect of imposing limitations on the behaviour and actions of the Western powers in their traditional domains, not only owing to the Soviet military deterrent, but also by virtue of the latter's occasional willingness to actively support targets of US (covert) intervention and aggression (Chomsky, 1999:11). However, the gradual decline of the Soviet Union during the 1980s afforded the US with an unprecedented degree of freedom in exercising its will, with the American will increasingly defined in terms of democracy promotion abroad and, ultimately, the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory, both of which more often than not served as a pretext for the pursuance of narrowly defined American interests (Chomsky, 1999:11). With the Soviet Union removed from the centre of international politics, US resolve to impose their will grew ever stronger, with policy experts and advisors clamouring for a foreign policy that matched America's newfound position in world affairs. Kristol and Kagan (1996:31) provide but one case:

[c]onservatives these days...hark back to the warning that America ought not go abroad in search for monsters to destroy. But why not? [...] Because America has the capacity to destroy many of the world's monsters and because the responsibility for international peace and security rests on America's shoulders...a policy of sitting atop a hill and leading by example becomes in practice a policy of cowardice and dishonour.

By the mid-1990s, interestingly enough, influential figures in Washington such as Paul Wolfowitz had already tabled various military plans to topple Saddam Hussein, with the ousting of the Iraqi leader merely intended to act as the lever for deeper

American penetration in the Middle East (Smith, 2007:35). The American belief that the democratisation of the Middle East would bring peace to the region, a belief wholly grounded in the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory and one that preceded the events of 9/11 *and* the American failure to locate Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), went some way in pushing the Bush administration to war with Iraq in 2003. In its 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, the Bush administration thus remarked that the “great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise” (The White House, 2002). More tellingly, the document also noted that the US would “use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe” (The White House, 2002). It is with this in mind that Waltz (2008b:247) notes that the argument that the events of 9/11 set the stage for such behaviour is wholly misguided, for in important respects the attacks merely perpetuated trends and policies already in motion. Although post-Cold War American behaviour nicely conforms to the claims and expectations of unipolar systems, we have good reasons for believing that America’s unipolar moment is bound to come to a close. In fact, as we will see in subsequent sections, potential balancers to American hegemony are already discernible on the horizon.

6.3 Are there any strange bedfellows left?

The multipolar and bipolar worlds of old were riddled with examples of ideologically, politically and economically disparate units allying with one another amid common fears and/or common interests. What do we expect to find if we turn our attention to the post-Cold War unipolar world? In crucial respects, and with the US now the lone superpower, we can expect to find not only a continuation but also an intensification of such behaviour. We have, in some respects at least, already laid the groundwork for this proposition. Accordingly, in the introductory section of this chapter we pointed the reader to four striking instances of states allying with one another even though for internal reasons they may have preferred not to: firstly, the possibility of an Israeli-Arab alliance in the midst of an increasingly volatile Middle East; secondly, US-Iranian cooperation in the face of the growing threat posed by ISIS; thirdly, the

restoration of US-Libyan relations in the wake of the events of 9/11; and finally, South Africa-Israeli intelligence cooperation.

In citing further examples, US-Iraqi relations during the 1980s provide a useful point of departure. While influential figures in the US foreign policy establishment strenuously laboured to oust Saddam Hussein from the mid-1990s onwards, the Iraqi regime had in fact been a favoured recipient of US arms, military training and loans during its war with Iran during the late 1980s, with US-Iraqi cooperation turning on the common Iranian threat (Ambrose & Brinkley, 2011). Consider, furthermore, the case of Colombia (1998), considered to be “the worst humanitarian crisis in the Western hemisphere” during the 1990s (Chomsky, 1999:49). Here, as in so many other instances, we find the US allaying *against* the ideals of freedom and democracy. By 1998, the US State Department warned that during that year alone 2000-3000 civilians had been killed and roughly 300,000 new refugees were formed, with more than 80 percent of all massacres attributed to paramilitaries and the military (Chomsky, 1999:49). As in other cases (for instance, East Timor and Kosovo), the Colombian military cooperated with the paramilitaries in committing grievous atrocities (Chomsky, 1999:49-50). As the violence escalated during the 1990s, Colombia in fact became the most favoured Western hemisphere recipient of US arms and training (Chomsky, 1999:50). During 1999, the year following some of the worst atrocities committed during the conflict, the US provided a threefold *increase* for the Colombian regime, totalling \$300 million, in addition to some \$60 million in arms sales (Chomsky, 2000).

Consideration of US dealings with the Taliban regime is equally instructive. Since the late 1990s, the proposed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline had brought the US government and the Taliban regime close together. With the lucrative development of the pipeline in mind, the California-based oil company Unocal held talks with the Taliban government (Blum, 2013b). The talks were not only fully endorsed by the Clinton administration, but in giving their consent to the talks the US showed little concern for the extreme repression of the Afghan society at the hands of the Taliban regime (Blum, 2013b). During 2001, however, talks with the Taliban begin to stall, with the Bush administration now threatening the Taliban regime with military action if the latter did not acquiesce to American demands

(Blum, 2013b). During August 2001, the US State Department negotiator, Christine Rocca, once more warned the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef, that “[e]ither you accept our offer of a carpet of gold [oil], or we bury you under a carpet of bombs” (quoted in Blum, 2013b). A month prior to the events of 9/11 the talks finally broke down, with the bombs following shortly after (Blum, 2013b).

Beyond the narrow focus on US behaviour in the post-Cold War world, a point to be returned to in due time, what else can we say? With Israeli defence planners increasingly appreciative of the fact that Israel’s traditional enemies no longer constitute the threat they once did, and amidst the increasing turmoil enveloping the Middle East (not to mention the problem of ISIS), fruitful grounds appear to be emerging for Israeli cooperation with a host of Arab countries (Harel, 2016:43-44; Danin, 2016:29). All of Egypt, Jordan and, to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have expressed the desire to cooperate with the Israelis, although mostly in secret, with the volte-face coming amidst the realisation by these states “that the problems they share with Israel are bigger than those that divide them” (Harel, 2016:44; Danin, 2016:30; Kramer, 2016:52)). Here, as before, common fears and/or interests appear to be pushing the units of the international-political system together, with the fears this time round turning on the common Iranian threat and the threat posed by ISIS (Harel, 2016:44). In fact, so impressive has the convergence of Israeli and Egyptian national security interests been that when, during 2014, the Israeli military engaged in a 50-day long campaign in response to Hamas rockets, the Egyptians sided with the Israelis, even brushing aside US efforts to halt the Israeli campaign (Danin, 2016:30; Cook, 2016). Israeli-Jordanian cooperation has also seen marked signs of improvement, with both states having a common interest in securing Jordan’s shared border with Syria and in fighting Islamic insurgents operating across the region (Danin, 2016:30).

Israeli-Turkish relations provide yet another case in point. Ever since Israeli commandos raided a Turkish relief ship en route to Gaza during 2010, killing in the process 10 activists, relations between the two states have been highly antagonistic. On account of this event as well as various others, the government in Ankara had thought it proper to invest more resources in and to grant a more expansive mission to the Turkish navy, with the principal aim being to secure the safe passage of

Turkish civilian and merchant vessels in the Eastern Mediterranean (Zhukov, 2013). Various attempts at rapprochement between the two states had failed, with the differences turning chiefly on issues concerning compensation for the victims' families and the provision of relief aid to Palestinians in Gaza. Over the last couple of years, however, the discovery of vast resources of natural gas buried in the Levant Basin – estimated at 3,450 billion cubic metres of gas (and this figure constitutes only *proven* reserves) – has pushed the two states together, with the pair deciding to normalise relations during June 2016 (Baker, 2016; Tyab, 2016). For the Israelis, the decision was not an overly difficult one, especially given their plans to construct a pipeline to Turkey, both for Turkish consumers as well as a connection to the European market; the Turkish government, likewise, proved keen to restore relations with the Israelis, intimating their desire to diversify their energy imports and resources and, ultimately, to restore Ankara's regional clout (Baker, 2016; Tyab, 2016). Even though tensions persist, it is striking to note how both states were willing to lay aside their differences subsequent to the discovery of vast resources of natural gas – common interests, not ideology, thus account for both states seeking to normalise relations.

Over the last few years or so, amidst an increasingly volatile internal *and* external environment, the EU has likewise been constrained to take decisions that on moral and/or ideological grounds it would otherwise have preferred not to (for the internal and external challenges confronting the EU, cf. Grygiel, 2016). Thus, given the rampant financial crises engulfing the union over the last few years and amidst fears of a possible British withdrawal from it, fears which eventually culminated in the UK voting to leave the union on June 23, 2016, the EU has largely turned a blind eye as Viktor Orban, the Hungarian Prime Minister, has continued to flout democratic norms, with the Hungarian polity gradually teetering towards autocracy (Diamond, 2016:153; Kurchick, 2012). Moreover, given the union's desperation to secure Turkish help in curbing the flow of Syrian refugees, the EU has intimated its willingness to revisit the issue of Turkey's membership in the union, this notwithstanding Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's widespread efforts to suppress dissent (Diamond, 2016:153). And with EU members gradually realising the weakness of the EU in grappling with pressing security issues, it appears to be the case that for some member states the conduct of international politics is already

wholly on the old footing, with member states now, as before, forming alliances based on common interests and security concerns (Grygiel, 2016:101). Accordingly, in recognising the inability of the union to deal with the pervasive refugee crisis, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia – normally, as Grygiel (2016:101) notes, “a disjointed group” – have now joined forces in opposing any EU plans that would have them opening up their borders to thousands of Syrian refugees.

It is also worth considering how Russia is increasingly courting the Chinese – and, as the reader might appreciate, for reasons other than ideology. For some time now, and not unlike the Americans, the Russians have begun reasserting their military presence in the Asia-Pacific region (Hill & Lo, 2013). Their pivot to the east, as with the Americans, comes amidst the now almost universal acceptance of the notion that the locus of global power is shifting from the West to the East. In Putin’s mind, however, a hegemonic China is in no shape or form a better alternative than a hegemonic US, yet the Russians appear to be keenly aware of the twin facts that the prospect of an all-powerful China is still a distant one and that Russo-Chinese cooperation would have the effect of weakening US and, by implication, Western power (Hill & Lo, 2013). Moreover, as part of Russia’s vision of once again having “the same level of say in the global system as it had at the Yalta conference of 1945”, Russia has continued to push for deeper penetration in the Middle East region. As was argued before (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.1, p. 158), the American decision to unilaterally suspend all aid to Egypt during July 2013 provided fruitful grounds for the Russians to thrust themselves into the Middle East region, with the Russians signing various arms agreements with the Egyptians. In thus deepening their security ties with the Egyptians, the Russians were little perturbed by the repressive behaviour of the Egyptian regime, opting instead for their decisions to be guided by interest rather than ideology. With the Russians prioritising national security considerations more than moral and/or ideological ones, the US in due time followed suit, opting to resume American aid to Egypt during April 2015. In the end, Russian and American actions concerning Egypt proved to be highly similar, this notwithstanding vast differences in the internal makeup of each state.

By way of concluding this section, it might be advantageous to point the reader towards the continuation of American support for, *inter alia*, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and

Israel, behaviour stretching from the Cold War to the present. In the case of Egypt, we have already noted that US military aid is continuing unabatedly, with part of the annual \$1.3 billion aid package including new F-16 fighter jets, M1A1 Abrams tanks as well as harpoon missiles and other military hardware (Hamed, 2015). Next to Israel, Egypt now constitutes the second largest recipient of US military aid. The relationship, we should point out, is one that is likely to endure for the foreseeable future, especially given the widespread perception in American policy circles that the termination of the relationship would be prejudicial to core American interests (Stacher, 2013). The Saudis, too, are continuing to flourish militarily amid continued US support. During 2016, the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency, tasked with overseeing all foreign arms sales, heartily approved a \$1.15 billion US military equipment purchase, arguing that the sale would “increase the Royal Saudi Land Force’s (RSLF) interoperability with U.S. forces and *conveys U.S. commitment to Saudi Arabia’s security and armed forces modernization*” (Sullivan, 2016; emphasis added). Attempts to block the weapons sale in Congress failed miserably (Sidahmed & Siddiqui, 2016). Moreover, despite concerns in Congress that the Saudis are no longer to be considered reliable partners, the bottom line appears to be that “Washington needs Saudi Arabia today more than ever” if it is to make any headway in addressing problems such as those posed by ISIS (Pregent, 2016). Interestingly enough, despite the Obama administration labelling the Saudis as free riders and criticising them, often quite boisterously, for their ideology and treatment of women, his administration has overseen roughly \$1.15 billion of arms sales to the Saudi regime, “more than any other US administration in history” (Sidahmed & Siddiqui, 2016). As a final point, consider also the ongoing and extensive nature of US aid to Israel. Under a newly negotiated accord, the US is set to provide the Israelis with aid worth \$4 billion annually for the next decade, with a further American undertaking to provide additional funding for Israel’s missile defence industries (Ware, 2016). In all of these cases – Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel – American support proved to be conditioned much more by calculations of interest than by moral and/or ideological ones. As we have seen in this chapter however, as well as the preceding one, such behaviour is to be expected in realms in which the units of the system have to fend for themselves and wherein the future intentions and actions of others are inordinately difficult to gauge.

