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## *Respite or Resolutions?*

### *Recurring Crises and the Origins of War*

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Among major wars, World War I holds pride of place. The war was immediately recognized and has continued to be seen as a cataclysmic event. Within a year of its outbreak, it had already been dubbed “the Great War” and was soon thereafter called “the war to end all wars.” Although the latter characterization lasted barely a generation, World War I has continued to be a relevant touchstone for subsequent analysts.<sup>1</sup>

The inherent scholarly interest in the causes of war has been conjoined in this case with the political and historical importance of assigning responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities and the tensions underlying them. Indeed, as Ross Collins notes, “The debate over who started World War I began only weeks after the war declarations.”<sup>2</sup> That debate has continued virtually unabated.<sup>3</sup>

Over the years since World War I, scholars have argued about its causes versus its origins. Those who look at causes focus on the specific trigger that began the hostilities and the period between the assassination of Austria’s Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the many declarations of war. In contrast, those interested in origins emphasize longer-term structural features, such as the system of European alliances or the long-running arms race.

There has also been disagreement over the decades as to whether World War I was a “war of miscalculation” or a “war by design.” Those who see it as the outcome of miscalculation consider World War I a prototypical war that occurred by accident, as interlocking military mobilizations generated an outcome not fully foreseen or desired by any of the warring powers. Those who have feared that a “war by miscalculation” could occur in their own times have stressed the perspective that puts World War I into that category and highlighted other similarities between that era and the ones in which they write. In contrast are those who hold that Germany wanted war. This was the immediate position at the time of the 1918 Paris Peace Conference, and those who make

this argument today believe that fear of another “war by design” is unnecessary, because no country is as aggressive as was pre–World War I Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Much scholarship focuses on the immediate causes of hostilities, on the transition from a state of peace, or nonwar, to a state of war. The current consensus holds that war is a costly form of conflict, and rational leaders want to avoid those costs.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, if a war’s outcome were known with certainty beforehand, the participants would be better off simply moving to that postwar state without paying the intervening costs of war. In this sense, wars are like strikes.<sup>6</sup> The bargaining theory of war posits reasons, discussed below, why states cannot arrive at negotiated deals to avoid the costs of war.

This chapter develops an alternative argument about both the origins of war, in general, and those of World War I, in particular. It argues that the origins of many wars, most especially World War I, have lain in recurrent crises. The delineation of the argument below is followed by its application to World War I and a discussion of its implications for international relations theory and contemporary international politics.

## War and Strategies in Sequential Crises

The argument developed here rests on a simple premise: that many wars, especially major power wars, do not occur suddenly and without warning. In most cases, that is, war does not occur the first time two states have a serious dispute. Rather, most wars reflect long-standing conflicts of interests and are preceded by crises that are at least temporarily resolved.<sup>7</sup> Yet the underlying conflict between the nations is not truly settled. In other words, the ends of crises do not constitute resolutions, but respites. Great power conflicts experience militarized crises and remissions.<sup>8</sup>

After a pattern of recurrent crises, wars break out when a new standoff between the same powers cannot be resolved as others had been earlier. That is, the strategies that states adopted previously and that were the basis for respites and remissions are not repeated. Consequently, countries adopt a modified Win-Stay Lose-Shift strategy.<sup>9</sup> Strategies that are seen as resulting in a triumph are repeated, whereas those deemed to have resulted in a loss or defeat at another’s hands are not.<sup>10</sup>

The history of interactions that ultimately result in war constitutes a critical backdrop providing the tinder for the lit match of the final triggering event. Three brief examples illustrate this argument. Imagine a Prisoners’ Dilemma game played once, one that does not result in mutual defection. One state decides to cooperate in the expectation of reciprocity, but the other

defects. The next time the two interact in a Prisoners' Dilemma game, the state that defected does so again, but the one that initially cooperated shifts strategies and defects as well.<sup>11</sup>

