VANISHING COUP

THE PATTERN OF WORLD HISTORY SINCE 1310

IVAN PERKINS

Vanishing Coup

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Ivan Perkins

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Figure 5.2: George Washington (1732-99) (oil on canvas), King, Samuel (18th century) / Chateau Blerancourt, Picardie, France / Giraudon / The Bridgeman Art Library

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I knew I was on the right track when Ted Slingerland, with his exacting standards and unsentimental approach, praised the project. Chris Ferko has influenced me generally by making a lifelong, hilarious sport out of punctur-

ing clichés and pomposity, and I can only hope that the book adheres closely enough to the Ferko ethos. Andy Gillis has been a good and important friend for sixteen years and has been an encouraging voice through a long period of slow but steady progress.

As my parents have long realized, and as I have come to understand, this apple has not fallen far from the tree. Both are independent innovators with little patience for groupthink. From my mom, Barbara Bridgman Perkins, I have learned (and probably inherited) a flinty, self-reliant instinct to question all received wisdom. Since the Carter-Reagan campaign of 1980, when I was nine years old, my dad, John Perkins, has told me all about politics. (We began with an extensive series of bedtime lectures on the Watergate crisis, which I recall with great fondness.) Of course, with this background, I could hardly help but question some of my parents' own political perspectives. Both provided great encouragement and helpful comments on the manuscript. If this book succeeds in questioning or toppling any received academic wisdom, it is because of their example, as well as their patient support and encouragement through the years.

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I am indebted to Steven Pinker and Spencer Weart. I have long been an avid Steven Pinker fan, but when I saw his latest opus, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, I momentarily despaired because I thought he had scooped me. In fact, I believe our projects are quite different but complementary. In *Better Angels*, Pinker comprehensively demonstrates the decline of violence, in all forms, over the course of human history. *Vanishing Coup* presents a thesis which is consistent with Pinker's empirical claims, and, I hope, improves our causal understanding of the "pacification process" which Pinker so convincingly establishes. Spencer Weart has traced and explained the "democratic peace" in an exceptionally powerful manner; his work upended and transformed my inquiry into the international relations of coup-free states. When both Pinker and Weart wrote back to me, a completely unknown and as-yet unpublished author, it was incredibly meaningful and exciting.

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My wife, Nicole, has been an indispensable partner in the creation of this book. She has listened patiently, explored ideas with me, and provided much-needed criticism. She has consistently believed in me, she has been my therapist and coach, and she has enabled me to pursue this project even though many other life circumstances—including school, work, and children—might easily have made this impossible. Also, in ways unrelated to the book, she has made my life joyful. I cannot believe my good fortune. Also, I am thankful for my funny, feisty, energetic sons, Milo and Linus, especially when we're out playing on the beach, but even when it's time for brushing and flossing.

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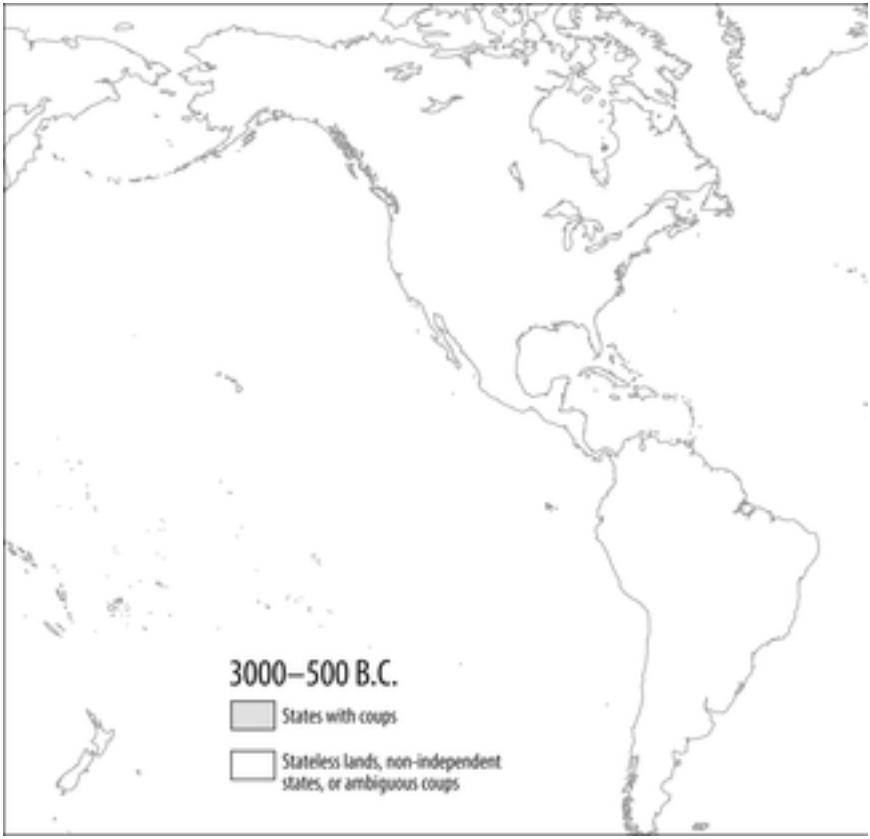
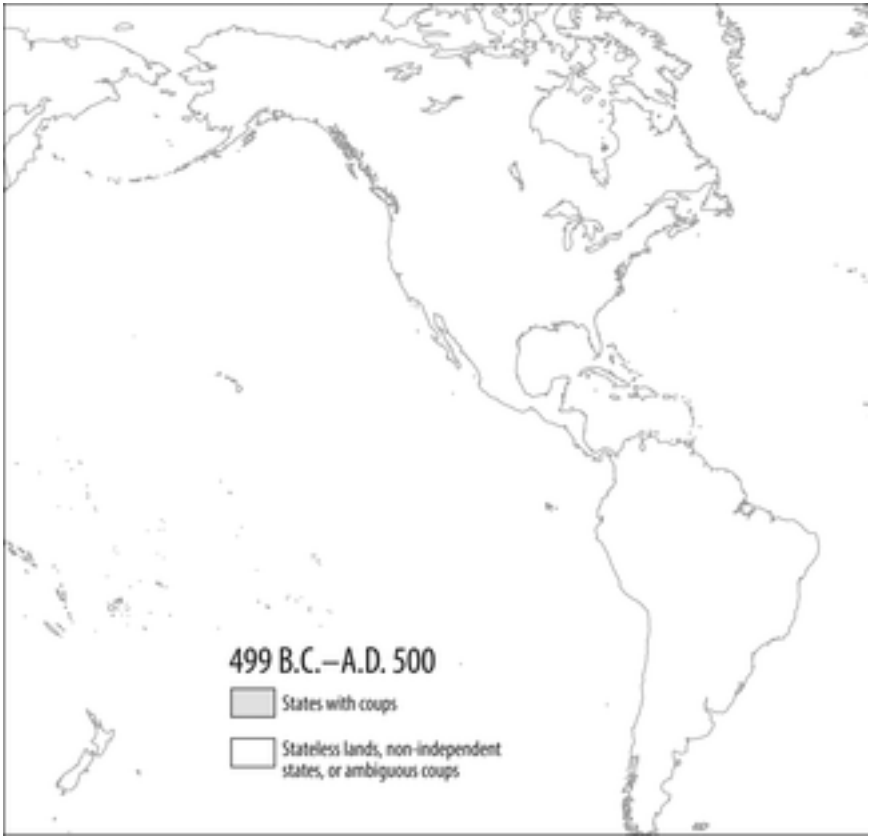
Maps

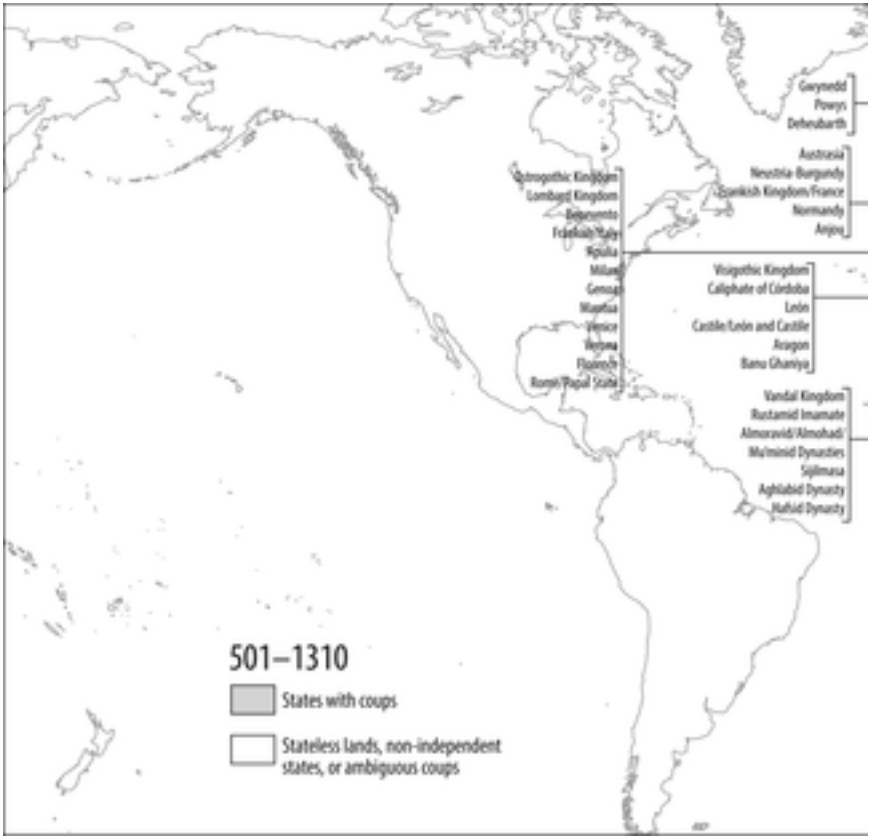
Coups and World History


3000–500 B.C.
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

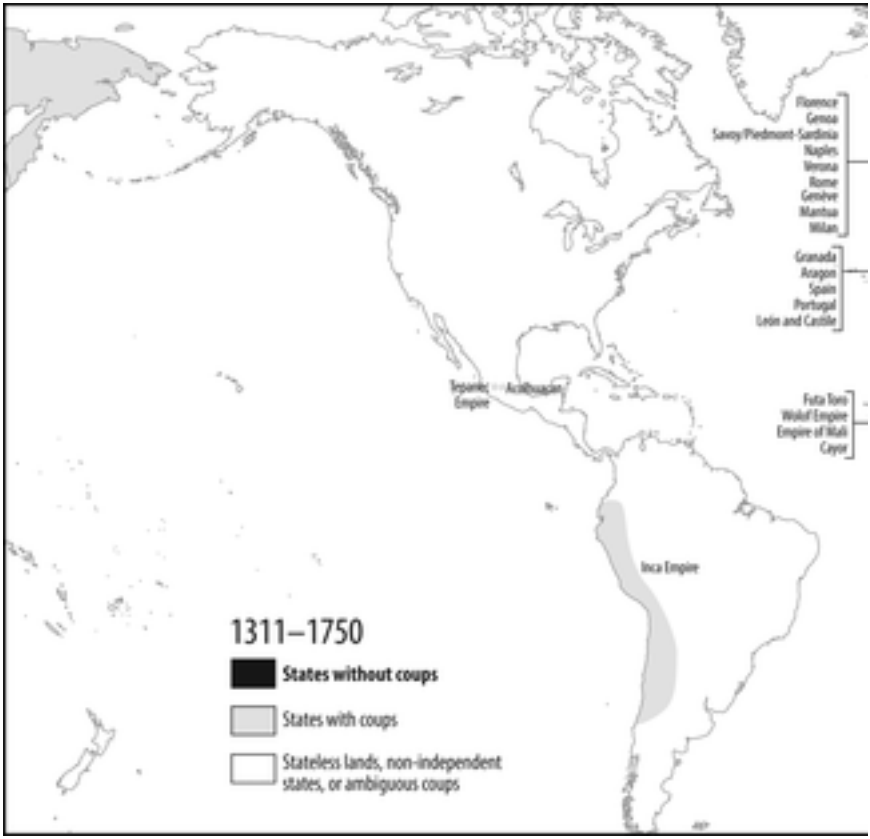
Mitylene
Heraclea
Pontica
Sicyon
Rome
Kibyracia
Lydia
Ionia
Ecbatana
Mitapont
Campe
Akragas
Corinth
Argos
Megara
Chalcis
Naxos
Athens
Sardis
Assyria
Persia
Egypt
Judah
Akkad
Babylon
Ur
Shang
Dynasty
Western Zhou
Dynasty
Jin
Wei
Yan
Qin
Qi
Lu
Cao
Song
Zheng
Chu
Cai
Chen
Wu


499 B.C.–A.D. 500
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

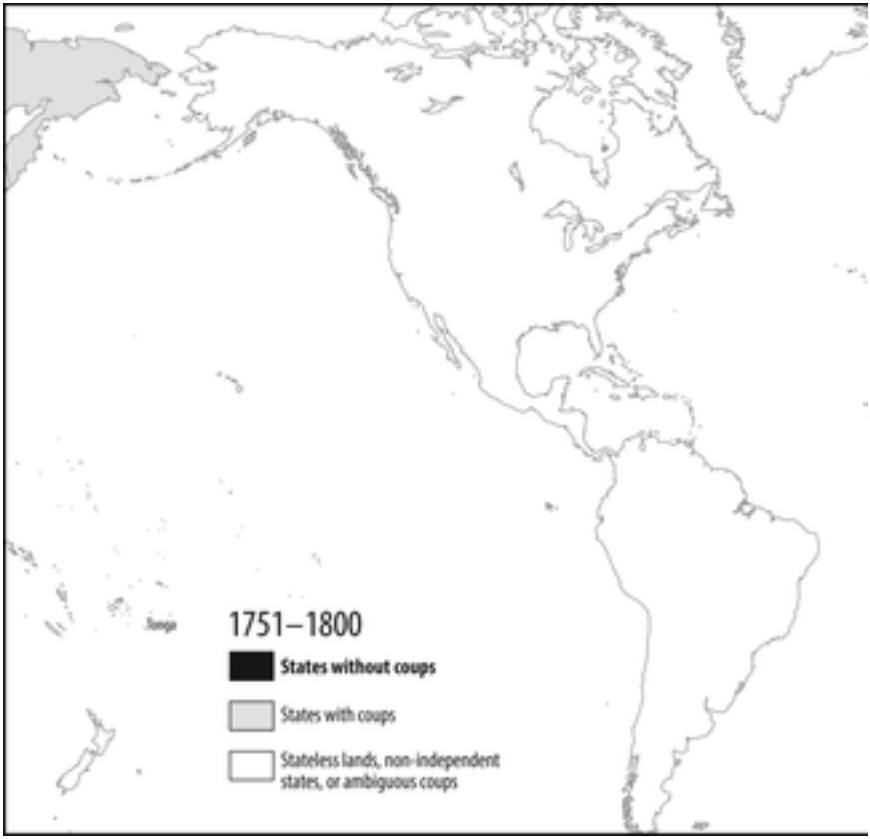
Epirus
Sicyon
Corcyra
Corinth
Eastern Roman Empire
Roman Empire
Pontus
Visigothic Kingdom
Armenia
Carthage
Persia
Bactria
Hasragas
Numidia
Elis
Athens
Hasmonean Kingdom
Magadha
Syracuse
Argos
Rhodes
Gupta Dynasty
Sparta
Champa
Funan
Sagnibane
Xiong Nu Empire
Chinese Empire
Yan
Qi
Jin
Lu
Qin
Song
Chu
Cai


Gwynedd
Powys
Deheubarth
Austrasia
Neustria-Burgundy
Frankish Kingdom/France
Normandy
Anjou
Ostrogothic Kingdom
Lombard Kingdom
Benevento
Frankish Italy
Ripuria
Milan
Genoa
Mantua
Venice
Verona
Florence
Rome/Papal State
Visigothic Kingdom
Caliphate of Córdoba
León
Castile/León and Castile
Aragon
Banu Ghaniya
Vandal Kingdom
Rustamid Imamate
Almoravid/Almohad/
Ma'minid Dynasties
Sijilmasa
Aghlabid Dynasty
Hafsid Dynasty
501–1310
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