6.4 Competition and emulation in a unipolar world

In Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.2, p. 181) of this study, we noted how in testimony before the US Senate Committee on Banking and Currency during March 1955, then-president of General Motors, Harlow Curtice, pointed committee members towards the peculiar difficulties confronting firms in a competitive marketplace where falling behind is simply not an option. In stating his position, Curtice thus noted that to “relax for a moment would be only to lose position” (quoted in Waltz, 2001:195). The extent to which the difficulties laid bare by Curtice have persisted into the present era is impressive, a proposition sufficiently illustrated by considering the fate of once-technological giants BlackBerry, Yahoo and Nokia. The lesson that Curtice had seemingly learned, and the latter companies evidently not, was aptly conveyed by the title of an article appearing in the financial pages of various local and international news outlets: “Blackberry lesson: Adapt or die in the internet age” (News24, 2016a). Now, as before, those who fail to keep up fall behind, and those who fall behind risk their own destruction. Yet we also know that in international politics, as variously argued above, the pressures identified by Curtice and now experienced by BlackBerry, Yahoo and Nokia are further compounded by the absence of any formally established agencies to counteract the private use of force. That the post-Cold War unipolar world, not unlike the multipolar and bipolar worlds of old, has been marked by relentless competition and states consistently adjusting their behaviour and strategies to that of the more successful competitors is not overly difficult to illustrate.

We have, throughout the course of this study, insisted that one of the better tests of a theory is for theoreticians to subject their expectations to hard cases. Consideration of EU relations provides one such case. For years now, structural realists have cautioned against overly optimistic voices gleefully arguing that the EU provides, and would continue to provide, the pre-eminent foundation for a stable political and economic order in Europe, one void of the flagrant power politics of its past (Mearsheimer, 2002:28). Today, more than ever before in its history, the EU is finding itself in troubled waters, with the old power-political currents of European politics growing ever stronger. Internally, the union has been rocked by various crises: the euro crisis, the refugee crisis and, more recently, the unprecedented

decision by the UK to leave the union (Grygiel, 2016:94). Attempts to deepen the political foundations of the union, such as the ambition 2004 draft constitution advocated by former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing with the aim of fostering "ever-closer union", was almost unanimously rejected by French and Dutch voters, two of the EU's founding fathers (Steinmeier, 2016:107). Instead, arguments are gradually emerging that the "bet against sovereignty has failed" and that the future European political landscape is bound to be marked by the return of European nation-states (Grygiel, 2016:99). Externally, a resurgent Russia looms large, having not only invaded Ukraine but also annexed Crimea (Grygiel, 2016:94).

That the playing of the game of power politics and the attendant quest for national security has been part and parcel of the EU's long history is a point already established in previous chapters (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.2, p. 217). We thus noted how within the EEC, hard bargaining continued unabatedly (notably by France, over agricultural policies), and how the latter, during the last decade of the twentieth century, was still very much interested in who was gaining more and who was gaining less, with Paris this time round fretting about the prospect of German reunification and the enormous power the new German state would one day wield. The extent to which such behaviour has repeated itself in recent years is, to say the least, impressive. By the turn of the millennium (in particular, during the period 2001 to 2007), with the French and German economies dramatically slowing down, both states brazenly started violating EU rules (Rosato, 2011:74). With the economies of both states thus dragging their feet, Germany and France suddenly found themselves having little incentive to maintain the economic community, and soon began acting as sovereign states usually do – i.e. pursuing *national* interests (Rosato, 2011:74). From 2001 onwards, both states consistently disregarded the EU's competition policy, which, ultimately, aims to foster a common European market by preventing states from aiding their crisis-ridden industries (Rosato, 2011:74). France subsequently aided companies such as Groupe Bell, Alstom, and Aventis, behaviour which led some observers to conclude that France was more than willing "to bend EU rules" and to pursue protectionist policies (Rosato, 2011:74). The Germans, on their part, acted in like fashion, thus providing more state aid to its crisis-ridden industries than any other European nation (Rosato, 2011:74). In 2006, moreover, with the threat of foreign takeover at their door, both states pursued rather

aggressive lines in protecting their oil and gas companies (Rosato, 2011:74). Interestingly enough, as the 2008 financial crisis started to unfold, both states once more “rushed to protect their own industries and workers, *often at the expense of those elsewhere*” (Rosato, 2011:76; emphasis added). When pressed hard enough – or, framed differently, when interest has so dictated – both France and Germany have also violated the rules underpinning the euro. Before the introduction of the single currency, aspiring members had undertaken to limit budget deficits to no more than 3 percent of GDP and to ensure that public debt in no way exceed 60 percent of GDP (Rosato, 2011:75). Yet, during 2002 to 2005, amidst an exceedingly difficult economic climate at home, both states ran up deficits and accumulated debt at levels far exceeding those they had agreed to (Rosato, 2011:75).

Consideration of the issue of and European dependence on natural gas is equally instructive. In dealing with this issue, European states have continued to bargain as sovereign nation-states gripped by concerns over relative gains instead of engaging in collective bargaining with mutually beneficial ends in mind (Coetzee, 2013:307). Moreover, as the pervasive financial crises of recent years have unfolded, the true contours of the European political landscape quickly emerged. The euro crisis, as Grygiel (2016:94) has correctly pointed out, exposed deep fault lines between, on the one hand, Germany’s economic predominance in Europe and, on the other hand, heavily indebted southern European states such as Greece and Portugal, so much so that perceptions of Germany as the new regional superpower have become commonplace. In fact, British and Greek newspapers have on more than one occasion likened German Chancellor Angela Merkel to a Nazi and have hissed that Europe is now witnessing a German constructed ‘Fourth Reich’ built wholly on the economic benefits accruing to the Germans under the euro (Coetzee, 2013:307). Some of these perceptions, as the reader might very well appreciate, are undoubtedly justified, especially given Germany’s reluctance to extend a financial hand to those European economies teetering under the weight of financial collapse (Porter, 2012). In fact, as most other European states have battled the financial crises, the Germans – as Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier has recently noted – have held their ground “and emerged as a major power”, with other observers of European affairs telling a tale of, as the title of a recent *Foreign Affairs* piece suggests, “[h]ow Germany won the Euro crisis” (Steinmeier, 2016:110-111;

Reisenbichler & Morgan, 2013; emphasis added). This has led France's presidential candidate Marine Le Pen to argue that "the euro is a currency created by Germany, for Germany. It's a suit that fits only Germany" (quoted in Reid & Le Pen, 2016:6). In these crises, as in so many others, the old Waltzian proposition is quite apt: all European nations are in the same leaky boat, but some appear to have a bigger dipper than others (cf. Waltz, 1979:210).

Furthermore, one of the more devastating flaws of the EU, besides suffering from a severe structural democratic deficit, has been the union's failure to recognise the persistence of *national* differences, a proposition aptly illustrated by the examples cited above and, still more, by consideration of European military affairs. Now, as before, the creation of an EU army seems highly unlikely, with European member states appearing to be wholly unwilling to cede military sovereignty to Brussels and with each member state's policy determined by *its* perception of needs and interests (Grygiel, 2016:97). The persistence of *national* differences becomes even more conspicuous upon consideration of the ongoing refugee crisis (Grygiel, 2016:97). In 2015, more than a million refugees fled across European borders, with the figure probably much higher today. The crisis, considered to be the worst of its kind in Europe in the post-World War II era, has led the EU Migration Commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, to conclude that it is undermining "the very core of the European Union" (quoted in Macdonald & Barkin, 2016). A number of European states, including Germany and Sweden, were initially quite welcoming to the refugees, criticising in the process those states opting to close their borders (Grygiel, 2016:96). In fact, in respect of the latter point, Hungary's decision last year to build a razor-wire fence alongside its border with Croatia was met with severe criticism by the German and French governments, so much so that Laurent Fabius, the French Foreign Minister, decried the move as disrespectful to "Europe's common values" (Grygiel, 2016:96-97). German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on her part, criticised the move as a disappointing example of the extent to which Cold War thinking still dominated the security policies of some states (Grygiel, 2016:97). Scarcely one year later however, and amidst pressing security concerns, many of the same leaders who railed against the Hungarians were now singing to a different tune, thus pressuring Europe's border countries to bolster security measures and to quickly curb the flow of refugees (Grygiel, 2016:97). Over the last two decades or so, with

Europe facing very few security threats, EU member states could indeed afford to prioritise and pursue lofty ideals such as dissolving Europe's borders; now, amid various internal and external challenges and with the union proving incapable of effectively dealing with them, member states are increasingly constrained to think in *national* terms and, ultimately, to "fulfil their most basic duty: defending their own" (Grygiel, 2016:97).

Consideration of EU relations provided us with an inordinately hard test for our theory, one – we would argue – it has done well to pass. In veering, however, towards the world beyond the EU, we expect to find still greater confirmation of the proposition that states relentlessly compete with one another in the arts and machinery of warfare and seek to emulate the military policies, weapon systems and capabilities of the more successful competitors. Is the expectation borne out by history? The answer, in more ways than one, is a resounding 'yes'. Chinese military modernisation provides a fruitful point of departure. Although estimations often differ, some observers of Chinese military affairs now believe that by 2020 "the quality of China's military doctrine, equipment, personnel and training" is likely to approach, to varying degrees, parity with the US military as well as the militaries of other Western states (Davis, 2015). Whether the year 2020 is perhaps a bit premature is of course debatable, especially given (inevitably biased) estimations emanating from American military circles that US military predominance is "not likely to change anytime soon" (O'Hanlon & Petraeus, 2016:10). Whether tomorrow or a decade or two from now, China's military *is* likely to catch up to and, perhaps even, surpass that of the US. The Chinese, in fact, are industriously working with that end in mind. For years now, Chinese president Xi Jinping has consistently urged his military planners to accelerate and expand the development of new weapon systems and military capabilities, arguing that "[a]dvanced weaponry is the embodiment of a modern army and a crucial support for national security and rejuvenation" (quoted in Blanchard, 2014). To this end, the Chinese have developed highly advanced stealth fighter technology and submarines, one aircraft carrier (with more under construction), anti-satellite systems, ballistic and cruise missiles, and, quite importantly, it now boasts of increasingly sophisticated anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities designed to halt the US military's forward air bases and aircraft carriers (Thornberry & Krepinevich, 2016:27; Blanchard, 2014; O'Hanlon & Petraeus, 2016:14). During

2013, the Chinese Navy completed its first carrier landing when a J-15 fighter jet successfully landed on the *Liaoning* aircraft carrier, a clear indication that the Chinese have ambitions beyond merely protecting the homeland (Parker, 2013). In fact, in respect of the latter point, China has already begun establishing military bases in strategically important regions, with the building of a military base on the Nanji Island (some 300 kilometres from the contested Senkaku/Diaoyu islands) being a case in point (Keck, 2015). It appears to be the case that China is also readying itself to build a military base near Scarborough Shoal, a disputed island quite close to the Philippines (Gertz, 2016).

The Chinese military, moreover, is investing ever larger sums in developing offensive and defensive cyberweapons capabilities, which they have already begun using quite successfully in targeting US governmental, military and industrial installations (Thornberry & Krepinevich, 2015:27; Capaccio, 2013). That information warfare and cyberweapons capabilities are integral to Chinese military strategy is not hard to illustrate. In two major public works dealing with Chinese military strategy, viz., “Science of Strategy” and “Science of Campaigns”, Chinese military planners identified “information warfare (I.W.) as integral to achieving information superiority and an effective means for countering a stronger foe” (quoted in Sanger, 2013a). In an attempt to obtain a competitive edge over the Americans, the super-secret Chinese cyberwarfare unit (PLA Unit 61398) has consistently targeted US trade and defence secrets, so much so that former Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), General Keith Alexander, has decried such theft as “the greatest transfer of wealth in history” (quoted in Goldman, 2013). In addition to enabling the Chinese to engage in such nefarious behaviour, the development of cyberweapons capabilities would also provide them with the impressive capability of blinding US satellites and other space assets, ordinarily considered to be two of America’s greatest strengths (Sanger, 2013a).