Alternatively, imagine a game of Chicken, one also treated as a model of international interactions. Both actors in Chicken want to defect while the other cooperates. The game has two equilibriums—those outcomes in which one of the actors defects and the other cooperates. The actors' preferences generate competition in risk taking and brinkmanship, behaviors that have become the hallmark of the game. Imagine a game of Chicken in which one actor has defected and the other cooperates, thus avoiding the outcome of mutual defection. Now imagine a second iteration. The actor that defected the first time has every expectation that the other will again capitulate and that it will again emerge triumphant. At a minimum, that actor has no reason not to defect. The actor whose previous capitulation prevented conflict, however, does not want to be so accommodating and instead stands firm while the first actor expects a repeat of the previous capitulation.<sup>12</sup> Although the choices of rational actors should still not result in mutual defection, this outcome can occur when actors misread each other, something more likely to occur when the game is repeated against the backdrop of previous play in which mutual defection has been averted.<sup>13</sup>

A comparable situation arises when states bargain repeatedly. Even if states have mutual interests, there is usually a bargaining range (the Pareto surface) along which they have a conflict of interest, because each wants to secure more from the ultimate outcome; that increment will come at the other's expense.<sup>14</sup> Now imagine situations of repeated bargaining in which one side gets the lion's share of the spoils. At some point, the party that has accepted the smaller payoff will likely reject such a division and demand more. At the very least, it will not accept a negotiated resolution that provides it less. Repeated distributional conflicts can preclude a bargain even when a mutually beneficial outcome exists.

These examples all assume repetition of the same game, but repeated interaction can also change the game itself to the point where the actors' assessments of the payoffs, not just of the probabilities, change. Again, take the case of two actors playing a game of Chicken. War is the least desirable outcome, and the game ends with one actor cooperating and the other defecting. The actor who cooperated may then reassess the game itself and, in a future crisis, feel that the experience of humiliation and what it wrought was worse than having gone to war would have been. That shift in the assessment of the payoffs changes the game from Chicken to one of "called bluff," in which the actor who no longer finds war the least desired outcome has a dominant strategy of

defection.<sup>15</sup> The other actor, who has a contingent strategy and whose preferences have not changed should then shift to cooperation upon realizing that the other actor's preferences have changed. The failure to recognize the other's shift, however, would lead to war.<sup>16</sup>

In each of these cases, a nonconflictual resolution in an initial situation makes a peaceful resolution more difficult to achieve in subsequent interactions. This is the core problem of international politics. States, especially great powers with wide-ranging geopolitical interests and concerns, interact with one another repeatedly. This means that they face repeated crises, some of which entail the risk of war. Successfully averting war once or twice is no guarantee that they will avoid it again. Indeed, the most critical factor in a subsequent round becomes the terms under which conflict was previously averted, whether earlier crises were resolved or went into remission.

World War I constitutes a prime example of this phenomenon. It was preceded by full-blown major power crises that served as precursors to overt hostilities when the two rising powers of Europe, Germany and Russia, each asserted its interests. The other great powers thwarted their ambitions, however, and the game then changed.

### The First Moroccan Crisis, 1905–06

The "Moroccan problem was the political barometer of Europe," observes Eugene Anderson, and the 1905–06 Moroccan crisis was the first of those presaging World War I. As Anderson notes, "It contained all those elements that were present at the other crises on the road to the great war."<sup>17</sup> The nations of Europe had long recognized Morocco as an independent country. Conflicting European interests in the nineteenth century had typically been settled by international conferences. And in 1880, at a conference at Madrid, the European powers agreed on a status quo that would not change without all of their agreement.

In the Anglo-French Entente of 1904, an arrangement that settled many of those two nations' long-standing disputes around the world, Britain consented to a free French hand in Morocco in exchange for its own freedom of action in Egypt.<sup>18</sup> Having also concluded agreements with Spain and Italy regarding Morocco, the French in January 1905 pressed the sultan of the Ottoman Empire to accept reforms that would effectively make Morocco a French protectorate. In response, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II traveled to Morocco to publicly offer German support for Moroccan independence.