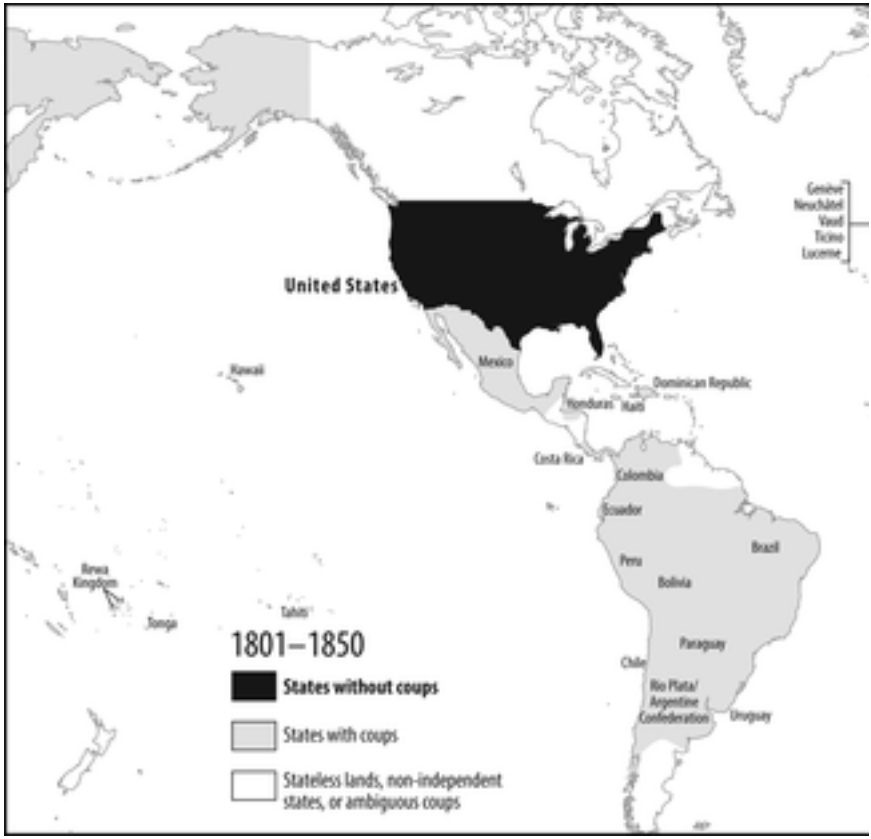
Mercia
Northumberland
Kent
Wessex
England
Scotland
Norway
Sweden
Denmark
Connaught
Portugal
Kingdom of Sicily
Bulgarian Empire
Hungary
Khanate of the Golden Horde
Seljuq Empire
Mongol Empire
Northern Wei Dynasty
Northern Zhou Dynasty
Koryo
Japan
Tibet
Kashmir
Sultanate of Delhi
Chinese Empire
"Five Dynasties"
Southern Qi Dynasty
Islamic Caliphate
Sasanid/Buyid Dynasties
Il-Khanate
Kannauj
Rashtrakuta Dynasty
Pagan
Vietnam
Khmer Empire
Champa
Funan
Eastern Chalukya Dynasty
Western Chalukya Dynasty
Taprobane
Ethiopia
Empire of Mali
Byzantium/Latin Empire
Empire of Nicaea
Rum Sultanate
Tulunid Dynasty
Fatimid Caliphate
Mamluk Sultanate
Antioch
Jerusalem
Seljuq Damascus
Kilwa Sultanate
Kadiri/
Singhasari


Florence
Genoa
Savoy/Piedmont-Sardinia
Naples
Verona
Rome
Genève
Mantua
Milan
Granada
Aragon
Spain
Portugal
León and Castile
Tepanec Empire
Acolhuacan
Futa Toro
Wolof Empire
Empire of Mali
Cayor
Inca Empire
1311–1750
States without coups
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

Denmark-Norway/
Kalmar Union
United Netherlands
Habsburg Empire
Scotland
England/
Great Britain
Sweden
Muscovy/Russia
Lithuania
Poland-
Lithuania
Bohemia
France
Serbia
Bosnia
Byzantine Empire
Venetian
Republic
Ottoman Empire
Timurid
Empire
Tibet
Malla
Dynasty
Korye/
Choson Dynasty
Japan
Chinese
Empire
Zayyanid Sultanate
Tunisia
Mamluk
Marinid/Wattasid/
Saadi/Alawite Dynasties
Muzaffarid Dynasty
Safavid/Afsharid
Dynasties
Mamluk
Sultanate/
Egypt
Sultanates of
Delhi/Lodi
Suri Dynasty/
Mughal Empire
Ayutthaya
Lan Xang
Lan Na
Mrohuang
Toungoo Dynasty
Mac/Tranh Dynasties
Champa
Nguyen Dynasty
Vietnam
Chenar Kingdom
Songhai Empire
Air Sultanate
Segu
Kanem-
Bornu
Funj
Ethiopia
Maratha Confederacy
Bahmani Sultanate/Ahmadnagar
Bijapur Sultanate
Hyderabad
Vijayanagar Empire
Dagomba
Gobir
Dahomey
Allada
Kano
Whydah
Nembe
Akwamu
Ashanti Empire
Avisi
Sultanate
of Brunei
Majapahit
Empire
Sultanate of Johore
Bantam Sultanate
Wataram Sultanate
Kongo
Luba
Lunda


1751–1800
States without coups
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

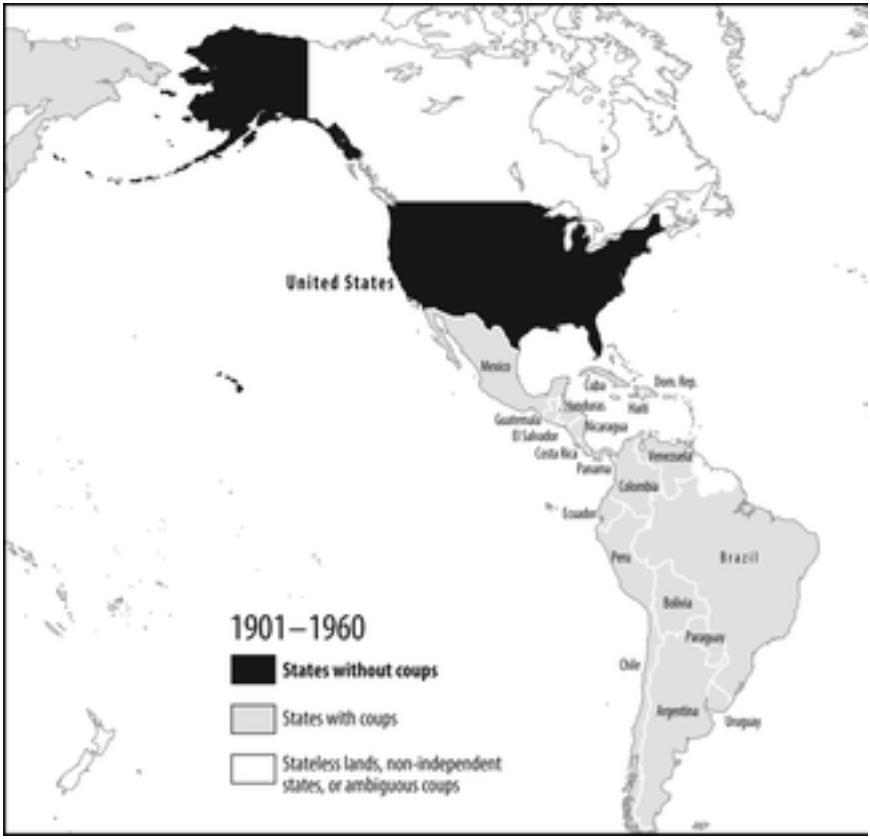
Britain
Sweden
Denmark-Norway
Russia
Poland
Netherlands
France
Portuguese Guiana
Morocco
Tunisia
Qaramanli Dynasty
Zand Dynasty
Durrani Empire
China
Oman
Gaikwar
Bengal
Myanmar
Hyderabad
Mysore
Arcot
Siam
Nguyen Dynasty
Futa Toro
Sego
Futa Jallon
Dahomey
Nupe
Oyo Empire
Ashanti Empire
Ethiopia
Funj
Mataram Sultanate


Geneva
Neuchâtel
Vaud
Ticino
Lucerne
United States
Hawaii
Mexico
Dominican Republic
Honduras
Haiti
Costa Rica
Colombia
Ecuador
Brazil
Peru
Bolivia
Rewa Kingdom
Tonga
Tahiti
Paraguay
Chile
Rio Plata/ Argentine Confederation
Uruguay
1801–1850
States without coups
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

Britain
Sweden
Frankfurt am Main
Brunswick/Hanover
Hesse-Kassel
Prussia
Baden
Saxony
Bavaria
Belgium
France
Russia
Austrian Empire
Portugal
Spain
Ottoman Empire
Greece
Tunisia
Iran
Durrani Empire
Sikh Kingdom
Nepal
China
Korea
Morocco
Libya
Piedmont-Sardinia
Tuscany
Papal States
Kingdom of the Two Sicilies
Saudia Arabia
Oman
Myanmar
Vietnam
Cambodia
Ethiopia
Dahomey
Benny
Ashanti Empire
Sultanate of Mombasa
Kazembe
Zulu Kingdom

United States
Mexico
Dominican Republic
Honduras
Haiti
Guatemala
El Salvador
Nicaragua
Costa Rica
Venezuela
Colombia
Ecuador
Peru
Brazil
Bolivia
Paraguay
Chile
Uruguay
Argentina
Samoa
Tonga
1851–1900
States without coups
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

Sweden-Norway
Britain
Denmark
Prussia/Germany
Netherlands
Belgium
Switzerland
Romania
Serbia
Bulgaria
Portugal
Spain
France
Italy
Greece
Ottoman Empire
Morocco
Egypt
Saudi Arabia
Oman
Tukulor Empire
Ethiopia
Kingdom of Buganda
Kingdom of Bunyoro
Sultanate of Zanzibar
Gaza Kingdom
Kingdom of Lozi
Kingdom of Merina
Matabele Kingdom
South African Republic
Zulu Kingdom
Russia
Afghanistan
China
Korea
Japan
Myanmar
Siam
Vietnam
Sultanate of Selangor
Sultanate of Pahang


United States
Mexico
Cuba
Dom. Rep.
Honduras
Haiti
Guatemala
Nicaragua
El Salvador
Costa Rica
Venezuela
Panama
Colombia
Ecuador
Peru
Brazil
Bolivia
Paraguay
Chile
Argentina
Uruguay
1901–1960
States without coups
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

Finland
Sweden
Russia/Soviet Union
Britain
Ireland
Estonia
Latvia
Lithuania
Czechoslovakia
Austria
Hungary
Serbia/Yugoslavia
Albania
Romania
Bulgaria
Germany
Poland
Switzerland
Mongolia
Portugal
Spain
Italy
Ottoman Empire
Turkey
Greece
Syria
Lebanon
Iraq
Iran
Afghanistan
Pakistan
Nepal
Bhutan
China
North Korea
South Korea
Japan
Morocco
Egypt
Oman
Yemen
Sudan
Ethiopia
Laos
Thailand
North Vietnam
Philippines
Malaysia
Congo

Greenland
Canada
United States
Mexico
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dom. Rep.
Belize
Hon.
Haiti
Guat.
Nic.
Pan.
Trin. & Tob.
Venezuela
Guy.
Colombia
Sur.
Ecuador
Solomon Islands
Tonga
Fiji
Peru
Brazil
Bolivia
Paraguay
Chile
Argentina
Uruguay
New Zealand
1961–2010
States without coups
States with coups
Stateless lands, non-independent states, or ambiguous coups

Iceland
Norway
Finland
Sweden
Britain
Ireland
Den.
Neth.
Bel.
Lux.
Germany
Switzerland
Austria
Belarus
Ukraine
Soviet Union/Russia
Kaz.
Mongolia
North Korea
Japan
China
Portugal
Spain
Italy
Turkey
Georgia
Israel
Syria
Iraq
Iran
Afghanistan
Pakistan
Nepal
India
Myanmar
Taiwan
Thailand
Philippines
Sri Lanka
Malaysia
Singapore
Morocco
Algeria
Libya
Egypt
Saudi Arabia
Kuwait
Oman
Yemen
Mali
Niger
Chad
Sudan
Ethiopia
Somalia
Nigeria
Ghana
Kenya
Tanz.
Seychelles
Comoros
Madagascar
Angola
Zambia
Moz.
Namibia
Botswana
Swazi.
Les.
South Africa
Australia

These maps are based on data contained in the online resource "Coups in World History," which can be accessed at https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442222717.

I

Solid States

Chapter One

The Coup-Free Zone

As the Watergate crisis escalated in 1973, rumors darted around Washington that President Richard Nixon might call on the military for support.

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt served on the Joint Chiefs of Staff during that time. Many years later, he described an alarming meeting between Nixon and the Joint Chiefs in December 1973.

Nixon launched into a rambling speech about how "the Eastern liberal establishment was out to do us all in." Nixon's next suggestion was shocking. "We gentlemen here," declared the president, "are the last hope, the last chance to resist."

"I got the impression," Zumwalt recalled, "he was sort of testing the water with us, to see whether there would be support—any nodding of heads—at some of these things. One could well have come to the conclusion that here was the Commander-in-Chief trying to see what the reaction of the Chiefs might be if he did something unconstitutional. . . . He was trying to find out whether in a crunch there was support to keep him in power."

The military commanders did not respond, and the moment passed.

After the meeting, a stunned Admiral Zumwalt conferred with the army chief, General Creighton Abrams. General Abrams said he would simply act as though the episode never occurred.[1]

If Zumwalt's depiction is accurate, President Nixon appears to have floated a trial balloon, to see whether the military brass would support him in some sort of coup d'état, or unconstitutional use of force, against Congress. The balloon popped instantly, and no more was said about the matter.

The following summer, Congress moved toward impeachment. Defense Secretary James Schlesinger secured understandings with military commanders that he personally, under the National Security Act, had to relay any orders emanating from the White House. No one was to take any action, or

execute any orders, unless Secretary Schlesinger authorized it. "I did assure myself," recalled Schlesinger, "that there would be no question about the proper constitutional and legislative chain of command. And there never was any question."[2]

During his last six weeks in office, Nixon spent only six days at the White House. The rest of the time, he stayed at his retreat in San Clemente, California, overlooking the Pacific Ocean.[3]

After the silent response of the Joint Chiefs, President Nixon faced his humiliating trial with stoicism, not Machiavellian machinations. In the end, Watergate constitutes our best evidence that no one—not even the president of the United States—can overturn the American constitutional order.

Why has there never been a coup d'état in America? Not only have we never suffered a coup, we have never even seen a coup attempt. Why not?

For that matter, what makes a coup such an outlandish prospect in many affluent democracies? Imagine—tanks roll into Washington, London, Stockholm, Berlin, or Tokyo; troops seize government buildings and arrest civilian leaders; a general, president, or junta appears on television and announces a new regime.

It sounds implausible. But why doesn't it happen here? After all, this scenario unfolds regularly around the world, in capitals like Caracas, Kinshasa, Quito, Katmandu, and Conakry. Moreover, coups used to be pandemic. Turn to almost any page in ancient and medieval history, and you will find violent intrigue and coup d'état after coup d'état.[4]

There is a standard theory of stability: "professional" military officers are so thoroughly steeped in ethics and self-sacrifice, and so fully internalize the values of civilian control and constitutionalism, that they will not lead a coup. This theory has several problems. First, it simply pushes the explanation back one level: Why do some military organizations, but not others, effectively inculcate "professional" values? Second, the standard theory of stability offers no good explanation for the fact that well-educated, highly "professional" officers have recently led coups in various countries (such as Thailand in 2006, Pakistan in 1999, the Soviet Union in 1991, and so forth). Third, this theory lacks credibility because it places enormous weight on the capacity for virtue. Given the stakes—supreme power, riches, and everlasting fame—why haven't any U.S. politicians or military commanders tried to mimic Caesar, Napoleon, or Mussolini?

This book offers a simpler explanation: stability is not about ethics—it is about law. Impartial "rule-of-law" institutions weaken and dissolve personal loyalty relationships within the political-military establishment. This process inhibits the formation of grand criminal conspiracies, up to and including those aiming at a coup d'état.

The attenuation of personal loyalties generates stability because, in the absence of tightly knit factions, cliques, and cabals, the formation of a grand conspiracy to seize state power becomes inordinately difficult. Scholars of corruption have pointed out that "corruption networks" tend to be based on family, clan, tribal, and patronage bonds[5]; similarly, scholars of the coup d'état have noted that coup organizers tend to draw upon the same "strong-tie" links to recruit followers.[6] This is because any criminal endeavor—and especially a coup, which is a complex operation requiring the participation of hundreds of individuals—brings the risk of discovery and criminal punishment. As a result, conspirators turn to people they can trust.

Even in rule-of-law states with weak personal loyalties, of course, some corrupt activities occur within government. For example, politicians, civil servants, and military personnel can be susceptible to the temptations of bribery—a crime that might involve only two people and can remain forever secret. Balancing risks and rewards, it may be individually rational to offer or accept a bribe. But the risk-reward calculations change with respect to a coup d'état, where hundreds of individuals must join a conspiracy in advance and then participate in an operation that becomes public at the moment of execution. In a rule-of-law society, a coup organizer would have to approach hundreds of fellow military officers, bureaucrats, or politicians—with whom he or she would only be connected through "weak ties"—and any one of them could betray the plot, perhaps for personal gain.