Along with the Russians and Americans, China is also investing large sums in expanding and updating its nuclear arsenal (Wall, 2013; SIPRI, 2016a). In addition to modernisation efforts directed at China’s aging land-based nuclear force, the Chinese navy is further spending large sums on developing a sea-based nuclear deterrent comprising of type 094 SSBN (Ship, Submersible, Ballistic, Nuclear)

submarines (SIPRI, 2016a:5). Interestingly enough, with China expanding and upgrading its nuclear force, India, too, is looking to expand its capabilities by further developing its longer-range ballistic missiles directed not so much at Pakistan but, rather, at China (Wall, 2013). And with India expanding its arsenal and attendant capabilities, archenemy Pakistan is, quite unsurprisingly, following suit, leading some observers to conclude that the nuclear arms race is alive and well (Business Insider, 2015).

And what can be said of the Russians? They, perhaps more than any other competitor, are seemingly leaving no stone unturned in competing in the arts and machinery of warfare, with their efforts chiefly directed at the US and its NATO alliance members. Today, as before, the proposition established in previous chapters appears to ring true: those who fail to keep up fall behind, and those who fall behind risk their own destruction. Compare, for instance, Stalin's and Sir Edward Grey's remarks with those of Putin. In 1940, with Stalin increasingly anxious to avoid a war with the Germans, the Soviet leader pleaded with his countrymen to keep the productive gap with the West in check: "To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten" (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2, p. 184). And, in reflecting in his memoirs upon the tumultuous years prior to 1914, Sir Edward Grey lamented the harsh reality that "[i]f there are armaments on one side there must be armaments on other sides. While one nation arms, other nations cannot tempt it to aggression by remaining defenceless" (cf. Chapter 4, Section 4.4, p. 139). Consider now Putin's remarks, made during 2012: Russia "must rely on the very latest developments in the art of war. *Falling behind means becoming vulnerable*" (Putin, 2012; emphasis added).

As various reports have indicated and as has been pointed out in preceding sections, Russia is readying itself for a possible war with the US and NATO (Haaretz, 2016). Over the last decade or so, whilst European defence spending has lagged, Russia has increased its military spending by 79 percent and has undertaken various conventional and nuclear military modernisation programmes, and is pursuing and developing new capabilities in domains such as space, cyber and underwater, all with the intent of nullifying America's conventional military superiority (Rose & Dempsey, 2016:4). Accordingly, with the Americans upgrading

their tactical nuclear weapons capability during 2013, the Russians quickly followed suit, subsequently arguing that their new generation of tactical nuclear weapons would more than suffice in ensuring a Russian victory in the event of war with the Americans (Conca, 2014). In addition to upgrading their tactical nuclear weapons capability, Russia has also recently unveiled its new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile (referred to as 'Satan 2'), boasting a range of 11000 kilometres (Shukla & Smith-Spark, 2016). Moscow, moreover, has over the last decade or so abrogated almost all of its existing arms reduction agreements with the US, a move, many would argue, that casts a dark shadow over the future of US-Russian relations (Lewis, 2016). The Russians, though still some way behind the Americans, *are* gradually catching up.

Across a diverse range of areas, Russia is faring much better than we might think. Although Russian fighter aircraft are probably no match for those of the US, its "advanced air defences, coastal cruise missiles, antiship capabilities, and air-launched cruise missiles" are gradually gaining ground on those of the Americans (Breedlove, 2016:103). Moscow has in recent years also invested heavily in developing anti-satellite airborne laser weapons, and is intent on using these to blind adversary (i.e. US) satellites (Eshel, 2016). With an eye towards a future conflict with Western states, and in an outright attempt to curtail US naval superiority, Russia is also establishing anti-access/area-denial zones across its periphery, in areas ranging from the Baltic and Black Seas to the Arctic and the Russian Far East (Breedlove, 2016:103). Much like the Chinese, the Russians are also looking to establish military bases in strategically important areas, with the Russian military now seriously considering re-establishing its old Soviet Union military bases in Cuba and Vietnam (Davies, 2016). Moreover, with increased NATO warship activity in the Black Sea and in an attempt to counter the military alliance, Russia has thought it prudent to open a new naval base in the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, which will, in due time, host six Varshavyanka class Project 636.6 submarines (Litovkin, 2016). Russia has also recently concluded a deal with Nicaragua whereby it would establish a spy base in the latter state in exchange for the sale of 50 Russian T-72 tanks (Summers, 2016). It is against this backdrop that various commentators have argued that under Putin's leadership Russia has pursued a far more assertive foreign policy, with the leitmotif ostensibly being "the political, economic, military, and cultural

reintegration of the former Soviet bloc under Russian leadership” (Aron, 2013; for a similar perspective, cf. Rose & Dempsey, 2016:2).

In attempting to preserve American global hegemony and, more narrowly, American *military* primacy, the US has as a matter of course invested quite heavily in bolstering its military capabilities. We have, with this end in mind, already pointed the reader (cf. Section 6.2, p. 237) to the sobering fact that the US military maintains a presence in more than 150 countries, boasting further of some 800 to 1000 military bases stretching across the globe. Compared to, say, China and Russia (or, for that matter, anyone else), American defence spending remains inordinately high. By 2015, as was argued, the American defence budget was still larger than those of the next seven states combined, with many military experts today urging policy makers to drastically *increase* US defence spending (cf. Section 6.2, p. 236; Rose & Dempsey, 2016:7-8). The Americans, not unlike the great powers of old, have maintained their lead over their competitors by operating at the cutting-edge of developments in technology and by remaining highly competitive in almost every conceivable area that matters. Consider, for instance, the extent to which US defence firms are spurred on to compete with, and outperform, their European rivals. Accordingly, US policy makers have often been heard saying that it ought to be the explicit objective of US policy to ensure that the major arms importers of the world “buy products from the United States rather than China, Russia, *or even western Europe*” (Caverley & Kapstein, 2013; emphasis added).

With other states excelling at emerging (and future) modes of warfare (notably, cyber warfare and space weapons), and with the US consistently targeted in cyberspace by the likes of China, Russia and Iran, the US has been quick to lavish resources on expanding their own capabilities, lest they fall behind. Accordingly, in realising that the Asia-Pacific is “increasingly becoming the world’s economic, political, and military center of gravity” and as part of the US rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, US Defence Secretary Ash Carter has recently stressed the outright necessity of the US investing quite heavily in “state-of-the-art tools for cyberspace, electronic warfare, and space” (Carter, 2016:66-68). The observation is an apt one, for as Cohen and Rotbart (2013:59-60) have noted, the proliferation of cyberweapons is gradually changing prevailing conceptions and modes of warfare, and constitute a true revolution in

military affairs: “[c]yber warfare is rapidly becoming one of the popular *offensive* methods used by states seeking to protect their interests from hostile states or organizations [...] We are in the throes of a silent cyber war” (emphasis added). In fact, as President Obama conceded in 2013, “Offensive Cyber Effects Operations [can provide] unique and unconventional capabilities to advance U.S. national objectives around the world with little or no warning to the adversary target and with potential effects ranging for subtle to severely damaging” (quoted in Capaccio, 2013).

Here, as in so many other areas of concern to states, one of those old (Waltzian) propositions of international politics, namely that those who have more can do more, is particularly apt. Given the vast resources at its disposal, the US is able to invest a significant part of its impressive wealth in developing highly effective offensive and defensive cyberweapons capabilities. During 2016, the US spent about \$14 billion on cybersecurity alone; by 2017, this figure is set to increase to \$19 billion (Volz & Hosenball, 2016). With the US increasing its spending on cybersecurity, China quickly followed suit, deciding to increase its spending by 20 to 30 percent during 2015 (Gertz, 2015). Although the Chinese increase is rather large, China’s *overall* spending remains inordinately low if compared with that of the US, which ranges somewhere between the hundreds of millions to a few billion dollars (Gertz, 2015). As part of its overall strategy to ready itself for cyberwarfare, General Keith Alexander (former director of the National Security Agency as well as commander of US Cyber Command) thus created various *offensive* cyber units, each designed to mount attacks and disable adversaries’ computer networks (Sanger, 2013a). US investments in offensive cyber weapons have certainly paid off, with the so-called Stuxnet and Flame viruses (jointly created with the technologically advanced Israelis) being used to great effect to halt (if only temporarily) Iran’s nuclear efforts (Singer, 2016; Nakashima, Miller & Tate, 2012; Glenny, 2012). The investment is, however, set to deliver another big payoff, and in some respects it already has, namely that of further bolstering America’s already impressive capabilities in penetrating foreign governments’ computer networks (of allies and enemies alike) with the aim of gathering intelligence, engaging in industrial espionage and in targeting civilian infrastructure (Martinez, 2013; Ferran & Fujita, 2013). In fact, it is believed that since 2009 US cyber spies have engaged in more than 61000 hacking operations across

the globe – again, as stressed above, against allies and enemies alike (Ferran & Fujita, 2013).

Also, in conventional (military) terms, US investment in and development of new capabilities critical to modern-day and future warfare continues to dwarf those of the rest. With this in mind, the Pentagon has invested quite heavily in the Ohio Replacement Program (essentially, the development of a next generation nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine) as well as the Fifth Generation Fighter, the F-35 Lightning II (Osborn, 2016). Both, we should point out, operate at the cutting-edge of technology and are bound to pose significant challenges to US adversaries in the decades to come. We should, perhaps, also mention that with the F-35 declared combat ready, the Pentagon is already looking for its next generation fighter. The US is also investing large sums of money in further developing its technological lead in advanced aerial *and* undersea drone warfare, in enhancing the capabilities of the new B-21 long-range striker bomber, in anti-submarine warfare capabilities, in further developing space (or anti-satellite) weapons, as well as expanding the number and lethality of its surface ships (Carter, 2016:68). As the reader might appreciate, US military developments are legion (in fact, far too many to adequately cover here), ranging from cutting-edge developments in laser-weaponry and submarines acoustics (ultimately, to render US submarines invulnerable to detection) to floating military bases (Mizokami, 2016b). In considering the vast range of US military developments, O’Hanlon and Petraeus (2016:10) are undoubtedly correct in arguing that the US “has the best military in the world today, by far. U.S. forces have few, if any, weaknesses, and in many areas – from naval warfare to precision-strike capabilities, to airpower, to intelligence and reconnaissance, to special operations – they play in a totally different league from the militaries of other countries”.

In thus having an impressively large and technologically advanced military at its disposal, the US has used (and, at times, abused) its military primacy to bolster its own security as well as those of its allies. In today’s world, as during the Cold War and in the immediate period afterwards, US military commitments continue to underwrite – for better or worse – the security of entire regions. One thinks in this regard of the continuous nature of American military commitments to *inter alia* South

Korea, Japan and Israel.⁹¹ We can of course add to these examples numerous others: US military commitments to or support of the Philippines, Australia, Thailand, India, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Yemen, Vietnam and India, with the US having recently labelled the latter as a “major defence partner” (Carter, 2016:69-71). With the rapid ascendancy of German power at the close of the nineteenth century, as the reader might recall from preceding chapters (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.2, p. 166), the Germans believed that they too had something worthwhile to offer human civilisation, with publicist Friedrich Naumann thus remarking at one stage that “[t]he German race brings it”. The Americans, much more than the Germans of yesteryear, can truly believe that they *are* bringing it. Even within a *collective* defence organisation such as NATO, US interest and military capabilities remain *the* indispensable factor in accounting for the longevity and efficacy of the organisation (Coetzee, 2013:306; cf. also Waltz, 2000a).