Germany wanted to reaffirm its long-standing interests in Morocco and to end the new British-French cooperation that isolated the Germans. Its strategy failed when great power jockeying solidified the English-French relationship. Sir Edward Grey, who would serve as Britain's foreign secretary until 1916, first assumed that post with the new government that came to power in London in December 1905. One of his first acts was to inform Germany that Britain would not likely remain neutral in a war between France and Germany.

After much maneuvering among the powers, a conference was held in Algiers, Spain, in 1906 with representatives from Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Spain, and the United States. Despite extensive efforts to obtain the support of others, Germany found only Austria, its ally, backing its proposal for an independent Morocco rather than de facto French control. In the end, Germany had to accept an outcome that it had earlier deemed unacceptable. German assertiveness had ended up strengthening the twelve-year-old Franco-Russian alliance and the new Anglo-French Entente, with the British and French entering military dialogue in 1905. Most important, the alliance generated a German perception of encirclement and isolation, a view that the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907 strengthened.

The resolution of the first Moroccan crisis was a disaster for Germany, "the reverse of that intended." Its policy had unraveled, and "the constellation which faced it in 1907 had seemed unimaginable" only a few years before.<sup>19</sup> The crisis "gave a first hint of things to come and foreshadowed the world war." It was a "true crisis, a turning-point in European history" in which "war between France and Germany was seriously, though remotely, contemplated for the first time since 1875."<sup>20</sup> In its history "are mirrored almost all the movements of the Powers with reference to one another."<sup>21</sup>

## The Bosnian Crisis, 1908–09

Following the 1905–06 Moroccan crisis came another in the Balkans, one that more closely resembled the crisis that actually precipitated World War I. Its origins lay in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the contest between Austria-Hungary and Russia over the Balkans. The Ottoman Empire, which had once controlled much of southeastern Europe, had begun to fray. As one historian puts it, "The origins of the tensions in the Balkans which became the immediate cause of the First World War lie . . . in Ottoman senescence."<sup>22</sup>

The combination of weakening Ottoman rule and rising nationalist sentiment in southeastern Europe had given birth to movements for autonomy and independence within the Balkans while the great powers

jockeyed to control the area. Russia had fought a series of wars with Turkey in the nineteenth century and had become the champion of the Balkan Slavs. In 1877 war with Turkey erupted over uprisings by Slavic subjects of the Ottomans, and Russia's victory liberated most of southeastern Europe from Ottoman rule. The following year Russia dictated the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano, which included independence for Serbia and autonomy for Bulgaria, which was expected to be dominated by Russia. The other European powers met within months, and at the Congress of Berlin an isolated Russia found the terms of the treaty altered. Greater Bulgaria was divided in three, and Austria was allowed to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, provinces inhabited primarily by Serbs and Croats. Prince Gorchakov, chancellor of the Russian Empire, called the Berlin conference "the darkest page of [his] life."<sup>23</sup> British Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury described the resolution of 1878 as "a mere respite."<sup>24</sup>

Two decades later, a crisis erupted in 1908 when Austria-Hungary annexed the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia was prepared to accept this formalization of Austria's position in exchange for Austria agreeing to an amendment to the standing international agreement and reopening the Turkish Straits to Russian warships. Austria reneged, however. And when the independent Kingdom of Serbia objected to Bosnia's annexation and mobilized its army, it received Russian support. A flurry of discussions and negotiations resulted in Russia's diplomatic humiliation. The great powers affirmed Austria's annexation and made no amendments regarding Russian passage through the straits.