In this context, it becomes highly irrational (from an individual's perspective) to approach even one other person about a coup d'état. In short, the rule of law creates a "collective action problem" that renders coup conspiracies untenable. In mature democracies like the United States, Britain, Sweden, Germany, and Japan, it is the rule of law that inhibits any threat of a coup d'état.

This is why President Nixon could only insinuate, in a way that maintained plausible deniability, the possibility of military-backed resistance to Congress. It is also why the Joint Chiefs pretended to ignore that awkward moment and why such episodes, from all accounts, are exceedingly rare in American politics.

As the maps at the beginning of the book illustrate, the past few centuries have witnessed an expanding "coup-free zone." On each map, the gray-colored states experienced coups, whereas the black-colored states did not. Each map covers a span of at least fifty years, and a state must pass at least fifty continuous years of stable and independent existence, without a single coup or coup attempt, to be colored black.

As we can see from these maps, coups have long been the norm, and stability is a recent innovation. The black zone unfurled slowly for several centuries but has recently exploded.

On these maps, two main patterns cry out for explanation. First, what explains all the gray? Why has human politics traditionally been a relentless cycle of intrigue, plotting, and violent displacement of leaders? Second, what explains the black? How have certain states escaped the cycle and emerged into long-term tranquility? These questions drive our inquiry.

But first, we should clarify our terms. I define "coup" broadly, as any forceful seizure of central government power. A coup, or coup d'état, is a disorderly, unpredictable transfer of power, accomplished through physical force or intimidation. This includes a coup d'état by military commanders but also encompasses palace intrigue. When one brother kills or imprisons another and assumes his throne, he commits a coup. The definition includes long civil wars for power, like that waged between Marc Antony, Octavian, and the assassins of Julius Caesar, as well as spontaneous street revolutions, like those in Tehran in 1979, Manila in 1986, Bucharest in 1989, Belgrade in 2000, and Tunis and Cairo in 2011. The effort to seize power need not succeed; serious but failed attempts still count. Finally, the term "coup" embraces an "executive coup," whereby a constitutional leader radically and forcefully extends his scope of power or term of service, as in Chancellor Adolf Hitler's 1933 hijacking of Germany with Nazi thugs.

Our definition of "coup" must exclude purely secessionist rebellions, where one region simply tries to leave a larger unit. These appear throughout history and include local uprisings against the Roman, Persian, and Chinese empires, the U.S. Civil War, and recent conflicts in Bosnia, East Timor, and Chechnya. Such events, we should note, are fully compatible with central stability. For example, even as imperial Britain faced separatist revolts like the American Revolution, the Sepoy Mutiny in India, Boer rebellions in South Africa, Irish uprisings, and other anticolonial movements, the government in Westminster remained placid, procedural, and nonviolent. Such lawful, orderly politics is the antithesis of coups.

You may wonder why we should care about the coup-free zone. Does it really matter to the citizens of a coup-free state how many other states are coup-free, how they achieved lasting stability, or what the direction of history looks like?

In fact, it does matter. If we look again at the 1961–2010 map, we might notice something about the black-colored states: none of them have violent quarrels with each other. Their leaders may disagree at times, but they never resort to force or even threaten to do so. In a troubled world, plagued by wars, tensions, and terrorism, the coup-free zone is an oasis of peace, negotiation, and compromise. (Currently, every black-colored state is a democracy, so this nonbelligerence is closely related to the observation that "democracies do not fight." But to remain democratic, a country must be stable, and as we will see, stability gives nations enough time to develop mutual trust.)

From the perspective of both war and terrorism, the coup-free zone matters. Americans fought long, deadly campaigns against coup-prone Germany and Japan, but now that both states are stable and democratic, the idea of another war is outlandish. Americans and Britons—along with the Dutch, Belgians, and Norwegians—created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and faced down the coup-prone Soviet Union for four decades. Today, violent conflicts with gray-colored states like China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, North Korea, and Venezuela are plausible, but wars against fellow coup-free states like Britain, Canada, Mexico, Sweden, Israel, and Australia are almost inconceivable.

Terrorism, likewise, emanates from the least stable sections of the globe. Radical Islamists trace their heritage to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which began as a revolutionary movement against the Egyptian state. During the 1990s, the radicals acquired a base in Afghanistan by helping the like-minded Taliban seize control after decades of civil war. From there, they planned and coordinated the 9/11 attacks, and they continue to press a revolutionary agenda. Ultimately, Muslim radicals hope to topple governments from Morocco to Indonesia and build a revived "caliphate," or Islamic superstate.

The burgeoning coup-free zone is not merely an interesting historical trajectory. As this book will demonstrate, it is also the most crucial force for peace and security in the world today. To promote the interests of the United States and its allies—on security, antiterrorism, economic prosperity, the environment, and other matters—the overarching task is to foster and facilitate the emergence of coup-free states. If we succeed, those states will acquire humane institutions, generate wealth, and become cooperative partners. If we fail, any democratic transitions will prove temporary, and such states will remain brutal, corrupt, surly, and threatening.

The good news is that history is on our side. For the first six centuries, the coup-free zone grew at a glacial pace, encompassing a tiny handful of states. But over the past fifty years, it has proliferated.

The bad news is that some gains may be tenuous and reversible. The past fifty years have harvested low-hanging fruit, and it will be difficult for crucial nations like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt, Nigeria, and Russia to enter into long-term stability any time soon.

As the epilogue contends, we should not expend our national blood and treasure in futile attempts to generate stability on inhospitable terrain, and we should not put much faith in "training" military and police personnel to obey a civilian government. The only way to create lasting stability is to build a systematic and impartial rule of law, and this requires a strong, persistent, and indigenous political movement against corruption, preferably led by a person who embodies what we can call "virtue charisma."

Just because a state is currently colored black does not necessarily insulate it from future instability. Fifty years is obviously an arbitrary cutoff. (To date, however, it appears rare for states to pass fifty years without a single coup event, only to lose their equilibrium and slide back into turmoil.) The states that have disappeared from the coup-free zone on these maps—Venice, Belgium, and the Netherlands—have done so only because of foreign invasion, not internal subversion. But as we will see in chapter 7, it is possible that ancient Sparta and Rome experienced up to a couple of centuries of stability before falling back into chronic civil strife. Today, the likeliest candidates for regression are Mexico, Costa Rica, and South Africa. Mexico and Costa Rica may have experienced coup conspiracies during the past fifty years (but have seen no overt coup attempts); South Africa's black revolutionaries, meanwhile, were never strong enough to topple the white apartheid government.[7] Moreover, these three states have much higher corruption levels than other coup-free states (and chapter 4 explains why that matters). If the Mexican military is corrupted by its use in combating the drug cartels, as many people fear, Mexico's position in the coup-free zone will be tenuous indeed.

Many recent entrants to the coup-free zone were easy or unusual cases. As British control slackened over the early twentieth century, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand gained practical independence, while retaining their basic laws and institutions. When Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, and Norway emerged from Nazi occupation, they simply resumed their prior stability. In Germany, Austria, and Japan, long and intensive Allied occupations, feelings of deep national shame, historical traditions of constitutionalism, and ethnically homogeneous populations helped build coup-free states. It will be far more difficult, and essentially impossible, for U.S. military forces to build lasting stability in places like Afghanistan.

Still, the coup-free zone is continuing its great expansion, and we should do everything we can—within reason—to help it along. More nations are on the immediate horizon: after France, which joined in 2011, will come Singapore in 2015, Botswana in 2016, and Italy in 2020.[8] Moreover, the global coup rate is dropping. The world now sees about six coups and coup attempts per year, which is less than half the rate of the 1970s.[9] Because all of today's coup-free states were placid forty years ago, this means that coup-prone states are beginning to stabilize.

To put our hands on history and give it a push in the right direction, we need to understand how it all works. This book proceeds in the following sequence.

The first part explains how states emerge from chronic violence into perpetual stability. We look at the world's first two known coup-free states: Venice and Great Britain. The Venetian Republic stabilized during the late

fourteenth century; Britain followed suit four hundred years later. Both states were renowned for exceptionally tranquil politics, and both states developed a genuine rule of law in that legal institutions resolved disputes fairly and minimized corruption. Chronologically, mature rule-of-law institutions coincided with the onset of stability in each state.

We bring together all proposed explanations as to why certain states appear immune to coup d'état, and as we will see, many writers have expressed surprise or bafflement at this question. In the 1770s, for example, the Swiss-born lawyer Jean-Louis de Lolme described English stability as "mysterious" and "astonishing" and posited a "secret force" ensuring that political controversies never erupted into violence.[10]

Confronted with this question, most people have fallen back upon virtue. According to the contemporary scholarly consensus, "professional" military commanders in mature democracies avoid coups because they internalize the values of civilian rule and constitutional procedure. In other words, they refrain from seizing power because they believe it would be wrong. We examine this theory and find it ultimately implausible. Virtue theory is far too demanding: it requires a system of socialization that negates self-interest, across the entire political establishment, for centuries on end.

We propose a new theory, which is more consistent with basic self-interest. Under the rule of law, military and political elites no longer form secluded personal loyalty cabals but rather create loose, open-ended networks of colleagues and acquaintances. In this environment, high-ranking officials do not trust each other enough to conspire at a coup d'état. In fact, they cannot even suggest a coup in conversation because the other person is more likely to report them than to go along. The rule of law protects people, but it also threatens conspirators with prosecution. The notion of a coup effectively disappears.

This theory tells us how coup-free states, once formed, persist indefinitely. Next we turn to a different question: When a state has the potential for stability, but has not yet established a coup-free structure, what determines whether it will succeed? Before a coup-free structure can exist, after all, individual human beings must build it. This leaves room for accidental factors, such as character, wisdom, and virtue, during the construction process. Specifically, we explore how the United States of America emerged as the world's third coup-free state, in part because of the leadership and temperament of George Washington.

In the middle of the book, we back up for two chapters and look at coups, revolutions, and the emergence of law-based politics from the widest possible angle.

Our first question is whether there is a biological basis for the human tendency to seize power through force. Through primate studies, evolutionary theory, and cross-cultural research, we draw several cautious and well-

supported conclusions. Humans—especially men—evolved to seek social dominance, often by force. They also evolved to cultivate friends and allies; to seize opportunities for power, sex, and material resources; and to hate and fear outsiders. (We can call this heritage our "simian will to power.") When we put these traits together, we see why history is mostly a saga of factional intrigue, betrayal, and coup d'état.

Our second inquiry turns to the very first steps taken to contain human rapacity within legal boundaries: the emergence of republics. In a republic, leadership positions are shared and rotated in accordance with constitutional rules, unlike in a monarchy, where power is monopolized by one person and usually passed down to an heir. To date, every coup-free state has functioned as a republic.

We find that three ancient republics—Sparta, Athens, and Rome—may have banished violence from their political succession during particular periods and that these stable periods coincided with relatively strong "rule-of-law" conditions. We also discover why, from the ancient world to today, many republics are born in spontaneous mob uprisings. Finally, we examine the notion of "republican virtue" and explore the conditions under which people clearly and unmistakably demonstrate high levels of public-spirited generosity toward their fellows.

The last part of the book returns to the modern coup-free zone but switches from domestic to international politics. Our primary question is, Why do coup-free states get along?

We begin by exploring the impact of coups d'état upon a state's foreign policy. Specifically, we examine three pathologies that bedevil coup-prone states: the self-interested use of war as a ploy to avoid revolution, the stupidity of dictatorships, and organizational confusion. (These tendencies undermine the "realist," or realpolitik, model of international relations, which asserts that states always pursue their rational interests.) By avoiding these problems, coup-free states have generally thrived in the international arena.

Next, we contrast coup-prone and coup-free states with respect to how they enter international alliances—or refrain from doing so. We begin with a brief overview of "meddling." Meddling is when the regime of State X supports one faction or side in a violent internal struggle for control of State Y. When a leader comes to power with foreign support, he or she has a system of alliances already in place. Next, we see what happens in the absence of foreign meddling. By definition, coup-free states are immune to meddling by foreign powers. (Of course, they can practice meddling around the world, as Great Britain and the United States have amply demonstrated.) Because leaders of stable nations never come to power through foreign meddling, they have no preordained alliances or obligations, and neutrality becomes a viable policy option.

As we discover, coup-free states have traditionally gravitated toward neutrality, especially when they are small and weak. (There are good reasons for this, because small states have much to lose, and little to gain, by participating in great-power wars.) But as we also learn, many coup-free states have "bent" their neutrality in ways that favor other coup-free states. Often, neutrality remains official policy, even as the state covertly cooperates with coup-free great powers. Over the past century, moreover, the most powerful coup-free states have drifted into a strong, durable military alliance. The "special relationship" between Britain and the United States ran counter to neutral isolationist traditions in both states but has proven a thoroughly rational response to international threats.

This brings us back to our basic question: Why do coup-free states get along? Many politicians, journalists, and foreign policy thinkers have discussed the related concept of a "democratic peace," or the notion that fellow democracies avoid fighting wars against each other. By combining the evidence for a democratic peace with evidence for a "coup-free peace," we find that the most amicable and harmonious relationships in world history are between coup-free democracies.

We probe the reasons for this amity and harmony and arrive at a new explanation for the democratic peace. We see that the unique transparency and predictability of democracies—especially coup-free democracies—facilitate cooperation and mutual trust. Democracies air all their fears and security concerns in public, enabling people in other states to understand just whom the democracy considers a threat and what general circumstances might lead it into war. Coup-free democracies are even more transparent and reliable. This is because their foreign policies do not "flip" overnight following foreign-backed coups d'état and because rule-of-law systems minimize or eliminate rogue actions, thereby rendering state actions far more comprehensible, and state leaders far more accountable, to the outside world. Even when disagreements arise between coup-free democracies, each state understands that rational considerations are urging the other side toward compromise, and war appears avoidable. Over time, and especially when states fight together as allies, this mutual trust grows ever more secure. As witnessed in the rise of the Anglo-American special relationship, both populations come to regard the other state as a solid partner in an otherwise treacherous world.

Ultimately, this book uncovers the specific incentive structures that generate stability within coup-free states and peace within the coup-free zone. Just as President Nixon could not straightforwardly propose an unconstitutional adventure to his military commanders, no American presidential contender can remotely suggest that Canada, Britain, Germany, or Japan poses a danger and must be confronted with military force. This would likely be a career-ending gaffe.

By learning how the coup-free zone has been expanding for seven centuries and why international relations within the zone are thoroughly civilized, we can advance our long-term interests in pragmatic and efficient ways. The epilogue explains why we cannot impart stability by inculcating a "professional" military ethos in places like Afghanistan or Iraq, but it also identifies simple and modest strategies for nudging the coup-free zone forward.

The end of history beckons. Our basic interests and our deepest ethical aspirations call us to build a coup-free world.

Or at least, to do what we can on a limited budget.

Chapter Two

The Most Serene Republic

Perched on islands and crossed by canals at the north end of the Adriatic Sea, the city of Venice created a new kind of political order. Venetians witnessed their final coup attempt in 1310. Nearly five centuries of internal peace followed.

When Venice surrendered to Napoleon on May 12, 1797, losing its independence forever, the city-state had operated for over 486 years without any serious attempts to oust the leadership by force. This remains a world record. Venice was known as La Serenissima Repubblica—"The Most Serene Republic"—and several historians call it the first state to emerge from internecine violence.[1]

What was the secret of Venetian success? How do we explain the republic's preternatural order? This is the fundamental question of the coup-free state, which we begin to unravel by surveying the Serenissima.

In this chapter, we follow the final coup-related events in Venice and see that the republic gained renown across Europe for its unique stability. We tour the mechanisms of the mature republic, observing how it rotated noblemen through an endless series of offices, assignments, and council chambers. We pay special attention to the Venetian courts in order to understand the systematic "rule of law" created by the city-state's legal institutions. Last, we examine the explanations for stability proposed to date and see whether any offer complete or satisfying solutions to the Venetian puzzle.

In chapter 3, we turn to the world's second coup-free state. That chapter presents an equivalent analysis of Great Britain and the transition to tranquility after 1746. Chapter 4, then, draws the two cases together, incorporates evidence from across the coup-free zone, and presents a general theory of stability.

As she watched the men passing beneath her window, an old woman named Giustina Rosso raised a heavy stone mortar. She hurled it at the leader, shouting, "Morte ai tiranni!"—"Death to tyrants!" She missed, but her projectile crushed the standard-bearer's head, spattering brain matter over his comrades.

It was Sunday, June 15, 1310. On this chilly, stormy morning, a young nobleman named Bajamonte Tiepolo—a confident and popular idol nicknamed Gran Cavalier, or "Great Knight"—was steering a small army through the narrow, meandering streets of Venice. His mission: to reach the Piazza San Marco, seize the doge and his palace, and rule the city.

The standard-bearer's body—with banner proclaiming "Libertà"—lay crumpled in the mud. Tiepolo faced even more serious problems. The doge and his councilors knew everything; the day before, a nervous conspirator had tipped them off. Early that morning, government soldiers had formed a hedge of bristling steel in the Piazza San Marco and quickly routed another rebel contingent, led by Tiepolo's father-in-law. Mercenaries from nearby Padua were supposed to arrive, but they were slowed by the downpour.