Today, as during the days of the Cold War, the US is expected to (and indeed does) shoulder Europe’s security burdens, so much so that the Americans now contribute about 75 percent of NATO’s military spending (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2016). In the immediate years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO’s European alliance members contributed roughly one third of its military spending; today, alarmingly, it barely reaches 20 percent (Meotti, 2016). NATO’s intervention in Libya (during 2011) nicely illustrates the extent to which the efficacy of the organisation continues to depend on US military might – or, framed differently, the intervention clearly illustrated the limits of European military power (Meotti, 2016). Although some 28 NATO members approved the intervention, less than half actually participated, with the former head of the Pentagon, Robert Gates, correctly pointing out that the “military capabilities simply are not there” (quoted in Meotti, 2016). As the intervention clearly illustrated, not much gets done within or by NATO, or gets done well, without the backing of US military capability (Coetzee, 2013:306). The American role in the intervention, though generally believed to be an insignificant one, was in fact much more extensive. By August 2011, US support of the Libyan

⁹¹ Interestingly enough, and against the backdrop of China’s increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea, Japanese officials appear to be becoming more willing to circumvent its pacifist constitution, with numerous defence papers now calling for an increase in the Japanese military’s war-fighting capabilities (Yamaguchi, 2013; Sieg, 2013; The Japan Times, 2016). Both the Japanese and Americans forthrightly declare, however, that the US-Japanese alliance “remains the cornerstone of Asia-Pacific security” (Carter, 2016:69).

revolution had already exceeded \$1 billion, with NATO's European members expected to foot the bill for the assistance rendered by the Americans (Coetzee, 2013:306). To an impressive degree, though almost entirely beneath the radar, NATO's foray in Libya was largely dependent on (covert) American military and surveillance capabilities (Barry, 2011).

Problems of national (in)security are not merely confined to US-China-Russia relations. Accordingly, as we have argued elsewhere (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.1, p. 162), contemporary international politics bears witness to "growing and intense political competition" between three distinctive groupings of states: one, developed and developing states; two, developing states; and, three, developed states. In fact, one is not hard pressed to find in the present-day world of international politics sufficient examples where the insecurity experienced by some states leads them and, subsequently, others to arm themselves (Coetzee, 2013:306). The Iranian nuclear question provides a striking example. For years, states within the region have co-existed in a general condition of insecurity owing to the security-generating measures of rival states (Coetzee, 2013:306). The Israelis, notably, responded, firstly, by acquiring a nuclear capability, and then moving towards ensuring the invulnerability of its forces by acquiring German-built submarines capable of being fitted with nuclear missiles (Coetzee, 2013:306). For the Israelis, such drastic measures were deemed to be necessary. As former Defence Minister Ehud Barak has explained, Israel's immediate environment has historically been, and continues to be, one in which "there is no mercy for the weak" (quoted in Bergman *et al.*, 2012). Although somewhat belatedly, Iranian nuclear ambitions are in large part a response to the insecurity generated by the Israeli nuclear deterrent and, no less so, by American foreign policy within and beyond the region (Waltz, 2012b:2-5); Coetzee, 2013:306). One can with good cause make a similar case in accounting for Syria's drive for nuclear weaponry during the first decade of this century, which subsequently ended abruptly when the Israeli Air Force (IAF) conducted an airstrike on the Syrian nuclear research reactor during 2007. As the examples cited here illustrate, the contention that international politics is no longer a realm of security competition and emulation is undoubtedly a false one. In fact, even with the EU, ostensibly the paragon of (liberal) democratic norms and institutions, competition and

national differences persist, which leads us to argue that today, as before, *national* differences and interests matter a great deal.

6.5 Democratic peace, the EU and Brexit: and back to the drawing board we go

Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, the EU *is* in real trouble. For the past decade or so, rampant financial crises have crippled the union, exposing in the process “deep fault lines” between, on the one hand, the Germans and, on the other hand, the highly indebted southern European states, notably Greece and Portugal (Grygiel, 2016:94). The Germans and Italians have also clashed quite regularly over issues ranging from banking regulations to border controls (Grygiel, 2016:94). And, as was briefly mentioned above, the decision by the UK to leave the EU dealt a severe blow to the bloc (Grygiel, 2016:94). Although scholars of international politics have often pondered the possibility of a politically unified EU one day emerging alongside the US as a great power, this proposition seems to be more and more unlikely by the day. In economic, political and military terms, the EU’s problems are pervasive. Consider, for instance, that the economies of roughly half of the EU member states are in decline and that almost all European (in fact, almost all *Western*) states face large fiscal burdens; Europe’s working-age population is shrinking quite drastically⁹²; over the course of the last few years, changes of government have been witnessed on no fewer than eleven occasions; with the UK leaving the union, no EU member state spends more than 2 percent of GDP on defence (in short, as was argued above, Europe’s armies are dismally out of shape); and, across Europe, a disconcerting trend – one incidentally with roots dating back to the early 1960s – is presently emerging with renewed vigour, namely that of the rise of, overwhelmingly, right-wing populist movements (Goldstone, 2010; Kirchick, 2012; Porter, 2012; Mudde, 2016; Zakaria, 2016; Urchick, 2016a).

In respect of the surge of right-wing populism across Europe, national elections in 16 European countries during the last five years have resulted in at least one populist party gaining ten percent or more of the vote. In collective terms, populist parties have garnered roughly 16.5 percent of the vote in these elections. In Greece,

⁹² The problem, as Zakaria (2016:11) has noted, is not unique to Europe, but appears to cover almost the entire Western world.

Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Switzerland, the largest share of parliamentary seats is now controlled by populists; in Hungary, Italy and Slovakia, populist parties succeeded in gaining a majority of the votes and in the case of Hungary and Italy, the official opposition to the government are populists too. Hungary's Viktor Orbán has earned 65 percent of the vote, with populism now constituting the reigning ideology; Marine Le Pen's National Front (in France) is poised to make the runoff in the forthcoming 2017 presidential election. During 2014, the UK Independence Party, in an unprecedented outcome, outperformed the Labour and Conservative Parties in a vote concerning election for the EU Parliament, while Austria's Freedom Party might very well win the presidency during the (rescheduled) final round of elections in December 2016 (Mudde, 2016:26; Zakaria, 2016:10; Grygiel, 2016:97-98). Interestingly enough, even Germany, a country notorious for its historical struggles with extremism, now boast of a rapidly growing right-wing populist party, i.e. Alternative for Germany (Zakaria, 2016:10). The problem for Europe, as Cas Mudde (2016:28) has correctly pointed out, is *not* that populism is anti-democratic, but essentially that it is illiberal, especially in its wanton disregard for the rights of minorities, pluralism, and the rule of law.

Moreover, for some time now, populist parties across Europe have campaigned on the basis of an anti-EU platform, arguing that the EU is increasingly impinging upon the autonomy of member states and that the benefits accruing from membership amount at any rate to very little. In fact, during 2012, Marine le Pen forthrightly declared that the EU was undermining both France's economy and its distinctive model of living. The EU, Le Pen further contended, had "progressively transformed itself into a sort of European Soviet Union that decides everything, that imposes its views, that shuts down the democratic process" (Reid & Le Pen, 2016:5-6). Her solution, one that she has frequently reiterated, is for France to "get out of Europe", a solution she is set on implementing if elected as France's next president (Reid & Le Pen, 2016:4).

Le Pen, incidentally, is not alone in her desire for the French to "exit from the European Union [and] to regain control of [their] currency" (Reid & Le Pen, 2016:4-5). Across Europe, national leaders are increasingly turning inward, concluding that the answer to Europe's maladies is more, not less, sovereignty (Grygiel, 2016:94).

Europeans are, it seems, becoming increasingly disenchanted with politicians who have agitated for EU integration, more porous borders, and the transfer of national sovereignty to Brussels, arguing instead that they desire greater *national* control over social, economic and foreign policy (Grygiel, 2016:98). In fact, the UK decision to leave the union – despite vociferous arguments (in fact, warnings) by *inter alia* the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Bank of England, and the UK’s Treasury that the decision to leave would imply economic peril – stemmed in large measure from an increasing frustration among the British public with the extent to which British laws are determined less in Westminster and more in Brussels (Grygiel, 2016:98).⁹³ In the case of the UK and, apparently in Europe now as well, the “bet against sovereignty has failed” – or, in less doom-and-gloom terms, the bet against sovereignty is gradually failing in Europe (Grygiel, 2016:99). With this in mind, it appears to be the case that one of those old Waltzian propositions is crystallizing right before our eyes, more precisely, that the self-help logic of anarchic systems requires of the units of the system to work to lessen their dependence, if realistically possible (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, p. 89). Although the EU has not collapsed, various observers of EU affairs now argue that, at best, we are likely to see a “looser, ad hoc” union in the future (News24, 2016b).

The multipolar and bipolar worlds of old were marked by numerous instances of war and/or covert interventions between pairs of (liberal) democracies (cf. Chapter 5, Sections 5.2.4 & 5.3.2.4). What can be said for the post-Cold War unipolar world? Much as before, the post-1990 environment has been characterised by instances of war and/or covert interventions between (liberal) democratic states, of which we can identify at least seven: the Yugoslav Wars, 1991 (Serbia and Bosnian-Serb Republic vs. Croatia and Bosnia, and at times, Croatia vs. Bosnia); the Georgia-Ossetia War, 1991 (Georgia vs. South Ossetia); the Georgia-Abkhazia War, 1992 (Georgia vs. Abkhazia and, purportedly, Russia); the war between Moldova and the Dnestr Republic, 1992 (Moldova vs. Dnestr Republic and, purportedly, Russia); the Chechen War of Independence, 1994 (Russia vs. Chechnya); the Ecuador-Peru War, 1995; and NATO’s intervention in Yugoslavia, 1999 (Schwartz & Skinner,

⁹³ As various polls have indicated, “concerns about the economy and sovereignty”, and much less so about immigration, were the predominant factors in shaping British voters’ decision to leave the EU (Eavis, 2016). In England, in particular, voters were swayed by the notion that Britain would be more powerful and successful without the constraints emanating from EU membership (Erlanger, 2016).

2002:161). We should, however, add at least one more to this list, namely that of the illegal overthrow of Ukraine's *democratically elected* (and, not coincidentally, pro-Russian) president, Viktor Yanukovich, during February 2014 (Mearsheimer, 2014a:1). In considering the events that transpired, Putin was probably correct in labelling the ouster of the Ukrainian president as a "coup" (Mearsheimer, 2014a:1). The US government, as has so often been the case, actively supported the coup, with Victoria Nuland, the US assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, along with Republican Senator John McCain, joining anti-government protestors in the street (Mearsheimer, 2014a:4-5). In his response to the toppling of the Ukrainian president, the US ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, noted that it was indeed "a day for the history books" (quoted in Mearsheimer, 2014a:5). And, as a leaked telephone recording subsequently brought to light, Nuland had been at the vanguard of those advocating regime change, desiring that Ukrainian politician Arseniy Yatsenyuk become prime minister in the government that would subsequently emerge (Mearsheimer, 2014a:5).

The US desire for a pro-Western government in Kiev, and subsequent attempts to make this a reality, have of course been a long time in the making. Washington, in fact, has been financing anti-government forces in Ukraine since the early years following the end of the Cold War (Mearsheimer, 2014a:4). During December 2013, Victoria Nuland estimated that the US had invested an amount exceeding \$5 billion since 1991 to aid the Ukrainians in realising "the future [they] deserve" – or, as Buchanan (2015) has scathingly remarked, to reorient Ukraine to the West (quoted in Mearsheimer, 2014a:4; Buchanan, 2015). In seeking to lessen the conspicuousness of its plans, the US has opted to bankroll the non-profit organisation, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which has provided financial support for some 60 plus projects earmarked to promote civil society groups in Ukraine (Mearsheimer, 2014a:4; Buchanan, 2015). In reflecting on the NED's work in Ukraine, NED president Carl Gershman has been rather forthright in calling that country "the biggest prize" (Mearsheimer, 2014a:4). Subsequent to Yanukovich's February 2014 victory in the Ukrainian presidential election, Gershman and his colleagues determined that the newly elected president was actively undermining the NED's goals, and thus ramped up their efforts to support anti-Yanukovich forces (Mearsheimer, 2014a:4; 2014b:177).