## The Second Moroccan Crisis, 1911

"The Moroccan problem," writes Anderson, "left behind plenty of raw material from which future conflicts could arise." One of those conflicts again pitted France against Germany in a contest over control of Morocco, where disorder spread to the capital (then at Fez) in March 1911.<sup>25</sup> At that point, the French decided to send an expeditionary force to protect lives and property. They came to this decision even though it represented a breach of the Algeciras settlement of 1906 and disregarded a German warning not to take military action. The Germans' initial response was to signal that this constituted an abrogation of the Algeciras settlement and to demand compensation should the French seek to establish an outright protectorate. Germany also sent a gunboat, the Panther, to the Moroccan harbor of Agadir, an action that it justified as necessary to protect German citizens, even though none were there. Franco-German discussions

about acceptable compensation proceeded but foundered over German demands for all of French Congo.

Ironically, German efforts to keep Britain uninvolved backfired. The British had not initially fully supported the French, but excessive German assertiveness resulted in Britain signaling that it would back France's position on compensation. During the summer and into the fall of 1911, there were war scares and military preparations, including military staff talks between Britain and France. Finally, in November 1911, France and Germany signed an agreement in which Germany obtained minor concessions in Africa while recognizing French control of Morocco.

Thus France had advanced its geopolitical position and obtained the support of Britain and Russia. Although no formal alliance resulted between Britain and France, their strategies had become more closely aligned. Once again, Germany's assertiveness had led to its humiliating retreat; Germany failed to achieve its stated interests and further antagonized Britain and Russia. It also engendered military as well as diplomatic cooperation between Britain and France.<sup>26</sup>

## The July 1914 Crisis

The next European crisis came in July 1914 and was not resolved short of war. Again, a Balkan crisis pitted Russia against Austria. As it had in the past, Germany supported Austria and its decision to present Serbia with an ultimatum after the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, an act in which members of the Serbian military were implicated. When Austria attacked Serbia, Russia undertook a partial military mobilization in support of the Serbs rather than accept Austria's action. Moreover, Germany this time rejected a British call, which others had accepted, for an international conference to resolve the dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. More than once, Kaiser Wilhelm told a close friend, "This time I shall not give in."<sup>27</sup>

The possibility of a European war had been both widely feared and widely dismissed in the years before one finally began in 1914. David Starr Jordan, Stanford University's first president and the president of the World Peace Foundation, concluded from his trip to Europe that "no considerable body of rational men in either France or Germany desires war or would look upon it otherwise than as a dire calamity."<sup>28</sup> One reason for thinking war unlikely was that 1914 Europe had weathered multiple crises in which war seemed possible but without belligerencies breaking out. The European publics had little expectation of, or desire for, war.<sup>29</sup>

Some did worry about the prospects of war, however, and saw the respites between crises as themselves being a problem. As French socialist Jean Jaurès put it in April 1913, “Europe has been afflicted by so many crises for so many years, it has been put dangerously to the test so many times without war breaking out that it has almost ceased to believe in the threat.”<sup>30</sup> Historian Paul Schroeder puts the point starkly: “Europe’s frequent escapes from crises before 1914 do not indicate the possibility that she could have continued to avoid war indefinitely; they rather indicate a general systemic crisis, an approaching breakdown.”<sup>31</sup>

The point made here, however, is that the crises were not necessarily a sign of either an approaching systemic breakdown or systemic strength. Rather, the ways in which they were resolved, or more accurately not resolved, sowed the seeds of future problems. Ends of crises that result in clear winners and thus generate a response from the losers of “not next time” or “never again” pose dangers for systemic stability and dim the prospect for war to be avoided in a subsequent crisis.

## Implications for International Relations Theory

This theory of the origins of war has implications for the arguments scholars make and the ways they assess them. These arguments and assessments are relevant for policy.

### *The Limits of Studying the Immediate Causes of War*

Wars are the product of ongoing and strategic interactions and of repeated interactions. Wars are the end point of a host of actions and reactions that extend back in time beyond the period immediately preceding the opening of armed hostilities. Prewar crises and the inferences that states draw from them for their subsequent interactions are crucial to understanding the emergence of war.