Tiepolo pressed on. After a long, deadly battle against the troops on the piazza, he and his companions fled. They crossed over the Grand Canal, burned the wooden bridge behind them, and occupied buildings on the far side.

The rebels' hopes dwindled when government forces intercepted the Paduan mercenaries and captured their leader. The doge, facing horrific bloodshed and property damage in assaulting Tiepolo's stronghold, decided to negotiate.

The Gran Cavalier accepted terms: he and his noble companions would go into exile across the Adriatic, in Venice-governed Dalmatia, while his plebeian followers would receive unconditional amnesty.

And Giustina Rosso? On holidays, she was allowed to fly the banner of San Marco—the patron saint of Venice—and the government promised to never raise her rent. A century and a half later, her descendants continued to pay fifteen ducats, a pittance.

The whole affair would have been over, except that, rather than simply retiring to Dalmatia, Bajamonte Tiepolo continually chafed against his restrictions. He was seen the following year in Padua, entertaining guests and complaining about his harsh treatment. The Venetian government got word and sent a messenger, and Tiepolo quickly departed. He bounded from court to court across northern Italy, soliciting support for his intrigues. When he finally settled in Dalmatia, he fomented disaffection there. He died in 1328, probably at the hands of a Venetian agent.[2]

The year 1310 marked the last overt coup attempt in Venice, but a few decades later, a final revolutionary moment emerged. In 1355, the doge—an

elected chief executive with sharply constrained powers—planned to massacre the city's ruling nobility, void the constitution, and rule personally as prince. Leading officials uncovered the conspiracy at the last minute, however, and instantly snuffed it out. As a result, no one took overt actions to seize power, so the episode does not quite meet the definition of "coup attempt" used in this book. It came awfully close, though, and we might hesitate to call the Venetian Republic truly stable until after this unsuccessful plot.

Marin Faliero was elected doge in 1354 at age seventy-six. His ascension to the ducal throne capped an illustrious career. Faliero had served in nearly every political office, represented the republic in foreign courts, and led Venice to victory over the Hungarians in the 1346 Battle of Luca. He could also be arrogant and quick-tempered. Amidst a religious procession in 1339, he punched the bishop of Treviso in the ear.

A few months after his election, Doge Faliero was apparently outraged by some scurrilous graffiti that appeared within the Ducal Palace. His anger rose when the noble young perpetrators were jailed for only a few days. It is unclear whether this perceived slight contributed to future events.

In April 1355, a fight broke out within the Admiralty Council. A nobleman struck Bertuccio Ixarello, a respected sea captain who belonged to the *cittadini* or "citizen" class. (*Cittadini* performed many official jobs, but only *nobili* ["noblemen"] could sit in the Great Council or hold any of the higher state offices. Nobles and citizens each constituted roughly 5 percent of the population.[3]) Ixarello stormed out, gathered some friends, and waited for the nobleman to emerge from the building. Hearing of the disturbance, Doge Faliero and his council summoned Ixarello. They reprimanded his vigilante methods and admonished him to take any complaints to a court of law.

But the doge, it appears, was secretly impressed. The following night, Faliero summoned Ixarello for a private meeting and aired his pent-up resentments against the overweening nobility. The two men concocted a plan. Ixarello would enlist twenty prominent but nonnoble citizens, each of whom would organize forty toughs. On the evening of April 15, conspirators would spread word of a Genoese fleet just outside the lagoon, and the doge would ring the bell of San Marco, signaling an emergency. The *nobili* of Venice would converge onto the piazza and Ixarello's improvised army would slaughter them, proclaiming "Viva Il Principe Faliero!"—"Long live Prince Faliero!"

The coup never happened. With so many participants, secrecy proved impossible. By April 14 or 15, word reached the Council of Ten—an all-powerful security committee. Immediately, the Ten took charge. They arrested and tortured suspects, one of whom implicated Doge Faliero. They stationed armed men in the piazza and ordered that no one could leave the palace. As April 16 dawned, Bertuccio Ixarello and several coconspirators were executed. A special court convened, consisting of the Ten, six ducal

councilors, and an additional twenty nobles. They summoned the doge, who made a full confession. His thirty-six judges sentenced him to death; hours later, Marin Faliero's head was severed.

For centuries, the plot lived in infamy. In the Hall of the Great Council, where Faliero's portrait should have hung, there was a black curtain. An inscription read, "Hic est locus Marini Faletro decapitate pro criminibus."[4]

Admittedly, the distinction between the Tiepolo Rebellion and the Faliero intrigue is a fine one. The revolutionaries of 1310 took to the streets in armed, massed units and attacked central government organs; the conspirators in 1355 merely waited to do so, when they were arrested and hauled away. Sometimes, though, fine distinctions are necessary.

In this book, evidentiary problems require us to draw a line between "coups" and "coup attempts," on one hand, and "conspiracies" on the other. Successful coups are easy to spot; new leaders or regimes forcibly replace old ones. Coup attempts can remain hidden but usually involve such striking actions (e.g., troop movements, open combat) that a historical record remains. Conspiracies, however, are simply words passing between people. Sometimes they come to light, especially when they bear fruit, but we should suspect that the majority go unreported. (The participants, after all, have every reason to remain silent.)

An apparently tranquil state could experience "conspiratorial activity" during a certain period, and we might never know. We can more confidently assess the presence or absence of coups d'état and serious attempts. To draw our maps of the coup-free zone, then, we must distinguish between overt military actions and covert machinations that never leave the planning stage.

At the same time, subversive plotting and active strikes are obviously connected. Every coup d'état requires extensive planning, and many plans are canceled, postponed, altered, or interrupted. The coups and attempts visible on the surface of history, then, presumably represent tips of vaster conspiratorial icebergs. But when states remain tranquil for centuries, our inferences shift. As a matter of probability, it would be essentially impossible for a large number of serious conspiracies to get rolling and for none to emerge as an overt revolutionary maneuver.

Two contemporary coup-free states—Mexico and Costa Rica—have witnessed high-level coup rumors, and possible conspiracies, within the past fifty years. (None of them bloomed into revolutionary actions, of course.) It would be surprising to find similar plotting in more established states like Britain, Sweden, or Switzerland.

In any case, after the turbulence of 1310 and 1355, the Venetian Republic sailed out onto the placid waters of endless stability. After Marin Faliero, no one tried to overthrow the system.[5] Venice became a wonder of the world.

For centuries, Europeans hailed the Adriatic marvel. By 1400, Venice was renowned for a uniquely smooth political life; its reputation lasted to the very end.[6] The republic "does not know civil discord," wrote a fifteenth-century French scholar.[7] There were no civil wars or tyrants there, noted a sixteenth-century philosopher.[8] An Englishman proclaimed Venice free from "intestin commotions and tumults."[9] As a Dutchman commented, the nobles "established themselves so well in their authority" after Marin Faliero that they faced no rebellions within the city.[10] The Enlightenment-era *Encyclopédie* lauded Venice for "an internal tranquility that has never altered."[11]

Venetians themselves branded their state a glorious exception. A local booster, for example, exaggerated his city's record in a 1544 book. "In our city," he claimed, "no popular tumult or sedition has ever occurred."[12] This was wrong, but nearly two centuries had passed since the Faliero plot, and faith in Venetian stability was growing unshakable. We are "so well established," a Venetian ambassador told the king of Spain in 1571, "our succession is of a kind which can never fail."[13]

Through the years, a horde of commentators called Venice perfect. "It seems a heroic accomplishment and more than human, indeed celestial and divine," exclaimed one, "to remain so many centuries, without change, in the same state."[14] A humanist called Venice "the most perfect magistracy" and the "idea of the perfect principate" because it remained stable, even as other princes and governments fell amidst "cruelty, violence, and ambition."[15]

Many expected the perfect government to last forever. A mercenary preferred to serve Venice over Milan, he said, because the Duke of Milan was mortal, but Venice would never die.[16] If anything human could be "perpetual and eternal," said one chronicler, it would be Venice.[17] "This holy republic," wrote a Renaissance diarist, "has neither popular sedition nor discord among her patricians, but all unite in promoting her greatness; and therefore, as wise men say, she will last forever."[18] A politician predicted his city's concord would last "until the end of time."[19] "Could any State on Earth Immortall be," rhymed a seventeenth-century Englishman, "Venice by Her rare Government is she."[20]

Even if Venice wasn't "perfect," many declared it the best state ever created. One heralded "the most beautiful and best government that any city, not only in our times but also the classical world, ever possessed."[21] "This city," crowed a noble Venetian, "is administered as well as any city in the whole world ever was or will be."[22]

Mechanical metaphors proliferated. Seventeenth-century writers called the republic a "great and ingenious machine"[23] and "a clock going with many wheels and making small motions, sometimes out of order, but soon mended, all without change or variety."[24]

For some, the clockwork state was dull! "The history of the Venetians flows on without being marked by any events worthy of the attention of posterity," complained a French historian.[25]

Of course, Venice was never completely uneventful, but nothing after 1310 amounted to a coup attempt, and few events after 1355 even came close. Doge Lorenzo Celsi was accused of overreaching his constitutional powers in the 1360s but died before an investigation got under way; afterward, the Ten declared he had been unjustly accused.[26] In 1372 and 1406, the Council of Ten discovered plots orchestrated by the lord of Padua, whereby his paid Venetian turncoats prepared to assassinate anti-Paduan politicians and, possibly, to seize control of the city. Both times, the Ten acted quickly and executed the traitors.[27] A coup conspiracy between two rich commoners in 1413 lasted only a few hours before one turned in the other.[28]

In 1456, following his son's death, an aging Doge Francesco Foscari secluded himself in his apartment and withdrew from official duties. After a year and a half, the Council of Ten and the ducal councilors asked him to step down. Foscari initially complained that the request was illegal, but when the officials insisted, he resigned without a fight. This was probably a deviation from strict constitutional propriety, because only the Great Council could remove a doge, but the episode hardly resembles a seizure of power. There was no threat of violence, the councilors were in full control from the beginning, and they immediately elected a new doge through established procedures.[29]

Venice was never immune from violence per se. Street brawls grew especially prevalent in the early 1500s, and a mob ransacked the public granary in 1581. Violent crime was relatively low, but certain neighborhoods could be dangerous at night.[30]

In 1618, the city faced a threat that straddled the boundary between local intrigue and foreign aggression. French mercenaries, who had recently been employed by the republic, gathered in Venetian taverns. They talked, perhaps too carelessly, about slaughtering the Great Council, seizing the Piazza San Marco, and plundering the opulent palaces. Supposedly, the Spanish viceroy in Naples sponsored the plan—which was dubbed the "Spanish Conspiracy"—but the evidence is ambiguous. In any case, nothing happened, except that one morning three mercenary leaders were found dangling from a gallows. According to some reports, the Ten quietly terminated three hundred lives. Survivors fled.[31] Even if we call this a "coup plot," because the participants were Venetian hirelings, it never flowered into revolutionary action.

Venetian authorities treated some political reformers as deeply subversive, even when they merely sought peaceful, incremental change. Noble politicians seeking to trim the powers of the Council of Ten found themselves banished, imprisoned, or placed under house arrest in 1625, 1628, 1741, 1756, and 1761.[32] In 1780, a nobleman named Giorgio Pisani argued

for equalizing power and wealth within the noble caste. He too went to jail. Opponents alleged that Pisani conspired to overthrow the government, but this is difficult to confirm.[33] In any case, no revolutionary attempt materialized.

THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC: A THUMBNAIL SKETCH

How did this unusual state work? We can briefly review the rise, development, and functioning of the constitutional system before turning to specific features of the Venetian "rule of law" and see how people have explained Venetian stability so far.

Venice was founded in the fifth century, as the Western Roman Empire was collapsing. In the early years it belonged to Byzantium—the Eastern Roman Empire—but by the late eighth century, the city effectively ruled itself. Politically, Venice toggled between republicanism and monarchy, sometimes occupying an ambiguous middle ground. It was anything but stable. Eighth-century doges (*doge* is Venetian dialect for "duke") began "associating" their sons with them in office, moving Venice toward a hereditary principality. Doges in the ninth and tenth centuries wielded absolute power.

A revolution in 1032 overthrew the Orseolo dynasty and reinvigorated republican principles. A new doge was elected, along with two ducal councilors, to prevent any backsliding toward tyranny. The *pregadi*, or "invited," began discussing issues of state; this body became known as the Senate.

Over the next two hundred years, ducal powers dwindled.[34] In 1172, Doge Vitale II Michiel earned popular venom when he led an assault to plunder Byzantium—against his councilors' advice—and returned with no treasure and a disease-stricken fleet. He fled an angry mob and was slain at the doorway of a church. It was no longer legitimate for a doge to contravene his six councilors, who now escorted and monitored him continually. Also, the Maggior Consiglio, or "Great Council," formed; this body would pass laws and elect all the other councils and offices.

During this period, new doges began signing written contracts called *Promissioni*. Over time, these instruments grew longer, more detailed, and more precise. When Jacopo Tiepolo took office in 1229, he pledged—among many other things—to draw only his salary from the treasury; to refuse all gifts above certain quantities of food or wine; to maintain state secrets; to communicate with the pope, Holy Roman emperor, or other princes only with his council's prior permission; to open all diplomatic letters in their presence; and to hear any petitioners on Fridays.[35]

The year 1297 brought the "closing" of the Great Council. Before then, only *nobiles* could attend, but that term was hazily defined. Most members sat because they held another office or were directly elected. Doge Pietro Gradenigo pushed a bill through the council that restricted membership to those who had held a seat during the previous four years or who gave up their place to travel. (Other men might be admitted "by grace," but this procedure was seldom used.) For those who qualified, this law solidified their place in the ruling class. With sudden urgency, men claimed their spots; the council ballooned from 210 members in 1296 to over 1,000 in 1311. A register of noble marriages and births—called the *Libro d'Oro*, or *Golden Book*—named the legitimate patricians. This caste governed Venice for the next five centuries.

The corpses generated in the Tiepolo Rebellion had barely begun rotting when the Great Council chartered a new security apparatus. A Council of Ten was empowered "to do all that appears appropriate" to bring the conspirators to justice. It was a temporary measure, set to expire in three months, but defending the state was a task that naturally extended longer, especially with Tiepolo running loose for two more decades. The Council of Ten was made permanent in 1334 and lasted until Napoleon Bonaparte's conquest.

The last major constitutional innovation came in 1530 when the Inquisitors into Revelation of State Secrets or "state inquisitors" came into being. Their mission overlapped with the Ten's domestic-security mandate, but when the three state inquisitors made a unanimous decision, it was treated as though approved by the Great Council and could not be appealed. When the state inquisitors were divided, the issue went to the Council of Ten.

The mature Venetian constitution was probably the most complex organization in the world. It was a baroque machine with constantly moving parts, frequent elections, and short, staggered terms in office. The men wielding power one day—with the exception of the doge—were always scheduled to step down the following week, month, or year. (And they always did.)

The following presents a general overview of the republic from the late fifteenth century onwards.[36] Practices evolved over time, of course, but the basic structure remained surprisingly static.

Let's begin with the Great Council, at the base of the pyramid. The Maggior Consiglio occasionally debated and passed legislation, but its primary function was to elect officials. It also resolved constitutional disputes. Only noblemen listed in the *Golden Book* who were at least twenty-five years old could sit in the council or hold higher office.

The Great Council met on Sunday afternoons and almost always held elections. The prospect of winning an office—for oneself or a friend—drew the nobility. Balloting generally went as follows: First, a nominating committee was picked. Members rose one by one from their long benches and walked to the front platform, where the doge and his councilors presided.

Each member reached his hand into an urn standing high off the ground, such that he could not see inside. The urns contained numerous silver balls and only a few gold ones. If he drew a gold ball and a ducal councilor verified a secret mark in use that day, the nobleman remained at the front of the hall as part of the nominating committee. He faced the doge, rather than the assembly, to block signals from eager aspirants. Thirty-six nominators divided into four committees and withdrew into separate chambers. Internally, each committee drew lots to determine who would make the first nomination, and the selected patrician could nominate anyone he wanted, including himself. In addition to the four nominees produced in this manner, the Senate usually named an additional nominee, who enjoyed a considerable advantage (because of the prestige of the Senate). Once the nominations were announced, all nominees and their relatives had to leave the hall. Then, the Great Council voted up or down on each nominee. As they passed by the ballot boxes, members of the council dropped linen swatches into hidden yes or no compartments so that no one else could see how they voted regarding that nominee. Voting took place in silence; open declarations were severely penalized. To win, a nominee had to receive the most yes votes, and his yes votes had to outnumber his no votes. If no candidate prevailed, the nominating committees returned with another slate of four nominees, and voting continued until a winner emerged.