The Ukrainian crisis is, however, important for yet another reason: that of Putin's subsequent decision to invade and annex Crimea. The decision was widely criticised in the West, with the prevailing wisdom holding that the crisis must be laid squarely at the door of Russian aggression (Mearsheimer, 2014a:1). The prevailing wisdom is however wrong. For years now, structural realists such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer have warned that US policy towards Europe and within NATO reflect a basic failure to learn from the mistakes of previous great powers, with the extension of NATO's influence over the old domain of its erstwhile enemy constituting a prime example (Coetzee, 2013:306). Although forming part of a much larger strategy (see below) to lure Ukraine away from Russia and into the West's orbit, NATO expansion constituted the central element in pushing Russia to intervene in Crimea (Mearsheimer, 2014b:175). The decision to intervene, although consistently portrayed in the West as irrational and sporadic, has in reality been coming for quite some time. In fact, since the mid-1990s, Russian officials have consistently expressed their discontent with plans for NATO enlargement, arguing that such plans would ultimately result in pro-Western (and, by implication, anti-Russian) governments in areas of strategic interest to Russian security (Mearsheimer, 2014a:1). Such fears have played themselves out in various contexts. Consider, for instance, the issue of US/NATO missile defence plans. In contemplating the implementation and implications of such plans, Russian officials have argued – and, we might add, with good cause – that the idea of a US-/NATO-constructed missile shield would, in effect, upset “the strategic balance” (Aron, 2013). Thus, in his op-ed contribution to *The New York Times*, aptly titled ‘You Say Defense, We See Threat’, the permanent Russian representative to NATO, Nikolai Korchunov, rightfully questioned how the system of ballistic missile defence contributed “to fostering security for all, rather than ensuring the security of one at the expense of others?” (Korchunov, 2012). More tellingly, as Putin has often insisted, “[w]e are being pushed into action by the U.S. and NATO missile defense policies” (Putin, 2012). Similar arguments, again, with good cause, can be made concerning Russia's behaviour in Crimea. On more than one occasion, Putin has, accordingly, warned the West that admitting Ukraine (and, also, Georgia) to NATO would pose a “direct threat” to Russian security (Mearsheimer, 2014a:3). During a 2010 interview, former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev similarly complained about NATO's “endless enlargement” (Mearsheimer, 2014b:177).

Russian fears about NATO expansion are understandable. Great powers, as the US ought to appreciate from its own history, always fret and, in due time, push back when other great powers seek to alter the balance of power in their own backyards (Mearsheimer, 2014a:2; 2014b:176).⁹⁴ We need merely mention how, during the nineteenth century, the US consistently attempted to curtail European influence in the Western hemisphere by citing the Monroe Doctrine and, during 1962, how president Kennedy insisted that the Soviets remove their strategically placed nuclear weapons from Cuba (Mearsheimer, 2014b:176). In both these cases, as Mearsheimer (2014b:176) correctly points out, “[s]ecurity fears, not resentment” informed US behaviour. Russian fears are today no less real. By 2004, NATO had already welcomed into its ranks many of the old Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) members as well as former Soviet Union republics, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (Waltz, 2000a:22; Mearsheimer, 2014a:2). That Russia might have felt – then and now – increasingly isolated and, more importantly, surrounded is a point that should be self-evident. In the case of Ukraine, more specifically, consider that, during 1997, NATO held various naval exercises with the Ukrainians in the Black Sea (and swiftly made plans for future joint exercises), as well as intimated its desire to make use of a military testing ground in the western parts of Ukraine (Waltz, 2000a:22). More troubling, during his visit to Ukraine during June 1998, Zbigniew Brzezinski forthrightly declared that Ukraine should ready itself for joining NATO by the year 2010 (Waltz, 2000a:22). In Putin’s mind, fears grounded in NATO enlargement (and, ultimately, Ukraine hosting a NATO naval base) interlaced with the very real fact that Crimea has historically been Russian, is populated predominantly by Russian speakers, and is home to Russia’s only Black Sea naval base (O’Hanlon & Petraeus, 2016:16).

NATO expansion, as indicated above, constitutes but one pillar (although *the* central one) of a much larger US/NATO strategy directed at bringing Ukraine into the orbit of the West. Although it might appear rather odd that this issue is raised in a section wholly devoted to democratic peace theory, it would serve our purposes well to consider the extent to which (liberal) democratic forces interacted with NATO

⁹⁴ As Mearsheimer (2014a:5) scathingly points out, “[t]his is Geopolitics 101”.

expansion to precipitate the crisis. What forces are we talking about? Alongside US/NATO attempts to lure Ukraine into its sphere of influence, and undoubtedly reinforcing Russian fears about an avowedly pro-Western (and, as argued above, anti-Russian) Ukrainian government, two other pillars proved critical in accounting for Putin's decision to intervene, viz., the eastward expansion of the EU and Western support for pro-democracy forces in Ukraine (beginning with the so-called Orange Revolution in 2004) (Mearsheimer, 2014a:1). All three pillars, as the reader might very well appreciate, are wholly embedded within liberal thought. NATO expansion, as any (structural) realist would adamantly argue, cannot and "does *not* represent a realist policy", but is grounded in the ostensible benefits of extending the liberal (democratic) zone of peace eastward (Mearsheimer, 2014b:178; emphasis added).

EU expansion and democracy promotion likewise take their cue from the liberal conception of international politics, having their point of departure in the (flawed) notion that European peace and security would best be served by incorporating (democratic) Ukraine into the EU economy (Mearsheimer, 2014a:3). Seen from the Russian perspective, however, EU expansion is conceived to be nothing more than a forerunner for NATO expansion – and the Russians, we might add, are not altogether wrong on this point. The EU's Eastern Partnership initiative (unveiled in 2008) actively sought to integrate countries such as Ukraine into the EU economy, and had its mainstay in the old liberal argument that free trade yields mutual prosperity and peace (Mearsheimer, 2014a:3). The association agreement that the union was pushing the Ukrainians to sign during 2013, as against this, went far beyond the confines of a free-trade agreement, containing as it did various security provisions and measures to draw the Ukrainians into NATO's military structures (Mearsheimer, 2014b:175). The latter agreement, accordingly, proposed that the relevant parties "promote gradual convergence on foreign *and security matters with the aim of Ukraine's ever-deeper involvement in the European security area*" and further called on all parties to take "full and timely advantage of all diplomatic and military channels between [them]" (quoted in Mearsheimer, 2014b:175; emphasis added). The situation, already a precarious one, was undoubtedly further compounded when NED president Carl Gershman, writing in *The Washington Post*, cheerfully contended that "Ukraine's choice to join Europe will accelerate the demise of the ideology of Russian imperialism that Putin represents [with the added benefit

that] Putin may find himself on the losing end not just in the near abroad but within Russia itself" (quoted in Mearsheimer, 2014a:4). With NATO and the EU increasingly setting up shop in Russia's backyard, Putin merely acted as most other great powers have historically done, i.e. to prevent other great powers from encroaching in areas deemed vital to their national interests.

As a final consideration, and by way of bringing this section to a close, it might be beneficial to return to an issue dealt with in previous chapters, namely that of states spying on each other. Accordingly, we contended (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.2, p. 167) that the old adage of international-political life, viz. that today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy, is one that turns out to be pretty much borne by history – and, interestingly enough, one that tells us something about how the environment in which states act conditions their behaviour. That this behaviour has occurred throughout history and persists to the present day is of course not surprising. In realms in which the units of the system have to fend for themselves and in which the (future) intentions of actions of other states are inordinately difficult to gauge trust is an extremely scarce commodity.⁹⁵ In considering the history of spying, Jennifer Sims thus reached the same conclusion:

In international politics, friendship is a misnomer. Relations among states cannot...entail true trust. States exist to keep their respective nations safe, and even allies can put each other at risk. In a world full of complex interests, countries cooperate where they can but seek information where they must, weighing the risks to alliances, international institutions, and strategies as they go (Sims, 2013).

With this in mind, when news of an extensive US spying programme targeting foreign governments, including so-called friendly (i.e. (liberal) democratic) ones, broke in 2013, US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, much to the chagrin of European allies, simply defended the US programme on the basis of "everyone does it" (Jakes & Pace, 2013; Martinez, 2013). While everyone is apparently doing it, the US once again appears to be taking the lead, with revelations

⁹⁵ As an American intelligence officer has recently conceded, the nature of international politics is such that "you never know what you may need, in a month, or a year, or 10 years" (quoted in Smale & Sanger, 2013).

about the extent of its spying activities being truly astounding. European leaders, accordingly, have in recent years expressed their outrage after it had come to light that they, along with some 35 other world leaders, have for years been subject to US surveillance operations (Pitas, 2013; Smale, Eddy & Sanger, 2013). That the US has targeted Russia or China, the Germans and French contended, is perfectly natural, yet they had some difficulty in understanding why, as German politician Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger has lamented, “our friends in the US [would] consider the Europeans as enemies” (quoted in Simpson, 2013). As allies, such behaviour is deemed to be “totally unacceptable”, as France’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius has consistently stated (Simpson, 2013). On her part, German Chancellor Angela Merkel candidly told President Obama that “between close friends and partners, which the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America have been for decades, there should be no such surveillance of the communications of a head of government” (quoted in Smale, 2013). That the US has long spied on other states (allies and friends alike) is hardly a novelty, neither is the fact that America’s allies and friends are also engaging in such nefarious practices (Jakes & Pace, 2013; Martinez, 2013). The French, for instance, are notorious for their talents in “stealing industrial secrets and intellectual property”, while the Israelis quite regularly indulge in a vast range of intelligence operations antithetical to US interests (Sanger, 2013b). That such behaviour militates against the logic of democratic peace theory is a point that needs not be laboured. Here, as in the cases involving the EU and the Ukraine crisis, the old Waltzian principles of international politics have proven to be remarkably useful in understanding the behaviour and actions of states, whether such states are (liberal) democratic or not. Waltzian structural realism, once more, appears to be vindicated.

6.6 Balance-of-power theory: tomorrow, not today

Three tasks, principally, remain for this chapter: one, to comment on the validity of balance-of-power theory in the post-Cold War world and to consider some applications of the theory to the concrete world of international politics; two, to point the reader towards future contenders for great-power status and, by implication, the emerging (multipolar) structure of international politics; and, three, to comment on the probability of a US-Russia war or, in still larger terms, great-power war in

general. The preceding sections have pointed the reader towards some of the effects accruing from anarchy and unipolarity. This section, and keeping in mind the tasks laid bare above, seeks to probe the proposition emanating from balance-of-power theory that unbalanced power, irrespective of its current beneficiary, will one day be brought into balance (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.41, pp. 91-94). Accordingly, what can be said for the notion that the international-political system tends towards balance? For the last 25 years or so, the notion of a balancer (or, perhaps more aptly, balancers) emerging alongside the US as a great power has proven to be a distant reality (Coetzee, 2013:307). Admitting this, however, detracts nothing from the validity of Waltzian structural realism, for, as was variously argued above, balance-of-power theory cannot tell us *when* balance will be restored. Yet, unsurprisingly, critics of balance-of-power theory have been quick to point out that other states have *not* balanced against the US or have been slow to do so, a proposition all the more remarkable given the latter state's "blustery binges" (Waltz, 2008c:xii).

What, then, accounts for the fact that other states have been loath to balance against the US? We can, with this question in mind, proffer at least four explanations: one, balancing is a costly and difficult business, and one that gains in difficulty when the capabilities required for balance reaches levels beyond the reach of most; two, *when* to balance (i.e. the issue of timing) is inordinately difficult to calculate; three, bandwagoning often provides a more alluring strategy than balancing, especially given the fact that it is both cheaper and states can entertain the hope that they might score some gains; and, finally, balancing behaviour is not inevitable – the urge to balance can be suppressed in the face of hegemonic power, as the example of Europe conclusively suggests (Waltz, 2008c:xii-xiii; 2000a:26).

Yet today, more than at any other time in the post-Cold War world, intimations of multipolarity are readily discernible. Such developments, as the reader might appreciate, are tremendously important, at both the levels of theory and praxis. Accordingly, as Charles Kegley has sensibly remarked (cf. Section 6.1, p. 231), the emergence of a new multipolar international system from the post-Cold War unipolar one would vindicate the claims and expectations of realist theory and, concurrently, thrust us back into a world of great-power war. Although multipolarity is not yet at our doorstep, we have sufficient grounds for believing that its realisation is not too far off.

Somewhere in the not-too-distant future the world is set to return to multipolarity, with the future contenders for great-power status already discernible. Take China as an example. By way of comparison, consider that in the old bipolar Cold War world, the Soviets were constrained to fend off the American threat by getting by on a GDP less than half the product of the US (Coetzee, 2013:307). Today, one-time fears that the Chinese economy would surpass that of the US (cf. Ikenberry, 2008) have become reality. In fact, during 2014, the Chinese economy overtook that of America (IMF, 2016; Arends, 2014).⁹⁶ By 2015, moreover, Chinese economic output was \$19.4 trillion, compared with the \$17.9 trillion of the US (IMF, 2016). The gap between the two economic colossi is set to widen still more in the future. By 2021, according to IMF projections, China's economy is set to produce \$30.8 trillion in goods and services, with the American economy increasingly falling behind, producing only \$22.8 trillion (IMF, 2016).