This argument implies an inadequacy in two prevalent approaches to the study of the outbreak of war. On the one hand are the many studies of war, in general, and World War I, in particular, that examine nations’ specific decisions to go to war. In the case of World War I, such studies lead to a focus on July 1914, because two earlier Balkan wars and a long series of quarrels between Austria and Serbia had not resulted in war. The argument becomes one that claims, whether implicitly or explicitly, that because only the specific features of 1914 resulted in belligerencies, only they deserve attention.<sup>32</sup> Such an approach is inadequate, however, because it decontextualizes a sequence of interactions.

On the other hand are structural approaches to the origins of war that focus on long-range dynamics such as the distribution of power and techno-



logical change. These are indeed important, but they need to be complemented by an analysis of the repeated crises that lead to war. Further, both approaches need to address why war was avoided in earlier crises, but was not in the one that eventually resulted in war. They need to be able to say what changed.

### *The Assumption of the Independence of Events*

Many studies of international politics, especially quantitative ones, treat events as independent of one another. This is standard practice in studies using large databases of events and disputes. Most analyses of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) treat such disputes as independent events and correlate measures of purported causal variables with the occurrence of MIDs.<sup>33</sup> They do so because it simplifies statistical inference. Yet such parameter estimates would be suspect if MIDs were not independent events. This chapter does not address whether MIDs are independent events, but it does suggest that state strategies in recurring MIDs are not independent. Hence, attributing war or even the escalation of MIDs to a set of exogenous features rather than endogenous strategic learning is inappropriate.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Bargaining Theory of War*

Scholars of international relations generally share an understanding of war that is built on a simple and singular logic: that wars are costly and states therefore want to avoid them. The failure to achieve a bargain to avoid belligerencies implies information asymmetries (where only conflict can reveal the intensities of preferences), or an inability to divide issues, or an inability to undertake the credible commitments needed to avoid war. This argument points to the difficulties that preclude the kinds of bargains necessary for avoiding costly conflicts.

Yet states that have experienced recurrent crises and remissions have found ways to avoid costly conflicts, despite the existence of informational asymmetries and commitment problems. Thus something must have changed for a crisis to end in war. If bargains to avoid war were possible at one point but not subsequently, informational asymmetries and commitment problems must have arisen between the occurrence of a crisis that successfully avoided war and the crisis that led to one.

The emphasis on informational asymmetry suggests that nations alone know their own resolve and are unable to signal it. Yet this disparity should be at its greatest when an interstate crisis first arises, not after a series of them. Similarly, if war begins because of one state's inability to credibly commit to exercising its expected power, there is no good reason why that would not be so when a rising and a declining power have their first crisis.<sup>35</sup>

In short, any formal model of conflict that looks only at one strategic interaction is incomplete and problematic. It is not the extant features of the final crisis but the repeated play preceding it that precludes a new agreement. War results when states replay crises and change strategies instead of finding a new bargain. The information asymmetry arises because of a state's unwillingness to again accept diplomatic defeat.<sup>36</sup>

### *Reputation and International Politics*

There is a lively debate among scholars of international relations about the role of reputation. Some argue that nations' track records clearly matter, that states assess one another's past histories and adopt strategies based on their understandings of others' past behavior. As a result, states also worry about their reputations. At times, therefore, they act not in accordance with their immediate interests but with an eye to their long-term reputation. In contrast, others argue, there is little empirical evidence that states assess one another's reputations. Instead, they focus on the features of the particular event at hand.<sup>37</sup> Yet the entire debate about reputation in international politics is miscast as one about whether a state's actions affect its credibility— for example, whether a nation choosing to back down is a function of its character or the particular features of a specific crisis.<sup>38</sup>

The argument here does not address whether states worry about their reputations or monitor those of others. It simply argues that states maintain or change strategies as a function of experience. That they continue on a particular course, however, can be seen as evidence of their wanting to maintain a reputation, but it is merely their continuation of a strategy deemed to have been successful in the past. That they change course after experiencing diplomatic defeat derives not from a concern about their reputation but from their wanting to avoid a repetition of the last outcome, which left them dissatisfied or aggrieved. In short, “current calculus theory” entails past experience theory.<sup>39</sup>