Elections to replace the doge were stunningly convoluted. Procedures established in 1268 survived, essentially intact, until 1797. First, the youngest ducal councilor received a blessing, wandered into the Piazza San Marco, and took hold of the first boy he met, who served as *ballotino*. The Great Council excluded all members under thirty; the *ballotino* distributed a ballot to everyone else. Most ballots were empty, but thirty contained a piece of parchment with the word *lector*. All but those thirty nobles left the hall. By the same random process, the thirty reduced their number to nine. Those nine sat together and elected a committee of forty. Those forty reduced their number, by lot, to twelve, who elected a council of twenty-five, who chose nine by lot, who elected a board of forty-five, who winnowed to eleven, who elected a final committee of forty-one. Then the real work began. After hearing the Mass of the Holy Spirit, each elector swore an oath to act honestly for the good of the republic. The forty-one entered a locked conclave within the Ducal Palace, cut off from all communications with the outside world and guarded by special naval forces. They stayed there, day and night, until it was over. Each elector wrote one name on a piece of paper and placed it in an urn. Secretaries unfolded each paper and read out all the names. The papers were replaced in the urn, and one was picked. Discussion followed. If that candidate was present, he left the room but returned to answer any charges or criticisms voiced against him. A vote was called. If the candidate

secured twenty-five yes votes, he became the new doge. If not, another name was drawn. The process unfolded until someone received twenty-five votes.

The doge was no autocrat, but he was the biggest player in Venetian politics. Almost everyone else—his councilors, the Ten, the state inquisitors—appeared in fleeting roles, but the doge remained the still center of the pinwheel. He served on every major board, enjoyed a uniquely panoramic view of affairs, and wielded informal clout through prestige, knowledge, and years of experience.

Venetians excelled in pomp and ceremony and lavished them upon their doge. Eight silver trumpets heralded his approach, followed by a golden sword of state. Youths in sumptuous garb held candles, while functionaries bore a silk canopy over his head.

Even so, he dwelt in a gilded cage. The doge was not supposed to leave his palace without permission. When he did leave, his councilors went along. He could not open letters—from foreign potentates or from the republic's own ambassadors—without the council watching. Nor could he send private dispatches. Foreign envoys and returning ambassadors were greeted by a certain number of assembled officers. Like other officials, a newly elected

Figure 2.1. Court reception presided over by the doge of Venice. Painting by Giuseppe Heintz, seventeenth century. The Granger Collection, New York

doge could not refuse to serve. He needed permission to resign but could also be removed from office.

Wary republican eyes monitored symbolic gestures. No one could kneel to the doge, kiss his hands, or render any sort of personal homage. No ducal portraits, busts, or coats of arms were allowed outside the palace. Inside, the doge could not expand his living quarters.

Promissioni detailed most of these restrictions. These were drafted for each doge-elect; new provisions addressed problems detected in the prior administration. They served as basic constitutional instruments and were supposed to be read aloud every two months of a doge's tenure, just to remind everyone of the ground rules. Council debaters cited specific clauses to justify their legal arguments. After a doge died, a special commission scrutinized his reign and fined his relatives for breaches of the *Promissione* contract.

The doge did not make autonomous decisions but presided over committee meetings where majority votes prevailed. He could not hold meetings without his ducal councilors, but four councilors could act in his absence. As they entered office, the councilors swore to correct the doge whenever he strayed from any council's orders.

Executive boards telescoped into larger and smaller gatherings, depending on circumstances, but their functions clearly overlapped. The nucleus of the republic was the Signoria, consisting of the doge, six ducal councilors, and the three chiefs of the "Forty." (The Forty, or Quarantia Criminale, was the highest court of criminal appeals.) This ten-man oversight team managed crises, formulated proposals, and summoned other councils.

A typical Venetian morning began in the Collegio, or "College," comprised of the Signoria plus six *savii grandi* and thirteen other heavyweights. For one week, a particular *savio grande* set the agenda and led discussion. The College prepared the docket for any afternoon Senate meetings; laws proposed in the College required senatorial approval.

The doge and his councilors usually joined the Council of Ten—effectively creating a Council of Seventeen—inside a chamber of the Ducal Palace. They formed a semicircle, with the doge at the center, flanked by the others in crimson, violet, and black robes.

The Senate began as an assembly of sixty, elected by the Great Council and charged with jurisdiction over commerce and foreign affairs. Over time, it elected an additional sixty members and added about two hundred spots for current and recent officeholders. Doge, Signoria, Ten, Forty, and all other notables belonged. Elected senators served annual terms, but unlike other officials, they could be reelected; many returned year after year. As in Rome, the Senate provided a forum for eloquent disputation. Debates could last into the night, with candelabras illuminating the hall. Only senators over seventy could leave without permission.

Venice distributed powers among committees but did not divide government into executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In that sense, there was no separation of powers, although councils still checked one another and corrected abuses. The Senate passed laws and also determined foreign policy moves. The state inquisitors and Council of Ten sat as criminal tribunals with plenary police powers. The "judiciary" also encompassed the regular law courts, the Ducal Council (which could hear appeals), and the Great Council (which resolved constitutional questions and on rare occasions invoked its jurisdiction as the supreme appellate chamber).

As we will see, many people through the ages credited Venetian justice for preserving stability. Specifically, people cited the uniform, dependable, and impartial law meted out to everyone—regardless of family, rank, or background—as the glory of Venice. Moreover, Britain also created a uniquely impartial and reliable "rule of law," and in both Venice and Britain, mature rule-of-law institutions developed at roughly the same time that the state transitioned to stability. For these reasons, we turn to the Venetian legal system.

THE RULE OF LAW IN VENICE

The prow of the doge's barge—called the *Bucintoro*—did not feature a Viking dragon or the bronze battering ram of a Roman trireme. Instead, there sat a golden figure of Justice, holding a sword in her right hand but gazing upon the scales in her left.

Justice was central to the city's mystique. Witness Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. The inexorable nature of Venetian law builds dramatic tension because the doge himself cannot intervene against Shylock's contractual claim for a pound of flesh.

"On the whole," concluded a British lawyer who published an immense two-volume history of the republic, "there was probably no early European State, where property and life were equally secure from violence, and where nocturnal repose might be enjoyed almost as confidently as in a modern home."[37]

Impressions and accolades like this are symptomatic of an impersonal, reliable, and rule-based state. But what was the underlying legal architecture?

We can identify eight interrelated and necessary components of the Venetian rule of law. These were (1) a developed court system with appellate tribunals, (2) formal equality under the law, (3) fact-finding through rational inquiry, (4) procedural protections for criminal defendants, (5) a legal profession closely intertwined with political elites, (6) an independent judiciary, (7) the subjection of all state actions to legal scrutiny, and (8) low governmental

corruption. Working in synchrony, these elements created a "rule of law" that made Venice an exceptionally well-ordered and prosperous city-state.[38]

The Court System

To begin at the most basic level, any legal system requires courts, or venues where suspected criminals are tried and civil actions are resolved. To create consistency in how those courts operate and what rules they apply, there must be some method for reviewing their decisions. Generally, this review occurs when convicted criminals, or losing parties in civil cases, appeal a case to higher courts. The mere existence or possibility of appellate review, moreover, encourages lower courts to conduct themselves with scruples and attention to the finer points of law.

From its rudimentary origins at the doge's court, the machinery of justice evolved gradually. By the fifteenth century, grand committees of forty presided in Venetian tribunals, and cases could move through a series of appellate hearings.

A basic distinction was drawn between cases arising inside the city and those arising on the mainland, in Dalmatia, and elsewhere throughout the dominion (i.e., the lands held by Venice). Within Venice, a variety of special trial courts operated, including the criminal courts, a court for contractual disputes, a Jews' court, and a strangers' court. Colonial officials, usually called "rectors," decided outlying cases.

All trial bodies, however, fed four appellate courts. The twenty-two member Collegio dell Biade decided small-value civil suits. The forty-judge Quarantia Vecchia Civile and Quarantia Nuova Civile heard civil appeals from the city and dominions, respectively. The Quarantia Criminale, or "Forty," adjudicated criminal appeals but could also try criminal cases in the first instance. If there was a tie vote in the Collegio dell Biade, the case went into the Vecchia or Nuova. If either of those chambers divided equally, the case went into the other, and if the tie persisted, the Senate could hear it.

Special tribunals convened to judge matters of great weight like the Faliero conspiracy. Their membership varied, depending on circumstances, but the Signoria formed the core. The Ducal Council was generally supposed to hear complaints of injustice, and the Great Council occasionally intervened when political-legal controversies grew volatile.

Formal Equality under the Law

For legal rules to guide behavior in any systemic way, they must apply across the board. There may be legally defined classes of people treated differently within specific contexts (think of minors in our legal system, for example),

but such deviations from formal equality should probably be kept to a minimum. Certainly, no one can get a free pass from the general duty to comply.

Venice acquired a reputation for dispensing justice equally, no matter the identity of the parties. *Nobiles* and *cittadini* did enjoy political privileges but, in theory, could expect no advantage in court. As the *Promissioni* put it, Venice had only one law—for the doge and the poorest fisherman. Despite glitches, Venetian justice mostly lived up to its lofty ideal.

Defendants had the right to choose their own counsel, which would otherwise be appointed by the court (except in the Council of Ten, where defendants appeared alone). A study of thirteenth-century criminal cases shows that patricians and commoners received equal sentences for equal crimes.[39]

Many foreigners came to Venice seeking a fair tribunal. Venetian courts proved entirely capable of finding in their favor, even against local interests. Recounting one case, a sixteenth-century diarist marveled that "even though there are some frictions with the Florentines, a Florentine still swiftly won the case against our patricians, something that would not have happened elsewhere."[40]

Still, Venetian judges were only human, and sometimes they favored their friends and fellow nobles. "The wolf does not eat the meat of a wolf," people said.

Fact-Finding through Rational Inquiry

Imagine if legal cases were decided at random: a judge pulls out some dice and, based on the roll, determines guilt, innocence, punishment, liability, or damages. Justice would literally be a crapshoot. This would be fairly ineffective at constraining behavior, because people might decide to roll the dice, as it were, and no one could be confident of enforcing contracts or obtaining justice. And yet, early medieval tribunals sometimes reached verdicts based on random factors (such as whether a wound festered) or used methods that could be manipulated by those with friends and resources (such as having "oath-takers" swear to a defendant's innocence).

Courts under the mature Venetian constitution determined facts and reached verdicts—such as guilt or innocence—by asking what happened. Moreover, they generally did so in a particularly transparent manner, in public courtrooms.

Since the thirteenth century, European legal systems have split between adversarial and inquisitorial proceedings. In an adversarial trial, two opposing sides present evidence and make their strongest arguments, and the judge or jury decides which is more persuasive. An inquisitorial judge, on the other hand, summons witnesses, questions them, examines evidence, and determines the truth on his own initiative. Generally speaking, England main-

tained the older adversarial system, while inquisitorial methods spread throughout the Continent.

This divide sliced through Venice. Most criminal and civil trials bore adversarial traits, but tribunals like the Ten and, unsurprisingly, the state inquisitors operated along strictly inquisitorial lines.

Regular Venetian courtrooms featured lively public debates. Criminal cases began when the prosecutor—the *avogador di comun*, or "state attorney"—questioned a lone defendant outside of court. A committee of five attended, and minutes were kept. If the defendant was found guilty at this hearing, the case went to trial. At this point, the defendant got a lawyer and received the minutes from his interrogation. In court, defense counsel sparred with the *avogador*, who was barred from cross-examining too aggressively.[41] Foreign observers found the contests scintillating and admired the procedural shields employed by defendants.

Proceedings in the Council of Ten were totally different. They were shrouded in secrecy. Initial examinations might happen in a dark cell, with two members of the Ten, a ducal councilor, and an *avogador* pushing for a confession. "And he who falls into the hands of the Council of Ten cannot defend himself with counsel," wrote a diarist; "when they examine him the palace is barred."[42]

Torture was occasionally employed, particularly in treason cases, but with some safeguards. A certain number of the Signoria and Forty were supposed to be present, and prisoners could not be pushed "beyond the normal limit," whatever that meant.

Procedural Protections for Criminal Defendants

Without rights for the accused and procedures that must be followed, no one would be secure under the law. State officials could take extreme steps, like imprisoning or executing someone, without the slightest justification—and perhaps for purely personal reasons.

Venice pioneered certain protections for criminal defendants, but these should not be overstated. No one should imagine that *Miranda* rights applied, especially when the Ten got involved. Compared to its neighbors, though, Venice provided a humane sanctuary for the accused. Such protections enhanced the rationality of punishments (for example, by ensuring that no vital steps were omitted, such as a trial). They guarded against corruption, abuse, and malicious prosecution, thereby making all Venetians more secure.

Aside from public and spirited trials, other innovations contributed. Unless the situation was urgent, the *avogador* needed a warrant from the Forty to make an arrest. If a *signor di notte* (police officer) made an arrest, he had to secure the approval of his colleagues within the week, or the prisoner was released. An early version of habeas corpus developed whereby the doge, and

later the chiefs of the Ten, kept track of prisoners and brought them to trial within a month of arrest. At trial, only one witness was needed to convict, but courts often went to great trouble to include as many witnesses as possible. Rather than in a jurist's idiom like Latin or "law French," trials were conducted in the Venetian vernacular. Venetian prisons were relatively clean and hygienic, although that probably is not saying much, considering the rat-infested, turd-littered dungeons of Renaissance Europe.

Legal Profession Closely Intertwined with Political Elites

As all law students and lawyers recognize, law is pretty complex. There are a great many rules, even more exceptions to those rules, and rules about how different rules mesh together under particular circumstances. For any complicated system of rules to apply in consistent ways throughout a society, one of the most basic requirements is that some people have to understand the rules. Therefore, some people must dedicate themselves to learning them. We simply have to have lawyers.

As we discuss further below, the kernel of the "rule of law" is that state actions are systematically subjected to legal scrutiny. For this to happen, the state itself must be staffed with lawyers.

All Venetian officials—lawyers, judges, other politicians, and civil servants—had to acquire a systematic knowledge of the republic's rules and doctrines. This generated impartiality and predictability because one demonstrated mastery of the law, and therefore suitability for office, by applying the rules correctly.

Law framed political debates. Arguing that a council should take a certain step, for example, required one to understand the council's jurisdiction and powers and any laws that might regulate the proposed action. An unwary politician might blunder by offering a proposal, only to see it shot down by someone with greater intellectual grasp, who could articulate its legal infirmity. While perhaps not fatal, this kind of misstep would be embarrassing and would not impress a patrician's peers. In Venice, skilled lawyers made natural leaders.

Cittadini constituted a second stratum of legal professionals. Many studied law and public administration at the University of Padua, an eminent European law school, and they qualified for office by passing examinations. Because their noble superiors were constantly rotating, many became the reigning experts in their fields. Often, citizen-bureaucrats made the real decisions.

Independent Judiciary

Judges—the linchpin of any legal system—can be subject to innumerable temptations, including the desire to please friends, allies, and, especially, political elites who can determine their future. When judges regularly bend the rules to serve their own interests, no legal system can be reliable. This is why it is critical to insulate judges from social and political pressures to the greatest extent practicable.

In many cases, an "independent judiciary" refers to judges with tenure, who need not worry about pleasing political bosses. In Venice, judges could vote their conscience because they were elected by a large council, their terms were always short, and they worked in committees (which provided numerical cover).

The Great Council chose them, so magistrates served the entire political class. Certain decisions might anger a segment, but judges probably minimized political fallout by adopting a neutral posture.

Like everyone else, judges were transient. They might be reelected, but only after time had passed. Ducal councilors, who sat with the Ten and on special tribunals, served six months or a year. The Ten were elected annually; every month, the Ten chose three chiefs, who adhered to a code of strict social isolation. Forty judges served eight-month stints in the Quarantia Nuova Civile, rotated into the Quarantia Vecchia Civile, and then became the Quarantia Criminale. Three chiefs of the Quarantia Criminale spent two months within the Signoria.

Individual judges enjoyed numerical cover, as all decisions carried the imprimatur of majority vote. While other Italian cities routinely hired foreign jurists, who might stand above local factions, Venice trusted its own patricians. According to a Florentine, Venetian judges rendered fair verdicts because they suffered no political interference.[43]

All State Actions Subject to Legal Scrutiny

The essence of the "rule of law" is that the state itself must comply with the rules. It is insufficient for only regular citizens (i.e., nonstate actors) to be subject to the law—because in that case there is no way to obtain enforcement of the rules that are supposed to apply to everyone.

"The affairs of Venice are governed with laws," proclaimed the republic. No magistrate or committee could exceed legal boundaries with impunity, because other dignitaries—notably the *avogadori di comun*—served as watchdogs.

The *avogadori* brought prosecutions for abuse of office and were specifically instructed to charge officials who failed to promptly turn over funds to the treasury, as well as to investigate allegations of bribery in the courts.

Every officeholder in Venice could be sued and personally fined by some other official.

State attorneys enforced what we call "constitutional law." If they thought a ducal councilor was ignoring his obligations, they could bring suit in the Forty. They regularly attended inner-ring congeries—like the Signoria, Collegio, or Ten—and if any council was violating a rule, an *avogador* could suspend proceedings and call for the Great Council to intervene.