Although these figures *are* impressive and do tell us something about China's *economic* rise, they do not tell the whole story. In international politics, as variously argued in these pages, force is the ultimate arbiter. In the bipolar system of old, although having only half the size of the American GDP, Soviet military spending kept track with that of the US (Coetzee, 2013:308). Chinese military capabilities, as against this, are dwarfed by those of the Americans (cf. Section 6.2, p. 236). This situation, however, is bound to change in the future. In due time, with China's economy outpacing America's, Chinese military capabilities are likely to catch up with and, perhaps even, surpass that of the US. The Chinese, it seems, are already making great strides in catching up to the Americans, not only by investing increasingly large sums in modernising and expanding its land, air, and naval forces (since 2000, an annual increase of more than ten percent), but also by investing in the capabilities needed (i.e. cyber, space, and underwater) to successfully engage in the wars of the future. With China's economy outperforming that of America, and given the rapid pace of its military modernisation efforts, the Chinese are already intimating their desire for an international order more nearly aligned with the preferences and interests of officials in Beijing than those in Washington. With this

⁹⁶ The calculations are based on the well-established economic measure commonly referred to as purchasing-power-parity (PPP), which in effect measures "actual output as opposed to fluctuations in exchange rates" (Arends, 2014).

end in mind, and amidst increasing doubts about the stability of the US dollar, China has increasingly called for the replacement of the dollar as the reserve currency of the world (Layne, 2011).

There is, however, far more to this. As Mark Leonard (2013) has correctly observed, the Chinese are becoming increasingly unwilling “to uphold a Western-led international order that they had no role in shaping”. When issues and questions of international standards or international rules of behaviour come up, Chinese officials are increasingly arguing that these rules were made without them being present on the world stage – and, ultimately, that they need to be reformed. Accordingly, in attempting to reform various aspects of the current regional and international order, Beijing has, for instance, promoted various alternative economic and security arrangements, ranging from the so-called ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building (CICA) (Geopolitical Monitor, 2016).⁹⁷ We should also mention that such developments are playing themselves out in a context where it is becoming increasingly commonplace to hear that the US is no longer able to provide global leadership (Steinmeier, 2016:106). With the above taken into consideration, China’s emergence as a great power is bound to happen – the question, it seems, is not if but when. Although seemingly oblivious to it, the overstretched nature of US commitments, coupled with its rapid economic decline (if compared to the Chinese), is further accelerating trends towards China’s ascension into the ranks of the great powers (Layne, 2011). Quite on its own, without much help from the future contenders for great-power status, the US is contributing a great deal to bringing the unipolar era to a close (Coetzee, 2013:308).

Who are the other candidates vying for great-power status? It has become customary to include in such deliberations the notion of a politically unified EU one day emerging alongside the US as a great power. Such notions are, today, fanciful and are growing more so by the day. The EU, as the preceding section has

⁹⁷ The initiative, essentially, attempts to redirect excess Chinese capital abroad by investing in and developing trade routes in the region (Wilson, 2016b). CICA, on its part, is a multinational forum designed to serve the ends of cooperation, peace and security in Asia. For its two core members (China and Russia), it provides a mechanism to address common security problems (Chunchan, 2014).

illustrated, is experiencing all manner and sorts of problems. Economically and militarily, EU members are increasingly falling behind vis-à-vis states such as China, Russia, Japan and even India. In economic terms, the economies of the majority of EU members are in decline; militarily, EU member states' armies are becoming increasingly obsolete. Demographically, too, the majority of EU members are going backwards. This situation stands in marked contrast with, say, that of India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, which, according to recent projections, are set to experience an increase of some 500 million people in total by the year 2050 (Carter, 2016:66-67). The only glimmer of hope, it seems, is the union's biggest economy, i.e. Germany – and its star, unfortunately, is not shining all that bright either. According to current IMF projections, the Germany economy is set to remain pretty much stagnant over the next five years or so, growing meagrely from \$3.8 trillion (during 2015) to \$4.6 trillion (during 2021) (IMF, 2016). India, by way of comparison, is set to increase its economic output from \$7.9 trillion to \$13.9 trillion during the same period (IMF, 2016). Militarily, the Germans are only spending about one fifteenth (\$39.4 billion) of the US total (SIPRI, 2015). Interestingly enough, with its regional and international environment becoming increasingly unsafe, the Germans are now changing course, with a 6.8 percent increase on defence spending approved for 2017 and with more increases earmarked for the period up until 2020 (Hoffmann, 2016). Such changes, though noteworthy, are still way below what the Russians and Chinese are spending, and will most certainly not be enough to propel Germany into the ranks of the great powers. Europe's best bet for now, one would argue, is to somehow muddle through the turmoil currently enveloping the EU, with the aim of one day creating a smaller politically unified union, capable of determining its own foreign and defence policies and with a well-equipped and well-trained modern army. But even this, at this stage of the game, appears to be a fanciful proposition.

While European nations have, for the most part, been loath to increase their military spending, the Russians, as against this, have not been. Russia now spends about one tenth (\$66.4 billion) of the US total (SIPRI, 2015). As was variously argued above, Russia has over the last decade or so increased its military spending by 79 percent and has undertaken various military modernisation programmes (conventional and nuclear), and is pursuing and developing new capabilities in areas

of vital importance for the wars of the future. Although Russia's defence spending declined during 2016 (due, primarily, to the falling oil prices and Russia's currency woes), it is likely to continue investing quite heavily in its armed forces for the foreseeable future and to look for suitable partners to counter US hegemony. In fact, in more ways than one, America's European missile defence plans and the constant clamour about NATO expansion are pushing Russia into the arms of China and is emboldening Putin to further accelerate Russia's military modernisation plans (Coetzee, 2013:309). Russia, now more than ever before in the post-Cold War period, feels that its security is inextricably linked to developing a stronger, larger and more technologically advanced armed force, and it seemingly have long-term plans to make this an abiding reality (Putin, 2012).

Moscow, furthermore, appears to be increasingly desirous of regaining a more global footprint, with Russian officials intimating their desire to establish foreign bases in Latin America, the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Balkans, and the Middle East (Summers, 2016). With the Americans ostensibly backing out of the Middle East (cf. Kramer, 2016:53-54), and with Putin already ramping up military support for Egypt, Russia might very well feel emboldened to increase its influence in the Middle East, and to do it soon. It is already gaining an increasing foothold in Syria which it could use, if it so chooses, to threaten the US military's presence in the eastern Mediterranean and in Syria's skies (Breedlove, 2016:103). Not unlike the Chinese, Russia is also striving towards an international order defined more to its liking and less to that of the US and its Western allies (Urchick, 2016a). Putin, as Urchick (2016a) has noted, is seeking to put in place an alternative framework to the rules and norms undergirding Western political, economic, and security institutions. Lest we get carried away, however, Russia's ambitions for a more assertive and expansive great-power foreign policy must be tempered by considering its economic situation. In economic terms, the Russians, as in the case of the Germans, are set to encounter a rather difficult economic environment in the next five years or so. During 2015, Russia produced about \$3.7 trillion in goods and services, with the figure set to increase to only \$4.3 trillion by 2021 (IMF, 2016). Although Russia can, and probably will, offset its economic woes by increasing its military spending as a percentage of GDP, this is hardly the ideal situation. The problem for Russia, as unfortunately also for Germany, is that current economic forecasts (covering the

period 2030 and 2050) paint a rather bleak picture, with both states' economies increasingly losing ground vis-à-vis not only the United States and China, but also India, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico and Nigeria (Hawksworth & Chan, 2015).

By the sheer size of its population, territory and economy, India, too, is poised to become a great power. In fact, according to various economic forecasts, by 2050 India and China are likely to be the leading economies in the world (Hawksworth & Chan, 2015; Fensom, 2015). During 2015, India produced about \$7.9 trillion in goods and services, whereas the Americans, for instance, produced \$17.9 trillion for the same year (IMF, 2016). By 2030, quite impressively, India is estimated to produce roughly \$17.1 trillion in goods and services, with the Americans expected to produce about \$25.4 trillion (Hawksworth & Chan, 2015). Gradually, and almost entirely beneath the radar, India is catching up and, in due time, will surpass the Americans, having already outperformed the Japanese, Germans, Russians, and the British some time back (IMF, 2016). In purely economic terms, India's prospects for joining the ranks of the great powers undoubtedly look impressive, a proposition further supported by the fact that India is also a member of the nuclear club. What, however, can be said for its emergence as a *military* great power? During 2015, India's military expenditure reached \$51.3 billion, an amount much larger than that of Germany (\$39.4 billion) and not too far off from what Russia is spending (\$66.4 billion) (SIPRI, 2016b). In order to fund various programmes focused on expanding and modernising its military force, India increased its military expenditure by about eight percent during 2016 (SIPRI, 2016b). Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative of "Make In India", and amidst the joint Indian-US Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (essentially, a collaborative agreement to bolster both states' defence industries), India's defence industry is gradually developing, although it still has some way to go (Carter, 2016:70). All in all, India's military, though gradually catching up, is still decades behind that of China and Russia, let alone the US. In due time, however, we can expect India's economic might to be matched by a more capable and modern defence force.

Although we can say something about other candidates, such reflections are bound to be merely speculative. The barriers to entry into the ranks of the great powers – today as in the future – remain inordinately high. States wishing to enter into the

great-power club have, accordingly, some catching up to do. Consider the case of Japan. During 2015, Japan produced about \$4.8 trillion in goods and services; by 2021, this total is set to increase to only \$5.5 trillion, hardly something to get excited about (IMF, 2016). Compared with, say, India or China, the Japanese are falling behind. By 2050, according to various estimates, the Japanese economy is bound to slip still further in the rankings, with a projected GDP of only \$7.9 trillion (Hawksworth & Chan, 2015). Does Japanese defence spending paint a rosier picture? Given China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea and elsewhere, we have good reasons for believing that Japanese defence spending is bound to increase in the years ahead. Although Japan's defence budget is today much smaller than that of China and India, Japan has seen increases in defence expenditures for four straight years, with the \$44 billion defence budget approved for 2016-2017 being the largest ever (Spitzer, 2016). The once-pacifist Japanese environment is gradually changing, with policy makers mainly fretting about China. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has intimated this much, declaring that the "security environment surrounding our country is increasingly severe" (quoted in Spitzer, 2016). Japan, moreover, has also recently passed a security law by which erstwhile restraints on the Japanese military have been lifted which would permit Japanese soldiers to defend the US in the eventuality of war (Spitzer, 2016). Various military modernisation programmes are also underway, as well as attempts to restructure the armed forces by, for instance, expanding its surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities and creating an amphibious warfare unit similar to the US Marine Corps (Spitzer, 2016). The Japanese, though, have much catching up to do if they wish to enter the ranks of the great powers, especially in military affairs. With China increasingly seeking to impose its will in the region and beyond, we have good reasons for believing that the Japanese would do just that.

What, then, are we saying? Two things, principally. One, the structure of the international-political system is likely to remain unchanged for some time to come. US capabilities, especially *military* capabilities, continue to dwarf the rest, but this will not last forever. Two, we are, gradually, observing intimations of a shift away from a unipolar system to (what appears to be) a multipolar one, with China, India and Russia the most likely contenders for great-power status. Though proceeding slowly, balance *is* being restored. Somewhere in the course of the next ten to twenty years,

we would argue, the twin forces of US decline and the (almost inevitable) rise of the future great powers (China, India, and Russia) are likely to collide to bring about an international-political system having all the familiar features of a multipolar international system.

If the world is set to return to multipolarity, then, surely, this is bound to have major implications on the behaviour of the units of the system and the outcomes resulting from their interactions. From the theory advanced in these pages, we know that multipolar systems promise a greater measure of great-power war. As numbers grow, the reader might recall, complications accelerate. With this in mind, two questions merit our attention. One, is a war between Russia and the US imminent? And two, if the international-political system returns to multipolarity, are we likely to see the return of great-power war? Whether today or at some ill-defined time in the future, the threat of war *always* looms large and, as the numbers of great powers increase, the threat multiplies. This being said, there are today good reasons to believe that today's great-power wars as well as those of the future would be more difficult to start. In a world where leaders are strongly affected by external pressures and in which the clarity of dangers and challenges are self-evident, we have good *theoretical* reasons for believing that war can be avoided. Nuclear weapons, as variously argued in these pages, incentivise states' leaders to act in more calculated and responsible ways. It is not, as Waltz (1979:176) noted, that we are entertaining "the utopian hope that all future [leaders] will combine in their persons a complicated set of nearly perfect virtues, but rather that the pressures of [a nuclear world] would strongly encourage them to act internationally in ways better than their characters may lead one to expect". Yet, as Waltz (1979:176) also warned, the fact that "necessities are clear increases the chances that they will be met, *but gives no guarantees*" (emphasis added). On external (structural) grounds alone, the threat of war is likely to multiply as the system veers towards multipolarity. The question today, as during the Cold War, is then whether nuclear weaponry provides sufficient constraints to stave off war, whether we are talking about a US-Russian one or a future great-power war? Short of some or other technological breakthrough obviating the peace-inducing effects of these weapons, sufficient external pressures appear to exist to make wars exceedingly difficult to start.