### *Modeling Rivalries and Recurrence*

Conflicts and rivalries between pairs of countries occur over extended periods. For this reason, scholars need to address questions about their origins, courses, and outcomes. Yet the small literature devoted to international rivalries is one in which scholars dispute what constitutes a rivalry and the appropriate focus for scholarship. Some even see a focus on rivalries as replacing a “traditional causes-of-war approach.”<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the quantitative studies of these interactions provide no logic for when and why conflicts and rivalries result in war. The argument in this chapter provides a logic for when and why crises become more difficult to resolve peacefully.

## Conclusion

World War I has remained a specter for a century. During the Cold War, many scholars and policymakers feared the possibility of war by miscalculation and wondered if World War I provided an analogue for the prospect of a war growing out of a crisis between the superpowers.<sup>41</sup> The end of the Cold War brought a fear of the prospect of returning to the structural conditions preceding World War I.<sup>42</sup>

In the early twenty-first century, concern has grown about interstate relations in the western Pacific and the fear that they mirror those in Europe prior to World War I. Kevin Rudd, the former foreign minister and prime minister of Australia, notes that “the region increasingly resembles a 21st-century maritime redux of the Balkans a century ago—a tinderbox on water.”<sup>43</sup> Historian Margaret MacMillan, the author of a book on World War I, notes the equivalence as well: “It is tempting—and sobering—to compare today’s relationship between China and the U.S. with that between Germany and England a century ago.”<sup>44</sup> Historian Christopher Clark arrives at the same conclusion after also writing a book on World War I: “I must say I was struck by the . . . insight . . . that . . . our world is getting more like 1914, not less like it.”<sup>45</sup>

They are not alone. It has become commonplace for scholars, policy-makers, and journalists to compare the current conflicts in East Asia to the period preceding World War I. Today, as then, there is the prospect of a power transition in which a rising power faces a declining one. Also in evidence are territorial disputes, trade and investment rivalries, concerns with national honor, and alliances cemented by common geopolitical concerns. But today, as then, there is substantial economic interdependence between the relevant great powers, growing wealth, massive reductions in poverty, growth in education and science, and the arrival of industrialization and modernity. Today, as then, the sense that war would be irrationally ruinous and so readily avoidable coexists with the view that the conflicts that could lead to war are both present and worsening. The international community has already witnessed small-scale crises concluding with respites rather than resolutions. The crises seem manageable. If they come to leave clear winners and clear losers, however, the danger of war will emerge with a subsequent crisis in which one side attempts to reproduce its triumph and the other vows “never again.”

Respite or Resolutions?  
Recurring Crises and the Origins of War

1. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 7. For a chart of the number of works published on World War I, see *ibid.*, p. 17.
2. Ross F. Collins, *World War I: Primary Documents on Events from 1914 to 1919* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2008), p. 9.
3. As one scholar notes, “Whole books are now written about how the causes of the war have been written about, [and] major academic conferences are staged at every conceivable anniversary of the war’s outbreak.” See John F.V. Keiger, “The War

Explained: 1914 to the Present,” in John Horne, ed., *A Companion to World War I* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 19. For relatively recent historiographic discussions, see Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (London: Longman, 2002); and Samuel R. Williamson Jr. and Ernest R. May, “An Identity of Opinion: Historians and July 1914,” *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (June 2007), pp. 335–387. For two characterizations of the competing approaches from an international relations theory perspective, see Dale C. Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Keir A. Lieber, “The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory,” *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Fall 2007), pp. 155–191. Note, however, that both of these works oversell the case that Germany actively sought war.