Avogadori themselves were hardly untouchable. The chiefs of the Forty could sue them in the Great Council for dereliction of duty. Everyone—not just officeholders—might find themselves under scrutiny by the Council of Ten.

Despite their secrecy, forbidding reputation, streamlined procedures, and broad powers, even the Council of Ten observed strict rules. State attorneys participated as nonvoting members. Whenever the Ten discussed foreign affairs, the six *savii grandi* had to attend. Informers in Venice could drop accusations and complaints into the infamous "Lion's Mouth," but minute regulations governed whether the Ten could consider them. In general, the notes had to be signed. No member of the Ten could sit in judgment upon a relative or accept any gifts or presents. From time to time, the Ten expelled one of their own, with no reason recorded.

Low Corruption

"Corruption" is simply the inverse of the rule-of-law principle. If state actors are not actually constrained by the rules—if they can accept bribes with impunity, for example, and twist the rules accordingly—there is no genuine rule of law.

As we might expect, the Venetian Republic could not live up to its billing as a paradise of virtue, honesty, and perfect government. Historians have easily found incidents of bribery, fraud, vote selling, family influence, and electioneering—but this is only surprising if you credit extreme versions of the Venetian myth.[44]

Sometimes corruption appeared at the very top. Controversy erupted in 1340, for example, when the doge leveraged his sons into lucrative positions. Doge Agostino Barbarigo, who reigned from 1486 to 1500, gained infamy. "[H]e did whatever he liked," wrote a diarist, and "gave offices to all his friends and servants."[45] Barbarigo also smuggled wine with his brother Carlo—a fact discovered after his death. Struggles for constitutional reform frequently targeted palace nepotism.

Still, such instances must be kept in perspective. In the kingdoms and principalities across Europe, nepotism and favoritism were ordinary facets of political life. In Venice, they triggered scandal.

The republic earned a reputation for rigor, scruples, and good government.[46] By and large, efficient *cittadino* bean counters, maintaining precise ledgers of revenue and spending, minimized corruption. Also, venality was punishable by death. As King James I of England told the Venetian ambassador, who insisted on extraditing a countryman for trial back home, "If I were to imitate the conduct of your republic and begin to punish those who take bribes, I should soon not have a single subject left."[47]

Did Venetian nobles spurn corruption because of their innate ethical sensitivities? It appears unlikely. First, elaborate electoral precautions imply that cheating was anticipated. Second, when they administered overseas territories—farther from legal scrutiny—many nobles turned into vicious tyrants.[48]

A Rich and Well-Ordered City

Today, a broad social science literature confirms that the "rule of law" is closely correlated with material prosperity.[49] We have every reason to believe that Venice was rich, in part, because it lived under the rule of law.

Venice was always an entrepôt, with traders buying silks, spices, and other luxury items in the East and selling them to Western Europeans. Relying on strict enforcement of contracts, Venetian merchants readily formed short-term partnerships, in kaleidoscopic combinations, to seize fleeting opportunities.[50]

An efficient civil service contributed as well, issuing penalties for every type of commercial trickery, thereby establishing the Venetian brand for quality. Detail-oriented bureaucracies like the Board of Health regulated chimneys, banned foul smells, and maintained a clean water supply.[51] Venice was an early Sweden.

Venice was a city of fabulous wealth, especially in its Renaissance heyday. By 1400, it was known as the most beautiful city in the world. A century later, its canals and piazzas sparkled with marble facades and sculptures, but it was the sumptuous interiors—laden with the finest materials and artifacts from East and West—that truly showcased Venetian finery. "The Queen of France herself could not display such pomp," gushed a Milanese priest after visiting a noblewoman's apartments.[52]

Now that we have a clear idea of how Venice worked, politically, constitutionally, and legally, we can return to the basic mystery. What made Venice uniquely immune to coups d'état, or the violent transfer of political power, for over 486 years?

PRIOR SOLUTIONS TO THE VENETIAN PUZZLE

Three main explanations for Venetian stability have been floating around since the Renaissance. They usually appear as short passages; few scholars sat down to build systematic theories.

First, there was an image of Venetian patricians as unusually selfless, unassuming, and patriotic public servants. We might call this the "virtue theory." "[O]ur ancestors were concerned not with ambition and empty fame," wrote a Renaissance politician, "but only with the good of their country and the common welfare."[53] Venetians were thought to eschew narrow, self-interested factions.[54] Virtue theory persists: in current lingo, Venice enjoyed an "internalized conformity to the fundamental demands of the state."[55] In other words, Venetians believed in playing by the rules.

Second, humanists credited a "mixed" or "balanced constitution," a concept harking back to Aristotle. In this view, the monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic elements—represented by doge, nobility, and commoners—stood in equipoise. A sturdy architecture blocked each segment from overreaching.[56]

Third, Venetians themselves believed that justice delivered peace.[57] Through a high-quality, equitable, and impartial judiciary, even poor folk could vindicate their rights. "An injury done by a Venetian gentleman unto the least inhabitant of the city," commented a Frenchman, "is right severely corrected and punished."[58] An English observer attributed Venetian harmony to "justice dulie and equallie ministred."[59]

None of these theories are very satisfying. Virtue theory expects far too much from the transient and unreliable human capacity for public-spirited generosity—and in fact Venetians were not reliably or unusually virtuous. Modern historians have easily undermined their lofty image, finding numerous instances of nepotism, bribery, bias, and vote selling.[60] Stringent bookkeeping methods checked corruption within the city, but many patricians sent to govern overseas territories pumped the locals for cash. Baroque anticheating measures infused the electoral system. Many Venetians, it seems, broke the rules when they could get away with it. It strains credulity that pangs of conscience trumped the will to power for half a millennium.

The "balanced constitution" concept is too vague and circular to offer a persuasive account of stability. What exactly is the correct proportion between monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic parts? What powers should each segment hold, and how should they interact, to maintain peace? The theory is circular because the only way to know that a constitution is "balanced" is through evidence of stability. By this logic, every stable state has a balanced constitution by definition. Moreover, just how "balanced" was Venice anyway? Was the "democratic" segment the *cittadini*—the 5 percent eligible for civil-service positions—or the 90 percent who were totally ex-

cluded? (Either way, the Venetian *popolo* did not enjoy an equal place in government.) More fundamentally, a mixed constitution might explain why branches remained in rough parity during the course of ordinary politics, but it does not explain the absence of rogue actors. Constitutional rules, by themselves, cannot ensure that no one assembles a small army, disregards the law, and reorganizes the state.

Equal justice offers an intriguing suggestion because it plausibly explains the absence of popular risings. If the masses suffer no outrageous treatment, they should be less inclined to riot. But this is a partial explanation at best. Many coups—like the Tiepolo Rebellion—are elite driven and share few connections to popular grievances.[61] Moreover, benevolent justice may not eradicate revolutionary leanings. Nazi thugs overthrew the progressive Weimar Republic in 1933, after all, because they craved domination, not equal treatment. Still, we should remember that Venetians attributed their own stability to impartial justice.

Recent theorists have credited the nascent Venetian welfare state and the security it provided the lower orders.[62] This argument overlaps with "equal justice" theory and suffers the same limitations. Other ideas include the city's great wealth, the exclusion of priests, bishops, and cardinals from politics, the professional *cittadino* bureaucracy, and even political traditions inherited from Byzantium, but it is unclear why these factors should prove stabilizing.[63]

Some authors pick up the "absence of factions" theme, arguing that personal loyalties—to family, friends, patrons, and clients—decayed in Venice.[64] There is an obvious link to stability: without factions, there can be no "bloody factional strife." But what generated unity? Aside from patriotic virtue, proposals include a sense of shared danger, crisscrossing blood ties within the small noble class, laws and procedures that minimized family clout, and the city's spatial isolation within the lagoon.[65]

Finally, a few people through the ages have floated a structural idea: no Venetian had the capability to smash the republic. Early Venice, says a character in a sixteenth-century dialogue, saw frequent bloodshed. "In later times," though, "there were Doges and others who aspired to tyranny, but they were soon suppressed." The political institutions, he concludes, "are well designed to suppress quickly anyone who begins to rise by taking this road."[66] Some historians sprinkle this notion into their writings, while remaining equally vague about how it works. We hear that the system "bent patricians toward compromise, accommodation, and self-effacement," forced them to "treat all their peers as potential allies," and made it "hard to build a power base."[67] We do not learn exactly how "the system" accomplished these feats.

Still, equal justice, the weakness of factions, and mandatory good behavior offer tantalizing hints. Can they help explain stability?

To find out, we next turn to the world's second coup-free state, Great Britain, to see if there are significant points in common with the Serenissima. Then we will try to crack the puzzle.

Chapter Three

The Last British Revolutionary

In the summer of 1745, Charles Stuart landed in Scotland with seven men and some muskets. There, he conjured a rebellion, known as the Forty-Five, which nearly swept him to the British throne.

The Forty-Five was Britain's last serious attempt at coup d'état or revolution. Since then, Britain has seen two and a half centuries of legal and orderly transitions from one governing ministry to the next.[1] This was new. Before 1688, writes an eminent Cambridge historian, "the country had scarcely been free from turbulence for more than a decade at a time."[2]

To learn about this transition, we zoom in on the damp, foggy islands between the North Sea and the North Atlantic. Historical sources are far more bountiful for eighteenth-century England than for fourteenth-century Venice, so this chapter is an excellent place to contemplate, in some detail, the shift from coups to calm, from chaos to order.

Structurally, this chapter mirrors the last one, on Venice. We recount the story of the Forty-Five and see that it marked the end of violent wrangling for political power in Britain. We trace the rise of "constitutional monarchy," which made England effectively—but not officially—a republic after 1688. We review the British legal system and see that by the eighteenth century, Britons enjoyed a systemic "rule of law." Finally, we examine the theories offered so far to explain British stability.

This sets the stage for chapter 4. There, we ask, what is the secret of political stability? Did Venice and Britain achieve stability for entirely different reasons? Or have the British, in some manner, followed the Venetian path?

THE FORTY-FIVE AND SUBSEQUENT ADVENTURES OF BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE

The Forty-Five shows how revolutionary movements can get rolling from small beginnings, demonstrates the critical role that foreign nations play in supporting domestic rebellions, and shows that vestigial clan loyalties in the Scottish Highlands were critical to mounting Britain's last coup attempt.[3] Plus, it is just a good story.

Charles Stuart was the grandson of King James II, who lost his crown during the Glorious Revolution of 1688. For decades, the exiled Stuart dynasty plotted a restoration. They had powerful Continental allies, and their British supporters were known as "Jacobites" (pronounced JAH-kə-bits).

When James II died in 1701, his son assumed the title King James III. (Many called him "the Pretender.") James III fathered a son, Charles Stuart, who became known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie" or "the Young Pretender."

At sixteen, Charles toured Italy and became a fashionable idol. He was tall, with perfectly regular features and a delicate complexion. A friend called him "the most surprisingly handsome person of the age" and described the "unspeakable majesty diffused throughout his whole mien."[4]

In 1744, hostilities with England drew French king Louis XV into an alliance with the Jacobites. Louis ordered an invasion of Britain, with twenty-three-year-old Charles Stuart at its head. As the French fleet waited in the harbor, however, it was wrecked by storms.

Louis XV scuttled the plan to invade, so Bonnie Prince Charlie decided to launch a revolution on his own. His strategy was to land in the Scottish Highlands—a traditional bastion of Stuart loyalty—and get the clan chiefs behind him. The chiefs would assemble their men into an army. The army would snowball, Charles calculated, as more Jacobites joined. Seeing his success, the French would send an army, and Charles could steamroll his way to London. It was an outlandish plan, and it almost worked.

In the summer of 1745, Charles and his companions assembled a small mercenary army in Nantes, near the Atlantic coast of France. Secrecy was critical, and Charles disguised himself as plain, stubble-chinned "Mr. Douglas."

On July 16, 1745, Charles and friends boarded a little frigate, the *Du Teillay*. A large battleship, the *Elisabeth*, carried sixty officers, several hundred men, small field artillery, and ammunition. Both ships sailed for Scotland.

On their way to the Highlands, as they rounded the coast of Cornwall, the ships encountered a British warship, the HMS *Lyon*. The *Lyon* and the *Elisabeth* traded cannon fire for several hours. As night fell, the leaking, listing *Elisabeth* turned back toward France, taking her soldiers, weapons, and supplies. Now Charles had no troops and little evidence of French backing.

He pressed on. Ten days later, the *Du Teillay* reached the Outer Hebrides, just west of the Scottish mainland. Chased by another British ship, Charles landed during a storm and sought shelter.

The next morning, bad news arrived: local chiefs refused to support him. Donald Cameron—head of clan Cameron—told Charles to return to France, get more soldiers and weapons, and then come back. "In a few days," replied Charles, "with the few friends that I have, I will erect the Royal Standard, and proclaim to the people of Britain that Charles Stuart is come over to claim the crown of his ancestors, or die in the attempt." According to lore, Charles invited Cameron to join him or "stay at home, and learn from the newspapers the fate of his prince."[5]

That was enough for Cameron. "I'll share the fate of my prince," he said, "and so shall every man over whom nature or fortune hath given me any power."[6] One by one, Charles won Highland backers, partly by assuring them that a French invasion was imminent.

Fortunately for Charles, Scotland was not well defended during the summer of 1745. In a stealth operation at dawn, Charles's small army captured Edinburgh. As a gate opened, a few hundred Highlanders rushed in and seized the guardhouse. Later, when Charles entered the city, people cheered. White cockades—circular emblems signifying Jacobite loyalty—suddenly appeared on hats throughout the city.

Figure 3.1. Bonnie Prince Charlie is toasted by supporters at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1745. Hulton Archive/Getty Images

A few days later, Charles consolidated his grip on Scotland. Twenty-five hundred government troops occupied a fortified position near Edinburgh, but a local landowner told Charles about an unguarded pathway through a marsh. At night, Charles and his Highlanders crept through and formed ranks two hundred paces from the troops. As dawn broke, the Highlanders charged. The Battle of Prestonpans was over within minutes.

Two months after landing in the Highlands with no army, no arsenal, and none of the clans behind him, Bonnie Prince Charlie reclaimed the Kingdom of Scotland through bluff and confidence.

Charles faced a decision: whether to stay and consolidate his rule in Scotland or to press forward into England. By staying, Charles could dissolve the Scottish-English union, summon a Scottish parliament, impose taxes, and build a regular army. By invading England, though, he could maintain momentum, spur the French into action, and prevent his Highlanders from melting back to their homes.

On November 1, Charles led five thousand men into England. As they marched south, Charles sometimes doubled back and took them through the same town multiple times, generating rumors of a vast Highland horde.

On the road to London, Charles marched alongside his men, speaking to them in a smattering of Gaelic and joining their physical labors. He kept this up in freezing winds and snow and spoke in a friendly and open manner with any troops who approached him. (A prominent Jacobite leader, on the execution block, would extol Charles's "incomparable sweetness," as well as "his affability, his compassion, his justice, his temperance, his patience and his courage."[7])

The Jacobite army failed to snowball, however. Englishmen of all political stripes—including Catholics and Tories—stayed away. Still, the Highland army had a frightening aura of invincibility, and Londoners began to panic. Shops closed, newspapers issued hysterical warnings, there was a run on the Bank of England, and King George II prepared to flee.

Some of Charles's officers, though, were losing confidence. They were leading a small army of Scottish Highlanders through a sullen and hostile England, and they felt alone and exposed. The long-promised French invasion had not materialized. They did not know how weak London's defenses actually were at that moment; nor did they know about the terror gripping the capital.

Early in the morning of December 5, in the city of Derby, about one hundred miles north of London, Jacobite leaders discussed their next move. Charles spoke first, referring to the next day's march toward the capital. There was silence. One chieftain asked whether advancing further was prudent, which released a flood of pent-up anxieties and arguments for returning to Scotland and awaiting French reinforcements. Charles stood alone. "You ruin, abandon and betray me if you do not march on," he raged.[8]

At this point, it seems that a young, smooth-talking London pimp named Dudley Bradstreet made a momentous contribution to history. Bradstreet was a government spy. He rode to Derby, posing as a rebel lord. Whisked into the Jacobite inner sanctum, he fabricated a tale of eight to nine thousand government troops waiting at Northampton. His news bolstered the case for retreat.

If the Jacobites had gone to London, would they have won? It is certainly possible. One historian argues that Charles's army "would almost certainly have swept aside the force at Finchley, and entered London"[9] ; another claims the Jacobites were "on the verge of a world-shattering victory."[10] If the Jacobites had prevailed, all bets are off as to the subsequent direction of British history.

Early in the morning of December 6—"Black Friday"—the Highlanders began to move. As dawn cracked on their right, the men realized they were retreating north; groans of despair rose.