6.7 Evaluation

What have we learned in this chapter? The preceding chapter painted a picture of an international-political world marred by security competition, emulation, strange bedfellows, mutual distrust, great-power war and, in due time, great-power peace. The world of the present or, more specifically, the post-Cold War one has illustrated the extent to which the conduct of international politics continues to be marred by debilitating continuities. Today, as in previous times, security competition is rife, with the units of the international-political system seeking to emulate the behaviour and practices of the more successful competitors. Whether we look to China, Russia, India, Japan, the US or, interestingly enough, the EU, states still care a great deal about relative gains and about who has what, a proposition that rings especially true if we consider the large sums now spent on modernising and expanding states' armed forces. In conventional and nuclear terms, states are relentlessly striving to remain at the cutting-edge of technological developments, and to augment these strengths by developing and using emerging capabilities in space, cyber and underwater. Cyber capabilities, in particular, have been exploited to great effect by the likes of the US, China, Russia and Israel. Furthermore, and as this chapter has indicated, trust remains an inordinately scarce commodity in international politics, with states – (liberal) democratic and otherwise – keeping a watchful eye on each other, knowing full-well that today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy. We have also seen how strange bedfellows persist and how (liberal) democracies, in particular the US, have intervened in the affairs of other states with the goal of destabilising or overthrowing democratically elected governments. We have to this effect illustrated how the Ukraine crisis was precipitated by forces wholly embedded within the liberal conception of international politics.

The post-Cold War world was one in which only one great power was left standing. By the sheer force of its size (economically and militarily), and in conformity with the expectations raised from our theory, the US has often used (perhaps more properly, abused) its pre-eminent position to pursue its own narrowly defined interests. Such a world, as was variously argued in these pages, is coming to a close, though the question of when remains beyond our theory. Intimations of multipolarity are, however, readily discernible, with numerous states (notably, China, India, Russia

and, to a lesser extent, Japan) already emerging as future contenders for great-power status. These states, though gradually gaining ground on the US, still have some way to go. Though not today, balance will be restored at some time in the future, a proposition that is bound to have several consequences for the conduct of international politics. We also considered, in light of the shift from unipolarity to multipolarity, whether great-power war (and, in narrower terms, a US-Russian one) is unavoidable. The conclusion reached here, one pre-eminently grounded in the clarity of dangers that nuclear weaponry present, is that we have sufficient *theoretical* grounds for believing that war can be staved off.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EVALUATION

At a certain level, when it comes to the future, the only thing one can be sure of is that common sense will be wrong.

George Friedman (in Friedman, 2009:3)

After careful consideration of the arguments advanced in these pages, three questions at once vie for our attention. One, in painting a picture of the validity of Waltzian structural realism across different international-political systems, did we not perhaps provide a too general account of the behaviour and actions of the principal units of the international-political system, one void of consideration of the *particular* forces driving their behaviour? This may be so, but not without sufficient cause. One of the most persistent charges levelled against Waltzian structural realism, as the reader may recall, is the theory's inability, and balance-of-power theory pre-eminently, to explain the *particular* policies of states. The criticism, though true, is of course largely misplaced. Balance-of-power theory, as Waltz (1979:121) has consistently argued, cannot "tell us why state X made a certain move last Tuesday". Criticising balance-of-power theory on such grounds is similar to criticising the theory of universal gravitation for its failure to explain why a falling leaf has proceeded along a wayward path. In testing our theory, we have thus asked of the reader to heed the instruction that theories located at one level of generality cannot and should not explain matters located at another level of generality (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.3, p. 46 and Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, p. 93). This, we noted, is but one rejoinder to the criticism that balance-of-power theory fails to explain the particular policies of states. A second and no less important one relates to the inability of scholars of international politics to appreciate the differences to be drawn between a theory of international politics and a theory of foreign policy (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, p. 93). The latter tells us why similarly placed states behave in dissimilar ways, whereas the former points us towards the expectation of a marked similarity in outcomes of similarly situated states, about the outcomes resulting from the uncoordinated actions of states and, importantly, about the constraints all of them are subject to. In thus

asking and answering how a particular state would react to such constraints, one would require both a theory of international politics *and* a theory of foreign policy (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, p. 93). This nicely settles, one would argue, the first of our questions.

Two, although we have provided a picture of the *future* of international politics, what are the likely implications for our theory if the world veers in an altogether different direction? Phrased differently, what if the future of international politics were to contradict the arguments proffered here? This, of course, is always a possibility, but good reasons exist – grounded in theory *and* history – for believing that this would not be the case. We have, throughout the course of this study, covered a rather large span of history, and have highlighted the extent to which different actors (politically, economically and ideologically) have often acted in markedly similar ways. In international politics, as variously illustrated in these pages, continuities are often far more engrained, and far more impressive, than change. Moreover, not only are continuities rife, but states throughout history, it seems, have found it rather difficult to learn the lessons from the past. It is not, we must strongly emphasise, that a significant break with the past is impossible, but absent the transformation of the international-political system we have good theoretical grounds and, as the study has illustrated, historical ones, for believing that the behaviour and actions of states are likely to follow familiar patterns. Accordingly, as we have cautioned from the outset (cf. Chapter 1, Section 1.4, p. 20), states may at times act in ways contrary to what structural realist theory may lead us to expect: “*One may behave as one likes to*. Patterns of behaviour nevertheless emerge, and they derive from the structural constraints of the system” (emphasis added). As a last comment regarding the second question, we may caution that prediction is but one test of a theory and, as argued in these pages (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.3, pp. 50-51), not a particularly good one.

Three. In pointing the reader towards the fundamental continuity of international politics across time and space, the question should be asked whether we had not been biased in our engagement with the historical record? With this particular concern firmly in mind, we have throughout this study attempted to heed the instructions for theory-testing as advanced in Chapter 2 (cf. Section 2.3, p. 49),

noting that one of the better tests of a theory is for theoreticians to subject their expectations to *hard cases*, i.e. cases in which sufficient grounds exist for an entity to behave in ways contrary to what one's theory leads one to expect. The period preceding World War I, for instance, provided such a test for our theory, as did an examination of EU relations and comparable cases (e.g. the Anglo-American crisis over the Venezuela boundary dispute and the Anglo-American rapprochement at the turn of the nineteenth century). We have, admittedly, excluded various regions (notably, Africa) from our examination of the historical record. This however does not detract from the validity of Waltzian structural realism. One of the instructions for theory-testing (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.3, pp. 45-46 & Chapter 2 Section 2.3, p. 46, fn. 31), as the reader might recall, is that a theory should be tested in accordance with what it claims to explain.

The aims and objectives of this study, though dealing also with matters of historical importance, were explicitly theoretical in nature. From the outset, we wanted to point the reader towards the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism in a world in which the spread of (liberal) democracy and, by implication, the purported (liberal) democratic zone of peace, had ostensibly invalidated the claims and expectations of Waltz's structural realist theory. Whether we have succeeded in this endeavour or not is a question that the reader must answer. We have, nonetheless, provided persuasive arguments – theoretical *and* historical – that cast doubt on the validity of democratic peace theory and which point us towards the progressiveness of Waltzian structural realism. Chapter 2, in effect, provided the first critique of democratic peace theory by highlighting the poverty of the conception of theory underpinning the democratic peace *proposition*. By drawing on the philosophy of science, and in considering Waltz's theory of theory, we noted that democratic peace *theory* falls short of some of the most pertinent criteria of theory-construction, shortcomings which inevitably cast doubt on the explanatory merit of attempts at accounting for the absence of war between (liberal) democracies. Chapter 3 had at its core an attempt to lay bare the richness of Waltz's theory of international politics and, in doing so, to consider the folly of reductionist theories of international politics. We argued in that chapter that the prevalence of a similarity of outcomes across time and space, irrespective of changes in the agents producing them, renders reductionist theories defective and points us towards the necessity of systems

theories of international politics. The chapter also highlighted the distinctive structural effects accruing from the anarchy of the international-political system and, more narrowly, the extent to which different international-political systems yield distinctive effects.

Chapter 4, once more, pointed the reader to pertinent shortcomings – theoretical, conceptual and methodological – in respect of democratic peace theory. Issues of causation, measurement, data sets, conceptual ambiguities, and the (theoretical and empirical) import of perceptions and public opinion, were but some of the issues identified that cast a long shadow over the validity of democratic peace theory. The chapter also set forth quite a number of expectations accruing from Waltz's structural realist theory and democratic peace theory, expectations which later informed our engagement with the historical record. This was followed by providing the reader with a Waltzian critique of democratic peace theory on the basis of some of the principles developed in previous chapters. We noted, alongside pertinent historical illustrations, how the conduct of *international* politics poses singularly distinctive challenges for the units of the system, such that the internal perfection of the units (in itself, we noted, a fanciful proposition) would remove but one of the causes of war. The chapter concluded by providing a brief account of the intersection between theory and history, in particular by probing the extent to which the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory, as against those of Waltz's structural realist theory, were borne out by a consideration of the historical record of Ancient Greece and Republican Rome. As might be recalled, democratic peace theory fell conspicuously short of vindication; Waltzian structural realism, as against this, fared rather well.

Chapters 5 and 6 attempted to provide a more comprehensive examination of the extent to which the expectations gleaned from our theories were borne out by historical validation. By way of organising the complexity of our material, four areas of inquiry were advanced, each addressing some or other aspect of the theoretical expectations raised in preceding chapters: i.e. strange bedfellows; competition and emulation; balance-of-power theory; and democratic peace. It would serve our purposes well to consider each of these in their own right. Whether we look at the world of the present or, in much broader terms, direct our attention to the conduct of

international politics over the last five hundred years or so, the proposition that strange bedfellows are often born amid common fears and/or interests appears to be pretty much true. History, accordingly, is replete with examples of ideologically, politically and economically disparate actors finding common ground when pressed hard enough or, as was often argued, not even that hard at all. In such instances, moreover, states were constrained to make calculations over possible alliance partners more on the basis of interest than ideology. This proposition, to drive the point home, rings true, whether we veer our attention towards the multipolar (European) great-power system, the bipolar Cold War world or, more recently, the post-Cold War unipolar world.

Throughout the course of modern history, we find among states, most especially the great powers, high degrees of competition in the arts and machinery of warfare and, among the lesser ones, emulation of the military policies, weapon systems and capabilities of the great powers. In today's world, as during the multipolar and bipolar worlds of old, states continue to place an unusually high premium on keeping up with the latest developments in military doctrine and hardware, contending that those who fail to keep up fall behind, and those who fall behind risk their own destruction. Whether we look at Catherine the Great's Russia, great-power Britain, Stalin's Russia or modern-day China, one thing remains clear: "To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten" (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2, p. 184). In all of these cases, as in the many others identified in this study, the old Alfred E. Kahn notion of the 'tyranny of small decisions' proves remarkably apt: if some units of the international-political system act with these ends in mind, or are expected to do so, other states must follow suit. Such constraints, as we have consistently pointed out, originate not from the individual units, but from the circumstances (environment) in which all the units of the international-political system operate.

Balance-of-power theory has also been vindicated. The theory, properly stated, gives rise to at least three expectations: one, it leads us to expect that states will tend to act in ways that lead towards balance in the system, whether or not they intentionally act with this end in mind; two, the system will tend towards balance; and three, given the competitive and self-help arena in which states conduct their affairs, a great deal

of emulation will occur such that states will come to display common characteristics (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, pp. 93-94). Confirmatory evidence of the validity of balance-of-power theory was not particularly hard to come by. Think in this regard of the 1879 Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, the Franco-Russian Dual Alliance (consummated in 1894), the Anglo-Russian alliance during the Second Mehemet Ali Crisis, the Anglo-French alliance to check the common Russian threat in Crimea, the coming together of the French and British during April 1904 and the British and Russians during August 1907, the Japanese decision to join the allied powers in the face of the common German threat during World War I, and the reactions of the European great powers and Russia amidst Hitler's drive for domination. These examples more nearly point us towards the validity of balance-of-power theory during the multipolar (European) great-power system.