4. Stephen M. Walt, “Good News: World War I Is Over and Will Not Happen Again,” *Foreign Policy*, February 8, 2013.

5. The canonical reference is James D. Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 379–414. For a recent review, see Matthew O. Jackson and Massimo Morelli, “The Reasons for War: An Updated Survey,” in Christopher J. Coyne and Rachel L. Mathers, eds., *The Handbook on the Political Economy of War* (Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar, 2011), pp. 34–57. This consensus forms the core of formal models that focus on the decision in favor of war’s costly lottery.

6. Arthur A. Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate: Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 62.

7. One study of enduring rivalries finds that they are more likely to end in war and that they have accounted for almost half of interstate wars. See Paul F. Diehl and Gary Goertz, *War and Peace in International Rivalry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 61–64.

8. Crises, especially recurring ones, occur only if the power disparity between the countries involved is not so great as to preclude them. Thus crises are more likely to occur between great powers.

9. The standard Win-Stay and Lose-Shift strategy is also known as “Pavlov” in the modeling literature and was dubbed “Simpleton” by Anatol Rapoport and Albert M. Chammah, *Prisoner’s Dilemma: A Study in Conflict and Cooperation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965). The reason for the modification is that the standard Win-Stay and Lose-Shift strategy shifts to cooperation after a mutual defection outcome. The argument here is that strategy shifts when an outcome has resulted in one’s own loss and another’s win. For comparisons of Win-Stay and Lose-Shift with other strategies such as Tit-for-Tat, see Lorenz A. Imhof, Drew Fudenberg, and Martin A. Nowak, “Tit-for-Tat or Win-Stay, Lose-Shift?” *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, Vol. 247, No. 3 (August 2007), pp. 574–580.

10. In simulation studies of strategies, this is typically operationalized in terms

of some aspiration level that needs to be met for a strategy to be repeated. See, for example, Inkoo Cho and Akihiko Matsui, "Learning Aspiration in Repeated Games," *Journal of Economic Theory*, Vol. 124, No. 2 (October 2005), pp. 171–201.

11. This is referred to as a "grim trigger" strategy, in which an actor initially cooperates but then defects in every move following defection by the other side.

12. For an alternative view, see Robert Jervis, "Bargaining and Bargaining Tactics," in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman, eds., *Nomos XIV: Coercion* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972), pp. 272–288. Jervis argues that merely the expectation that one actor will stand firm will lead the other to capitulate. The problem is that this turns out not to be the case empirically in repeated games of Chicken.

13. For the impact of such misperceptions, see Arthur A. Stein, "When Misperception Matters," *World Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (July 1982), pp. 505–526; and Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate*, chap. 3.

14. Stephen D. Krasner, "Global Communications and National Power: Life on the Pareto Frontier," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (April 1991), pp. 336–366.

15. This term was so dubbed by Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977). Snyder and Diesing characterize the four crises discussed below as four different games, thus suggesting a change in preference between each crisis.

16. For discussions of this issue, see Stein, "When Misperception Matters"; and Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate*, chap. 3.

17. Eugene N. Anderson, *The First Moroccan Crisis, 1904–1906* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. vii.

18. Indeed, the formal public title of their agreement was "Declaration between the United Kingdom and France Respecting Egypt and Morocco." The secret protocols they signed at the same time came to be dubbed the "Entente Cordiale."

19. Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, Vol. 1: *To Arms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 16, 20.

20. A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), pp. 440–441.

21. Anderson, *The First Moroccan Crisis, 1904–1906*, p. vii.

22. Strachan, *The First World War*, p. 41.

23. David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, "Russian Foreign Policy, 1815–1917," in Dominic Lieven, ed., *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Vol. 2: *Imperial Russia, 1689–1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 566.

24. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918*, p. 253.

25. Anderson, *The First Moroccan Crisis, 1904–1906*, p. 405.

26. In the words of historian Hew Strachan, "It is striking in the pre-1914 crises,

particularly both those over Morocco, how Germany would start with a large measure of rightness in her case, but forfeit this legitimacy by her threatening and domineering diplomacy." See Strachan, "The First World War: Causes and Course," *Historical Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (March 1986), p. 235. 27. Margaret MacMillan, "The Rhyme of History: Lessons of the Great War" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, December 14, 2013), <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2013/rhyme-of-history>.