Meanwhile, the French invasion, as Charles had long insisted, really was imminent. Twelve thousand French troops waited in Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne, all of them ready to land in England by the end of December. King Louis XV solidly backed the effort, and Voltaire wrote a manifesto for the occasion.

The Duc de Richelieu arrived in Dunkirk to lead the invasion, only to find serious logistical problems involving transport of food, horses, and artillery. At this juncture, word arrived that Charles was retreating to Scotland. This meant the French would have to take London by themselves. Richelieu's nerve began to fail. A series of sea disasters followed; two English privateers sank or captured eighteen ships. The invasion was repeatedly postponed because of bad weather, until the political momentum dissipated.

The Jacobites and the French both sought regime change in Britain, but each side worried about bearing the sole burden. On this point, the Forty-Five unraveled.

By the time Charles's army reached Scotland, Edinburgh was lost to the government. The Jacobites marched north, arriving at Inverness in February.

On April 13, Charles learned that government troops were rapidly approaching. He gathered his men at Culloden, a large flat plain. They slept there, and the next day, their food ration consisted of a single biscuit. Charles concocted a plan to move at night and shock the government troops at dawn, as they had done at Prestonpans. After slogging for eight hours, though, the troops were still four miles from the enemy, with only an hour before daylight. So they marched the eight miles back to Culloden, where many collapsed from hunger and exhaustion. Then, a downpour began.

A few grim hours later, the well-fed, well-rested government troops arrived. They outnumbered the Highlanders by three to one, and Culloden's flat terrain favored government tactics and artillery. The red-coated soldiers marched in slow and steady order to dozens of kettledrums. Charles still

projected a jocular optimism, and the Jacobite army greeted the silent soldiers with derisive shouts. After a heroic but futile Highland charge, government muskets and artillery mowed down the Jacobite army; the Battle of Culloden Moor was over within thirty minutes. Charles ordered every survivor to "seek his own safety" and fled the battleground.

Now, of course, Bonnie Prince Charlie was public enemy number one in the eyes of the British government. British troops swept systematically through the region, searching for Charles and other Jacobites, leaving a trail of death, rape, slaughtered cattle, and scorched earth. The government was intent on eradicating clanship itself.

With help from friends in the MacDonald clan, Charles made his way to the Outer Hebrides. He rested in a small hut for three peaceful weeks, watching Royal Navy patrols and receiving visitors. Clansmen demonstrated firm loyalty to Charles during this period, despite the government's bounty of £30,000 on his head. (When Charles heard about the reward, he offered £30 for the capture of King George II.[11])

In June, Charles dressed as a maidservant named Betty Burke for a few days and slipped under the noses of British troops. He narrowly escaped capture by government troops on several occasions.

Finally, in September, Charles reached a French ship and sailed away. On his return to Paris, Charles basked in celebrity. He was tan and fit, and for over a year Europe buzzed with tales of his adventures. Parisians mobbed him, and the court adored him. As it turned out, this was the zenith of Charles Stuart's life.

In 1748, France and Britain signed the Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle, which ended Continental support for a Stuart restoration. One provision required Charles to leave France. Charles stubbornly remained in Paris, assuming that his immense popularity shielded him from arrest and deportation. He was wrong.

Ousted from France, Charles embarked on a ten-year incognito odyssey. He traveled as John Douglas, Dr. Thompson, or a priest, as well as under other aliases. Reports placed him, at various times, in Venice, Sweden, Scotland, Ireland, Spain, Flanders, Austria, Germany, Poland, and Russia. "Sometimes he wears a long false nose," a British spy reported, and "at other times he blackens his eyebrows and wears a black wig, by which alteration his most intimate acquaintances would scarce know him."[12]

In the fall of 1750, Charles visited London for five days. During this time, he abjured the Catholic faith, entered the Church of England, and met with fifty Jacobites to discuss the seizure of King George II.

The next year, the Elibank Plot began brewing. Alexander Murray of Elibank, a young Scottish nobleman, traveled to France and met with leading Jacobites. A plan was concocted: Elibank would return to London and organize hundreds of men. At a signal, they would seize St. James's Palace, the

Tower of London, and the royal family. Swedish troops in Scotland, meanwhile, would spark another northern insurrection, and Charles would be proclaimed regent.

A government spy—whose code name was "Pickle"—foiled the plot. Pickle was another young Scottish lord who had helped Charles organize the Forty-Five uprising but had been captured by the British navy. After two years in the Tower of London, he emerged penniless. Unable to obtain financial help from the "Old Pretender" in Rome, he offered his services to the British government. Still enmeshed in Jacobite conspiracies at the highest levels and personally trusted by Charles, Pickle proved devastatingly effective. The government learned everything about the Elibank Plot as it unfolded.

On March 20, 1753, government forces captured Archie Cameron, a chief architect of the Elibank Plot, in the hills near Loch Lomond. They tried him for participating in the Forty-Five, then hanged and disemboweled him. Recognizing that their cover was blown, the conspirators abandoned ship.

The Elibank Plot was the last significant Jacobite effort. Afterward, the Bonnie Prince grew violent and chronically inebriated, but he never let go of his claim to the British throne. By 1755, British ministers were confident he no longer posed a serious threat, but they remained vigilant until his death in 1788.

THE TRANSITION TO STABILITY

There is no doubt that British history after 1746 looks different from what came before. Held in the Tower of London after the coup of 1399, King Richard II lamented his "fickle" realm, "which hath exiled, slain, destroyed, or ruined so many kings, rulers and great men, and is ever tainted and toileth with strife and variance and envy."[13] The next two centuries saw coups, coup attempts, and civil wars in 1403, 1408, 1414, 1450, 1455, 1456, 1459–1461, 1464, 1469, 1470–1471, 1483, 1485, 1487, 1497, 1549, 1553, 1554, 1549, and 1569.[14]

Volatility persisted through the 1600s: a coup attempt in 1601, a period of coups, civil wars, and coup attempts lasting from 1642 to 1660, a quashed rebellion in 1685, and a successful revolution in 1688 dotted the century. After 1688, the Stuarts continually conspired with foreign sponsors and British friends, but their realistic hopes died at Culloden Moor in April 1746.

As many people saw it, England stabilized after 1688, while the Scots remained turbulent. Both major Jacobite risings (in 1715 and 1745) broke out in Scotland as England remained quiet, and despite lingering Jacobite sympathies, no English Tories joined the Forty-Five.[15] Historians call 1688 the

"last English revolution" and contend that no genuine revolutionary situations arose in England or Wales after 1689.[16]

Politics became unusually nonviolent in eighteenth-century England.[17] No politicians were assassinated. Ministers who fell from power—at least after 1716—were not threatened. Except in duels, politicians no longer tried to kill opponents. After the 1753 execution of Archie Cameron, no political offenders paid with their lives. Even impeachment fell into disuse.

At the time, Englishmen noticed the change. Bereft of violent or treasonous undercurrents, Parliament could be downright boring. One critic's caustic remark on the Commons: "A bird might build her nest in the Speaker's chair, or in his peruke [wig]. There won't be a debate that can disturb her."[18] "Under the mild and just" Hanoverian dynasty, Prime Minister Pitt commented in 1792, "a general calm has prevailed through the country, beyond what was ever before experienced."[19]

Since 1746, there has been occasional revolutionary talk and conspiracy. No activities, however, have risen to the level of a serious, highly plausible attempt to oust British leaders by force.[20]

In the late eighteenth century, many Britons sought a political overhaul. Some reformers became radicals, and some radicals dabbled in revolutionary notions. Most reformers, however, sought incremental reforms from within.

In the 1760s, Member of Parliament John Wilkes pressed for democratic reforms and "liberty," and his supporters formed unruly mobs. Neither he nor his followers, however, demonstrated revolutionary inclinations. The army decisively quelled the Gordon Riots of 1780. There was a constitutional standoff between the Crown and leading politicians between 1782 and 1784, but violence remained remote and implausible.

The 1789 French Revolution inspired radicals across the channel. In 1793, agitators were prosecuted for seeking to assemble a "National Convention" in Edinburgh as a rival to Parliament. Rioting erupted in October 1795, and two naval mutinies—mostly over sailors' pay and conditions—broke out in 1797.

In response, Parliament clamped down on civil liberties, and government spies consistently infiltrated subversive cabals. Unlike many Continental states, England had no sizeable contingent of émigrés—or local "fifth column"—ready to collaborate with the aggressive French "crusade for universal liberty."

The 1810s witnessed another wave of popular radicalism and conspiracy. Luddites rioted in northern England, destroying newfangled machines. Poor harvests brought food riots, as well as alarming instances of military-style drilling, oath taking, and attacks on arms depots by local groups.

There were a few revolutionary actions—but none can be counted serious threats to established order. In 1816, a small cabal of militants looted gunsmiths' shops and attacked the Tower of London. They were easily repulsed.

Radicals planned a national uprising for June 1817, but a government agent known as "Oliver the Spy" informed the authorities, who preemptively arrested the ringleaders. The only men to rise were about three hundred workers from Pentridge; they were apprehended without trouble, and three of their leaders were hanged and beheaded. A revolutionary named Arthur Thistlewood concocted an extravagant plan—dubbed the "Cato Street Conspiracy"—to blow up Prime Minister Lord Liverpool and his entire cabinet as they dined in February 1820. Thistlewood assumed the assassinations would trigger a national uprising; he intended to form a provisional government. But Thistlewood's aide-de-camp, George Edwards, was a government agent—and the "cabinet dinner" was a police ruse anyway. Police arrested the conspirators; Thistlewood and four confederates were hanged.

The last revolutionary alarms sounded in the 1830s and 1840s. Middle-class and working-class reformers struggled to make the oligarchic Parliament more representative of the nation. They wanted to expand the franchise and eliminate the "rotten boroughs" usually dominated by aristocratic patrons.

In October 1831, a landmark set of political reforms went down to defeat in the House of Lords. Rioting erupted in various cities; a mob held Bristol for three days. The following May, the Lords again blocked reform. Mass demonstrations and riots followed, and rumors swarmed of insurrection. The Birmingham Political Union—with an army of fifteen hundred men and muskets, at least on paper—pledged itself to an uprising, if necessary.

It proved unnecessary. In the face of disorder, reform passed. Earl Grey, the prime minister, argued reform would "prevent the necessity for revolution."[21] King William IV pressured reluctant Tory Lords, and the 1832 Reform Act became law.

"Rotten boroughs" lost seats in Parliament, cities gained them, and the franchise widened. Now one in five men could vote. Still, working classes remained dissatisfied. "Chartists," who supported a written constitutional charter, pressed for universal male suffrage, equal representation in Parliament, payment of members of Parliament (MPs), and vote by secret ballot—in short, for democracy.

Chartists mounted serious demonstrations, riots, and strikes between 1838 and 1848, as militants urged their followers to "arm, arm, arm." Some gatherings displayed weapons and discharged guns; shadowy coup plots developed. No one—including Chartists themselves—knew whether demonstrations would descend into riots or if rioting could bring revolution. Chartists attacked a hotel in Newport in 1838, but soldiers and local authorities chased them away.

Chartist violence remained mostly rhetorical. Ultimately, Chartist activities proved less menacing than the disturbances of 1831–1832. The move-

ment dissipated after 1848; nonetheless, its goals were largely implemented by 1900.

On the Continent, popular revolutions toppled governments during the 1830s and 1840s. In Britain, revolutionary talk was primarily tactical, designed to leverage fear into political gain. After 1848, even militant language went into decline. As workers won rights later in the century, prospects for revolt dimmed further.

What about the military? Did any elites—politicians, the Crown, or military commanders—try to use military force against the constitutional order? In short, were there any attempts at coup d'état after 1746?

Scholars agree: there were not. In fact, the British military has been well-behaved and solidly constitutional for over three hundred years.[22] From time to time, mere murmurs have sounded. A small conspiracy formed within one army battalion in 1802–1803 but never bloomed into revolt.[23] During World War I, Prime Minister Lloyd George feared army commanders were plotting a coup, but this appears unlikely.[24] In 1974, army exercises near Heathrow Airport generated media buzz about a possible coup; one author found the episode interesting only because "it marked the end of a long period in which the question had never been raised at all."[25]

How did Britain go from chronic coups to stable governance for two and a half centuries and counting? It will be helpful to briefly chart the rise and consolidation of the British constitutional system, investigate the specific mechanisms of the British "rule of law," and see how British stability has been explained to date.

THE LONG MARCH OF ENGLISH CONSTITUTIONALISM

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 confirmed that England would have a constitutional monarchy, but it did not fashion the principle out of thin air. The revolution drew upon hallowed traditions. For centuries, lawyers, scholars, and politicians considered English kings uniquely bound to law.

Magna Carta, signed in 1215, long symbolized the principle that English kings ruled through law, rather than above it. This century also witnessed the rise of Parliament. This body began simply as the King's Council, where feudal magnates and royal ministers gathered to discuss politics, law, and foreign affairs. Townsmen and "knights of the shire" were summoned in the 1260s, an innovation that became the House of Commons. Persistent revenue needs, usually to fight wars, enhanced parliamentary leverage. By the fifteenth century, the principle was established that all statutes and extraordinary taxes required consent by the Commons.

The Tudor dynasty—lasting from Henry Tudor's 1485 overthrow of Richard III to Queen Elizabeth I's death in 1603—strengthened Crown pow-

ers and centralized the national English state. Even so, the Tudors did not dismantle the constitutional dimensions of English governance. In general, Tudor monarchs governed under the law, lived on their own resources, and summoned Parliaments when they needed extra money.

New statutes required consent by Lords and Commons—but we should not imagine that members of Parliament felt completely free to dismiss Crown concerns. The Elizabethan House of Commons described "free speech" as their "ancient right," but historians describe this freedom as "precarious."[26] Members were barred from introducing topics relating to the royal prerogative, for example, and some MPs went to the Tower for overstepping their place. The Tudors also interfered with parliamentary elections, and Speakers of the Commons—who were appointed by the Crown—guided the agenda. Even if an unwanted bill slipped through, the monarch held a veto.

Elizabeth coaxed and guided Parliament masterfully—but her Stuart successors proved far less adept. In 1603, Elizabeth's cousin, King James VI of Scotland, was crowned as England's King James I. Soon James was articulating a view of kingship by divine right, wherein the Crown stood above law. In 1604, he scolded Parliament for demonstrating "nothing but curiosity from morning to evening to find fault with my propositions."[27]

King James also confronted judges like Sir Edward Coke. Chief Justice Coke, first of Common Pleas and then of King's Bench, saw the English common law as a bulwark against arbitrary power. He resisted James's efforts to suspend parliamentary statutes, govern by proclamation, expand the royal prerogative, and rule on cases personally. James ultimately dismissed his stubborn chief justice, who reappeared as a leading Crown antagonist within the House of Commons.

Tensions between Crown and Parliament grew far more heated under James's son, King Charles. Historians generally agree that Charles I was "haughty, aloof, and rigid" and that his personality helped seal his fate.[28] An introvert, Charles could not smooth over disputes with jovial glad-handing. He worked hard, but a brittle and defensive nature made him behave disastrously. He saw all opposition as illegitimate.

After a contentious Parliament in 1629, Charles dissolved it and refused to call another for eleven years. He needed money desperately in 1640, however, to defeat a Scottish insurrection. He summoned Parliament, but tensions steadily worsened as Charles and the MPs suspected each other of plotting violence.

In January 1642, Charles took several hundred armed men to arrest five ringleaders in the Commons, but they had already fled. The House adjourned into London for safety, and angry mobs blocked the king's search for the five. Six days later Charles fled the capital, and a civil war resulted.

Parliamentary forces eventually defeated the royalists, but instability persisted through the 1650s. Colonel Thomas Pride forcefully purged Parliament in December 1648, leaving a die-hard contingent of republicans and Puritans. This Parliament tried and executed King Charles, then declared England a "commonwealth and free state." Four years later, General Oliver Cromwell dissolved Parliament by force, then became "lord protector" for life. Five years of strenuous Puritan governance ensued. Cromwell died in 1658; he was succeeded by his son Richard, but the following year, army leaders forced Richard to abdicate. George Monck, an English commander, briefly held power that year. Monck—like many others—sought a return to traditional government. In May 1660, a new Parliament voted to "restore" Charles II, the exiled son of King Charles.

Monarchy had returned, but eighteen years of republican or quasi-republican rule had revolutionized public administration.[29] Charles II promised a "free parliament" before his recall, and many remained wary of royal authority. They also feared and despised the Catholic religion. Englishmen saw "popery" as the natural ally of absolutist tyranny.

Their opinion, moreover, was not merely religious prejudice. The overwhelming power of France under Louis XIV represented a serious threat to constitutional government in England. In secret treaty provisions negotiated between Charles II and Louis XIV, the Sun King promised subsidies of soldiers and money, which would allow Charles to rule without Parliament, declare himself Catholic, and bring England back into the Roman Church.[30] In other words, constitutional government and the Protestant faith faced a common peril.