What can be said about the bipolar Cold War system? In multipolar systems, the reader might recall, balancing is conducted through alliance formation and internal efforts; in bipolar systems, with interdependence at low levels, balancing proceeds primarily through internal efforts (cf. Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1, p. 96). Consideration of the history of the US-Soviet rivalry pretty much bore witness to this proposition. In the wake of World War II, the reader might recall, both states through a series of internal efforts attempted to strengthen themselves, *even though they had demonstrated a strong desire not to*. Thus we saw how the US rearmed itself shortly after it had begun dismantling the world's most impressive military-industrial machine, even though it had keenly stated its desire not to, and the Soviet Union, notwithstanding the utter devastation wrought by the war, desperately trying to maintain roughly three million men ready for war, while pushing with all its might to enter the nuclear ranks (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.1, p. 213). We also noted how, owing to their fate and fortunes being intimately tied to each other, the responses of the one great power were inextricably tied to the actions of the other one and vice versa (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.1, p. 214). The extent to which this proposition was borne out by the US-Soviet Cold War history is striking: the operation of communist guerrillas in Greece led to the Truman Doctrine; the extension of Soviet control over the Eastern European states resulted in the Marshall Plan and, in due time, the Atlantic Defence Treaty, which in turn precipitated the Soviet Union to establish the Cominform (i.e. the Communist Information Bureau) and the Warsaw

Pact; the plan to establish a West German government giving rise to the Berlin Blockade; and, in the 1960s, the US undertook what must be seen as the world's largest peacetime military build-up (conventional *and* nuclear), with the Soviet Union following suit in due time (Waltz, 1979:171; 1993:46).

The post-Cold War unipolar world ostensibly challenged the claims and expectations of balance-of-power theory. For more than two decades, the US was the undisputed lone great-power in the world, with the reach of its military and the size of its economy being virtually unprecedented. Today, however, America's unipolar moment is gradually coming to a close, with the future contenders for great-power status (dimly) discernible on the horizon. In due time, balance *will* be restored. Somewhere in the course of the next ten to twenty years, we contended, the twin forces of US decline and the (almost inevitable) rise of the future great powers (China, India, and Russia) are likely to collide to bring about an international-political system having all the familiar features of a multipolar international system.

Sufficient evidence also exists, we would strongly contend, to cast doubt on the validity of the claims and expectations of democratic peace theory. We have, with this end in mind, emphasised various cases, illustrations and theoretical arguments casting doubt on the historical *and* theoretical validity of democratic peace theory. We noted, for instance, how (liberal) democratic public opinion have throughout history often served the end of driving (liberal) democratic states to the brink of war, how pairs of (liberal) democracies have allied with *and* against one another *and* with and against authoritarian regimes, and how (liberal) democratic relations have often been marred by mutual suspicions. When faced with war-threatening crises, moreover, (liberal) democracies have more often than not behaved like traditional (i.e. realist) great powers, resorting to military threats and military build-ups, ultimatums and so-called big-stick diplomacy. Numerous instances in the post-1945 world of (liberal) democracies intervening either to subvert or to suppress democratically elected governments or movements or to support authoritarian ones, have led us to question the mutual trust and respect ostensibly underlying (liberal) democratic relations *inter se*. We have also subjected one of the pre-eminent post-World War II examples of the validity of democratic peace theory – to wit, the EU – to scrutiny, arguing that power-political factors, not (liberal) democratic ideological

ones, more nearly account for the origin and subsequent development of the union. Today, more than ever before in its history, the EU is finding itself in troubled waters, with the old power-political currents of European politics growing ever stronger.

The four areas of inquiry discussed above pointed us towards the fundamental continuity of international politics across time and space. Yet we are also keenly aware that the behaviour of states and the outcomes of their interactions vary in accordance with different international-political systems. We have illustrated to this effect that bipolarity holds a much greater promise of peace than multipolar systems do and that unipolar systems, as against both bipolar and multipolar systems, often marked by the desultory use and abuse of power by the dominant power, drastically increase the prospects of war. Although a purely unit-level change, nuclear weaponry further added to the (structurally induced) constraints and pressures confronting states, so much so that the prospect of war, today as in the future, has been drastically reduced. As any realist would caution, however, the threat of war *always* looms large – yet for now at least, sufficient constraints exist to make the start of wars forbiddingly hard. Whether such constraints would hold indefinitely is a question that cannot be answered in the present. In the absence of the constraints of nuclear armaments, and with the world set to return to multipolarity, great-power war is bound to ensue.

Although we went some way in validating the claims and expectations of Waltzian structural realism in this study, more work can and should be done with this end in mind. Three specific areas for future research immediately come to mind. One, the theory might benefit from a still longer (and more encompassing) view of history. In many ways, we have merely succeeded in scraping the bottom of the barrel in bringing history to bear on the theory. Although we have mentioned that the validity of *realist thought* stretches beyond the confines of Western Europe and North America (think in this regard of Kautilya as well as the work from Han Fei and Shang Yang in ancient China), *Waltzian structural realism* might benefit from a more thoroughgoing examination of the histories of states *and* empires stretching beyond these two regions. Two, classical realism, it seems, is making a comeback. Realist scholars of international politics are slowly but surely reverting to the work of classical realists such as E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr,

claiming that the arguments proffered by these scholars are applicable to a wider set of circumstances than structural realist theories are. The claim, one in need of greater substantiation, goes against the grain of the arguments raised here. Consider, for instance, that one of the central arguments of this study, to wit, that strange bedfellows exist across time and space, is one to particular the conduct of *international* politics. In domestic politics, too, strange bedfellows occur, and it found be singularly instructive to consider the extent to which the recurrence of strange bedfellows is indicative of forces more nearly found in man than in the international-political system. Three, much remains to be said about the sociological underpinnings of Waltz's structural realist theory. It has become commonplace to argue that the constructivist turn has its roots in the work of Alexander Wendt. Yet a careful perusal of the pages of *Theory of International Politics* would indicate that Waltz's theory has a clear sociological dimension – a dimension obscured by constructivists' continued insistence that Waltz is a materialist. Four, we would also do well to bring Waltzian structural realism to bear on new developments in warfare, such as cyber and space warfare. With nuclear weapons making war exceedingly difficult to start, states are increasingly resorting to cyber warfare to wage war by other means. In explaining these developments and, in particular, in explaining the existence of so-called cyber arms races, we would expect Waltzian structural realism to do well – an expectation that naturally requires further investigation.

What, then, have we learned? Framed differently, what are the principle contributions and/or findings of the study? In essence, three principle findings stand out. One, democratic peace theory is brazenly false. Not only is democratic peace theory marred by a myriad of theoretical shortcomings, but history truly provides scant support for it. Two, whether we confine our attention to pairs of (liberal) democracies or mixed dyads, Waltzian structural realism trumps democratic peace theory in explaining international-political outcomes. As the study concretely suggested, systems theories of international politics – and Waltzian structural realism pre-eminently among them – remain inordinately useful in explaining international politics; reductionist theories, as against this, less so. Three, Waltzian concepts and expectations such as the tyranny of small decisions, balance-of-power theory, emulation and competition, and strange bedfellows remain exceptionally useful in explaining international politics – a proposition that rings true whether we

gaze our attention to the period of Ancient Greece or to the future of international politics. Continuity, more than change, remains the hallmark of international politics. Moreover, it has becoming increasingly fashionable to argue that, subsequent to the rise of Donald Trump into the highest political office in the US, international politics is returning to the old (realist) footing. The claim is a false one. As the reader might appreciate from the arguments raised in this study, history clearly shows that international politics has largely remained (and is likely to remain) on the old footing – and the old footing, as was argued, is one in which interest more often than not prevails over ideology.

Against the backdrop of the arguments advanced here and by way of bringing this study to a close, the principal contention of this study then is this: that Waltz's structural realist theory remains an inordinately rich one in accounting for the behaviour and actions of states, whether those states are (liberal) democratic or otherwise. Short of the system being transformed (i.e. transformed from *anarchy* to *hierarchy*), and on account of the evidence presented here, Waltzian structural realism is set to remain "the basic theory of international politics" (Waltz, 2000a:41). In more ways than one, the future of international politics is set to look very much like the past.

APPENDICES: TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.1: GREAT POWERS, 1700-1990

	1700	1800	1875	1910	1935	1945	1990
Turkey	X						
Sweden	X						
Netherlands	X						
Spain	X						
Austria (Austria-Hungary)	X	X	x	x			
France	X	X	x	x	x		
England (Great Britain)	X	X	x	x	x		
Prussia (Germany)		X	x	x	x		
Russia (Soviet Union)		X	x	x	x	x	
Italy			x	x	x		
Japan				x	x		
United States				x	x	x	X

SOURCE: Adapted from Waltz (1979:162)

Table 1.2: EUROPEAN INTERDEPENDENCE*, 1909-54

		1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	Average
Germany	with						
other	EC	3	4	4	4	4	3.6
States**							
France	with						
other	EC	2	2	2	2	2	1.8
states							
Region		4	4	3	4	4	3.7
		1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	Average
Germany	with						
other	EC	3	4	4	4	5	4.0
states							
France	with						
other	EC	5	5	5	5	5	4.9
states							
Region		8	8	8	8	8	8.0
		1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	Average
Germany	with						
other	EC	4	3	3	4	5	4.0
states							
France	with						
other	EC	6	6	5	4	4	5.0
states							
Region		5	5	5	5	5	5.2

* Exports as a percentage of GDP

** Consisting of: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands

SOURCE: Adapted from Rosato (2011:79)

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ABSTRACT

International politics continue to be marked (or, more properly) marred by debilitating continuities. Across time and space, and against the vogue of inside-out explanations of international politics (with democratic peace theory as the example par excellence), the study points toward the enduring quality of Waltzian structural realism in theorising and explaining international-political outcomes. The study, accordingly, shows the enduring usefulness of systems theories of international politics and, as against this, the inadequacy of reductionist theories in accounting for international-political outcomes. Waltzian concepts and expectations such as the tyranny of small decisions, balance-of-power theory, emulation and competition, and strange bedfellows are borne out by an examination of the past, present and (as far as possible) future of international politics. The study also shows the lack of empirical *and* theoretical vindication for democratic peace theory. In making a case for the poverty of democratic peace theory and, as against this, the enduring quality of Waltzian structural realism, the study examines international politics from the period ranging from Ancient Greece to the future of international politics, illustrating that we have much to learn from Waltz's structural realist theory. Short of the system being transformed, and on account of the evidence presented in this study, Waltzian structural realism is set to remain the basic theory of international politics. In more ways than one, the future of international politics is set to look very much like the past.

Die internasionale politiek word steeds gekenmerk as 'n omgewing waarin kontinuït die reël is. Ongeag tyd of ruimte, en teen die heersende drang vir reduksionistiese verklarings van die internasionale politiek (met die demokratiese vredestorie as die voorbeeld by uitstek), dui hierdie studie op die voortdurende relevansie van Kenneth Waltz se teorie van strukturele realisme om die internasionale politiek te verklaar. Voorts wys die studie op die bruikbaarheid van sisteemteorieë van die internasionale politiek en, hierteenoor, die gebrekkige aard van reduksionistiese teorieë ten einde die internasionale politiek te verklaar. Waltz se konsepte en verwagtinge – onder andere, die tirannie van individuele besluite, die magsbalansteorie, nabootsing en

kompetisie, sowel as vreemde bondgenote – word deur 'n noukeurige ondersoek van die verlede, hede en toekoms gestaaf. Die studie wys ook op die gebrekkige aard van die empiriese en teoretiese grondslag van die demokratiese vredesteorie. Die staaf van Waltz se teorie van strukturele realisme en, hierteenoor, die verwerping van die demokratiese vredesteorie, geskied kragtens 'n bestudering van die historiese rekord wat strek vanaf Antieke Griekeland tot die toekoms van die internasionale politiek, met die slotsom dat daar allerlei skatte geput kan word uit Waltz se teorie. Met die internasionale politieke sisteem wat steeds gekenmerk word deur anargie, en op grond van die argumente wat in die studie voorgehou is, is Waltz se teorie bestem om die hoeksteen van teoretiese besinning oor die internasionale politiek te bly. Die toekoms, in meer as een opsig, is bestem om bepaalde ooreenkomste met die verlede te toon.