28. David Starr Jordan, quoted in Michael S. Neiberg, *Dance of the Furies: Europe and the Outbreak of World War I* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 59.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., p. 57.

31. Paul W. Schroeder, "World War I as Galloping Gertie: A Reply to Joachim Remak," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (September 1972), p. 321. It should be noted that this is a point of disagreement among scholars. Kenneth N. Waltz, for example, sees recurring crises as a source of stability. Even in a bipolar world, he argues, "if the condition of conflict remains, the absence of crises becomes more disturbing than their recurrence." See Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus*, Vol. 93, No. 3 (Summer 1964), p. 884.

32. This is the argument made by Joachim Remak, "1914—The Third Balkan War: Origins Reconsidered," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (September 1971), pp. 354–366.

33. For a description of the dataset, see Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer, " Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Fall 1996), pp. 163–212.

34. There is another sense in which crises may not be independent: if countries and leaders purposely start crises under specific conditions. The case can be made that the triggers for the pre–World War I crises were exogenous to the assertive strategies that originated them. Events in Morocco and the Balkans, as well as elsewhere, repeatedly raised problems that the great powers had to manage. As the Russian foreign minister told the foreign ministers of the other powers in January 1908, "Events do not depend on us." Thus, as historian Dominic Lieven puts it, "Russia could have a crisis imposed on it against its will at any time." See D.C.B. Lieven, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983), p. 33.

35. The same point can be made about the third proffered reason for war: issue indivisibility. If an issue of contention is not divisible and is thus a cause of conflict, it will be just as much so when it first arises as when it arises subsequently.

36. For a broad argument about the role of status and humiliation in international politics, see Joslyn Barnhart, "Prestige, Humiliation, and International Politics," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2013.

37. Daryl G. Press contrasts his “current calculus theory” with what he dubs “past actions theory.” See Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005).
38. Jonathan Mercer makes the situational argument in Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996).
39. The role of past success and failure has been discussed in different ways. In general, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976). Some scholars argue that actors always attempt to fight or prevent the previous war. Others argue that actors try to relive past successes. Still others argue that past failure leads to the adoption of a more coercive strategy. See Russell J. Leng, “When Will They Ever Learn? Coercive Bargaining in Recurrent Crises,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (September 1983), pp. 379–419. One can also use such arguments to modify existing ones. For example, prospect theory argues that actors are risk acceptant. The theory can be modified to argue that actors may not make risky choices in the domain of losses the first time around, but will do so having experienced losses in the past. The argument here is that past capitulation and loss result in an unwillingness to again accept a loss as the cost for averting war.
40. Diehl and Goertz, *War and Peace in International Rivalry*.
41. Miles Kahler, “Rumors of War: The 1914 Analogy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Winter 1979/80), pp. 374–396.
42. John J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1990), pp. 5–56.
43. Kevin Rudd, “A Maritime Balkans of the 21st Century?” *Foreign Policy*, January 30, 2013. Ironically, Luxembourg’s prime minister saw parallels between modern-day Europe and the Europe of one hundred years ago. See Jean-Claude Juncker, “Interview: The Demons Haven’t Been Banished,” *Spiegel*, March 11, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/spiegel-interview-with-luxembourg-prime-minister-juncker-a-888021.html>.
44. MacMillan, “The Rhyme of History.”
45. “Stumbling into World War I, Like Sleepwalkers’: Interview with Christopher Clark,” National Public Radio, April 23, 2013. Journalists have made the same point. See Gideon Rachman. “The Shadow of 1914 Falls over the Pacific,” *Financial Times*, February 4, 2013; and Richard Gwyn, “Is China Making the Same Mistakes as Kaiser Wilhelm’s Germany?” *Toronto Star*, December 9, 2013.