As it turned out, Charles II backed away from his close entanglement with Louis XIV and retreated toward constitutionalism and Anglicanism—which were certainly more popular in England. But then, Charles's younger brother James, who stood to inherit the throne, was discovered to be a zealous Catholic. The news was explosive and split Parliament into bitter factions. Some MPs, identified as "Whigs," fought furiously to exclude James from the royal succession. Others, labeled "Tories," saw his blood claim as sacred and inviolable.

The Whigs failed. A Tory majority approved James's accession, provided he refrain from introducing "popery and arbitrary government." Charles refused to call Parliament after 1681, subsisting on French largesse. He died in 1685.

Almost immediately upon his coronation, King James II made threatening moves. He stationed a standing army of thirty thousand men near London.[31] He claimed the right to suspend parliamentary statutes at will—including the Test Acts, which blocked Catholics from government and military offices. Leading Catholics entered the Privy Council. James placed Catholic officers in key military commands, including the Royal Navy, the Irish army, Edin-

burgh Castle, and the Tower of London. He drew close to Louis XIV and French Jesuits.

To many, the specter of "popery and arbitrary government" loomed. The last straw came in June 1688, when James's wife gave birth to a son. Now, Catholic tyranny stretched over the horizon of James II's own life.

A cabal of English politicians invited William of Orange—the Protestant Dutch *Stadholder*, or constitutional monarch—to invade. In November 1688, William's vast armada landed, and many Englishmen flocked to his Orange banner. The unpopular James tried using force, but his troops began deserting. James fled to France, and the Dutch prince was crowned King William III. Victorious parliamentarians dubbed it the "Glorious Revolution."

The year 1688 cemented parliamentary authority and created a strictly constitutional monarchy. Eighteenth-century Britons lauded their "Revolution Constitution." This constitution was not a single document like the U.S. Constitution but was instead a series of different basic laws, as well as implicit understandings about the role of Parliament, the rights of British subjects, and the limitations of the monarchy.

A new Coronation Oath bound monarchs to govern "according to the statutes in Parliament agreed on." The 1689 Bill of Rights mainly reinforced existing practices: it blocked the Crown from interfering with legal decisions and parliamentary elections, mandated frequent Parliaments, required parliamentary approval for taxes and a peacetime standing army, provided for parliamentary freedom of speech, and guaranteed freedoms from excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments. Press censorship—by government and church—came to an end in 1695. The 1701 Act of Settlement determined the royal succession, such that after King William III and his sister-in-law Anne died, the Crown would pass to Electress Sophia of Hanover and her Protestant descendants. In 1714, this law went into effect, establishing the Hanoverian dynasty.

The Crown under the Revolution Constitution

The Glorious Revolution made it clear that English monarchs would be constitutional, not absolute. Parliament retained ultimate control over laws and the royal succession. After 1688, no king attempted to govern without Parliament or tried to override votes in the Commons.[32]

Still, King William III and his eighteenth-century successors were hardly "ceremonial" figures like Queen Elizabeth II. They made judicial and civil service appointments, dispensed titles and pensions, commanded the armed forces, and freely chose their ministers from the Lords and Commons. Their only constraint was practical: Crown ministers needed to organize parliamentary majorities.

In the long run, the Crown gradually lost its powers, but the decline was not linear. Much depended on the monarch's personal qualities, social relationships, and political ambitions. King George III reigned from 1760 to 1820 and frequently took charge of policy matters, especially during the American Revolution. Some of his actions raised constitutional questions, but he never behaved like a genuine tyrant, despite Thomas Jefferson's rhetoric. In the later period of George III's reign, parliamentary reforms chipped away at royal patronage. Afterward, the Crown could no longer elevate or sustain ministers who lacked support in the Commons.

When George III went permanently insane in 1811, Parliament rapidly assumed control over the executive branch, and none of his successors made their will decisive on policy matters. National leaders emerged from the House of Commons and were essentially imposed on the Crown. In 1834, King William IV dismissed Prime Minister William Lamb, who held a majority in the Commons, but since then, no king or queen has interfered in choosing the prime minister.[33] Monarchs were relegated to strictly symbolic functions.

Partisan Politics under the Revolution Constitution

Below the Crown, two parties competed for dominance. Whigs and Tories came together to oust James II in 1688, but they quickly resumed a passionate, rancorous, and somewhat ideological rivalry. Whigs emphasized government by consent, exemplified in John Locke's writings. Tories abandoned kingship by divine right but still favored the Crown prerogative and the Anglican hierarchy. Jacobites, who favored a Stuart restoration, formed a secret wing of the Tory Party.

Whiggish principles triumphed in 1688, but Whigs themselves enjoyed no postrevolutionary monopoly, at least not immediately. Monarchs displayed varying party preferences and strategies. King William III recruited evenly from both parties; Queen Anne (r. 1702–1714) favored Tories; Georges I and II (r. 1714–1727 and 1727–1760) relied exclusively on Whigs. All monarchs, however, responded to political winds and electoral results.

The "rage of party" reached virulent heights during the first decades of the eighteenth century. National life was divided in surprising ways. There were not only party clubs and newspapers but Whig and Tory coffeehouses, taverns, theaters, doctors, and hospitals.[34] Politicians "impeached" their opponents, wielding criminal charges as weapons. Fallen ministers might reasonably fear a couple of years in the Tower.[35]

The prospect of Jacobite violence lurked in the background, heightening party suspicions. As Queen Anne's health declined in 1714, Tories anticipated a drastic fall. When she died, her chief minister, Viscount Bolingbroke, fled to the Continent, offered his services to the Pretender, and supported the

Jacobite uprising of 1715. His treason tarnished the Tories, who would remain dormant for decades.

Despite fears of instability, the Elector of Hanover succeeded smoothly as King George I, in accordance with the Act of Settlement. In retrospect, historians identify 1714 as a transition to tranquility. One cites the Hanoverian "atmosphere of moderation and tolerance."[36] Others describe the era's "harmony," "stability," and "reasonableness."[37] At the time, people actually called the Whig-Hanover regime a "Venetian oligarchy."

Georges I and II left most decisions to their Whig ministers. The most prominent was Sir Robert Walpole, who governed from 1721 to 1742. Walpole is often considered the first prime minister; officially, he was "First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer."

Robert Walpole was a leader of the Lyndon Baines Johnson type. He cajoled, manipulated, and dominated men. He hunted with his beagles, drank with gusto, and told earthy stories. His bluff, open, "country" persona—and his ability to distill complex legislation into plain English—won over independent backbenchers in the Commons. Walpole's influence in Parliament made him invaluable to the king; his extraordinary grip on Crown patronage helped him in the Commons.

Walpole built a sophisticated political machine. He lavished Crown benefits upon aristocratic patrons, who in turn controlled "pocket boroughs." His allies carefully nursed local constituencies, reminding electors of benefits they received from the ministry. Sometimes electors were bribed or pressured to support particular candidates.[38]

To some contemporaries—especially Tories—Walpole's system reeked of "corruption." The issue is difficult to resolve, and perhaps impossible. Definitions of corruption vary, and they have changed over time. Politics was rowdy, freewheeling, and relatively unregulated in Walpole's day; it was considered legitimate for Crown ministers to use material "influence"—such as jobs, pensions, titles, and government contracts—to coax electors and members of Parliament into line. After Walpole fell in 1742, a parliamentary enquiry examined the bribery charges against him but found nothing conclusive.[39]

Walpole also used the Pretender as a blunt political weapon, branding all Tories with the Jacobite stigma. He ruthlessly, persistently, and obsessively investigated Jacobite activities. Government agents opened mail and followed people they considered dangerous. Walpole personally interrogated suspects, threatened them, and used brute force on at least one occasion. He brought some to trial; in other cases, he resorted to special parliamentary bills of pains and penalties. Walpole's campaign struck terror. Within Parliament, at least, support for the Pretender vanished after 1723.[40]

After Viscount Bolingbroke's flirtation with the Pretender between 1714 and 1716, no ministers appear to have embraced violent causes or methods.

Figure 3.2. The House of Commons during the administration of Sir Robert Walpole. Engraving by William Hogarth. The Bridgeman Art Library

All worked within the system: retaining Crown confidence, building parliamentary support, and appealing to the electorate.[41]

Saying that each political actor has been constrained by legal and constitutional principles, however, simply restates the problem. Why has no one made a serious effort to destroy, curtail, or abrogate the British constitution by force?

As many eighteenth-century Britons saw it, the merit of their constitution and legal system was that it provided security to everyone, regardless of family, rank, party, or background. (People were secure only if they did not break the law, of course.) Did the same principle also secure the crown and its chief ministers against violent efforts to replace them? Moreover, in both Venice and Britain, strong rule-of-law institutions coincided with the transition to stability. We bring these threads together in chapter 4 to develop a general theory of stability.

For now, we should understand exactly what the rule of law meant in Britain, how it worked, and when its various components attained maturity.

THE BRITISH RULE OF LAW

By the eighteenth century, the British legal system—like its Venetian counterpart—was exceptionally fair, impartial, accessible, and dependable.

For eighteenth-century Britons, legality was a point of national pride.[42] The "free-born Englishman" cliché pervaded political talk. Englishmen of all classes considered themselves free because they had rights—of liberty and property—that could not be infringed by anyone, including the king.

As a mid-century statesman, William Pitt the Elder, declared, "[T]he poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail—its roof may shake—the wind may blow through it—the storm may enter—the rain may enter—but the King of England cannot enter. All his force dares not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement."[43]

The British constitution—like the Venetian—inspired wonder. "Here is a country where a man can think freely and nobly, without being hindered by any servile fear," wrote Voltaire.[44]

Britain and Venice were hardly identical. The two states progressed along different timelines, promulgated separate bodies of law, and acquired distinctive constitutions. Their governing bodies were hardly twinned; there was no "Signoria" or "Council of Ten" in London and no "Lords" or "Commons" in Venice. The two peoples were divided by language, customs, habits, religion, clothing, food, weather, outlook, architecture, recreation, and much else.

But at the broadest level of comparison, England and Venice created surprisingly parallel legal orders. With distinctive variations, the English also cultivated (1) a developed court system with appellate tribunals, (2) formal equality under the law, (3) fact-finding through rational inquiry, (4) procedural protections for criminal defendants, (5) a legal profession closely intertwined with political elites, (6) an independent judiciary, (7) the subjection of all state actions to legal scrutiny, and (8) low governmental corruption.

To avoid repetition, we shall only briefly touch upon the reasons why each of these elements is critical to a strong and systemic rule of law. (Read-

ers may refer to the parallel sections in the previous chapter for fuller explanations.)

The Court System

As in Venice, courts and appellate review were basic building blocks for a rule-of-law state. In an age of feudal anarchy, England developed a centralized, national system of laws and courts. When William the Conqueror arrived in 1066, he acquired a kingdom with a particularly strong central government; he and his Norman successors tightened the administration of law and order still further. Shire courts stood above hundred courts, and royal courts supervised all.

Royal judges created the common law—a uniquely national body of law in England. Common law judges maintained records of their decisions and used them as precedents in subsequent cases. Since the Middle Ages, three common law courts—King's Bench, Common Pleas, and Exchequer—have heard appeals and corrected the errors and abuses of local courts and officials.[45] Continental justice, by contrast, tended to remain a patchwork of local customary law and feudal courts. By the thirteenth century, royal courts handled all serious crimes in England, including all crimes punishable by loss of life or limb.

Law and order improved gradually over the centuries. By combining data from numerous sources, political scientist Ted Gurr and criminologist Manuel Eisner have each found that homicide rates in England dropped steadily and dramatically from 1200 to 1950, before making a slight uptick in the late twentieth century.[46] English justice, it appears, developed an increasingly strong and impartial presence across the country, from the Norman Conquest to the Glorious Revolution.[47]

Formal Equality under the Law

During the later Middle Ages, many legal systems in Continental Europe developed complex classifications of social "estates," or ranks. In many instances, noblemen enjoyed special privileges and immunities, such as not being subject to the regular law courts. England (and Venice) stood apart from this trend.

In England, the common law did little to differentiate social estates and ranks.[48] As serfdom grew obsolete in the later Middle Ages, all Englishmen were "free." In France, on the other hand, the legally defined nobility maintained steep privileges under the law until 1789. French noblemen could not participate in manual labor or commercial activities without risking *dérogation*—the loss of noble rank.[49]

England always exhibited a social hierarchy of minute gradations, with no chasms between legally distinct castes. As in Venice, justice was dispensed with relatively little regard for the identity or social rank of parties.

Fact-Finding through Rational Inquiry

For justice to be administered with any kind of fairness or accuracy, it is crucial to determine the underlying facts of a case in a rational and balanced manner. Early medieval tribunals, however, knew other methods. Religious and mystical methods of proof—including oath taking, ordeals, and trial by combat—remained prominent in England until the twelfth century.[50]

Oath taking took several forms. Sometimes, to defeat an allegation, a criminal or civil defendant could simply swear a solemn oath. (But a slip of the tongue might prove fatal.) Usually, a defendant had to produce "oath helpers," or people who swore they believed the defendant's oath. Early oath helpers were often a defendant's kin, but in later periods, they were generally free men untainted by crime.

In serious cases, especially when oath takers could not be found, defendants underwent ordeals. By one method, defendants carried hot iron in their hand for nine steps. Their hand was sealed up and examined on the third day. If the hand festered, the defendant was deemed guilty. Other ordeals involved plunging one's hand into hot water and being thrown into cold water to sink or float.

The Normans brought a new procedure, trial by combat, which in theory sought God's judgment. In practice, of course, it rewarded valiant fighters and those able to hire them.[51]

By the thirteenth century, English juries were increasingly determining facts. Early juries used their own knowledge to render verdicts. Often jurors received advance notice of questions and made inquiries in their neighborhood. During this time, judges would question each juror individually about their findings. By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, juries were rendering collective verdicts, based largely upon evidence presented in public courtrooms.[52]

Procedural Protections for Criminal Defendants

In different ways, Venice and Britain each provided unusual rights to criminal defendants. These enhanced the rationality of adjudications and the security of individuals by minimizing vindictive prosecutions, summary convictions, and extrajudicial punishments.

The jury system has long been seen as a shield against arbitrary power. This is not to say that juries were incorruptible. Bribery was clearly a problem in late-medieval civil cases, where litigants contested great sums of

money. In addition, some officials selectively empanelled jurors.[53] Assuming that all officials are susceptible to corruption, though, the jury system probably renders corruption more difficult. With more people to bribe or intimidate, the effort, expense, and risk of discovery are greater.

The English system also minimized the use of torture. Writing in the fifteenth century, Sir John Fortescue contrasted English procedures with French methods. In France, he said, defendants were tortured mercilessly, such that innocent people "confess[ed] to every kind of crime" rather than submit to further agonies.[54]

In Tudor England, torture was applied by royal councils, not by ordinary courts. The Privy Council and the Court of Star Chamber extracted evidence on the rack, usually regarding critical matters of state security. A royal warrant—issued under the "prerogative" rather than the common law—was necessary. (Torture, like the Star Chamber, was abolished after 1642.)[55]

"Due process of law" first appeared in a fourteenth-century statute. Over time, it came to mean that any judicial process had to include a fair hearing before a neutral decision maker.[56] Prisoners were eventually able to use the writ of habeas corpus to contend that their detention was unlawful. In 1540, the Court of King's Bench held that Magna Carta protected all subjects against illegal imprisonment and that the habeas writ was available to provide a remedy. Over the next century, however, that decision was frequently disregarded. Only after 1642 and the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679 did the habeas procedure come into widespread use.[57]

Legal Profession Closely Intertwined with Political Elites

Lawyers, we noted earlier, are indispensable to a rule-of-law state. For the state to function in a legalistic manner, in conformity with all applicable legal doctrines, it must at least employ people who have learned the law. Perhaps better yet, the state might essentially be composed of lawyers.

In Britain as in Venice, legal knowledge and skilled analysis became prized assets, which could help an aspirant rise in government and politics. Aside from dispersing knowledge of law across the top social strata, this fostered impartiality because lawyers and judges proved their abilities and established their reputations by applying legal doctrines correctly, without respect to persons.

Thirteenth-century Europe witnessed an intellectual renaissance, as students began studying law in the new universities. In England, a new kind of secular, professional lawyer emerged. William Caxton—a fifteenth-century printer—thought England had more lawyers than any other country.[58]

By the sixteenth century, young Englishmen trained for legal careers in London, at the Inns of Court. (Young gentlemen preparing to manage their estates and to serve as justices of the peace [JPs] also attended.) Students

absorbed the innumerable technicalities of pleading, writs, and legal argument. Judges, barristers, and MPs came to lecture, dine, preside over moot courts, and examine students for the bar. After eight years, the new lawyers might become barristers. After sixteen or twenty years, some were named serjeants-at-law and could be appointed judges.[59]

The bar was an exclusive club. Men achieved high rank by mastering the law's subtleties and complexities. The young Edward Coke, for example, first gained notoriety by arguing a complaint about the food served in one of the inns. Coke stated his case "so exactly," says a chronicler, that "all the House admired him and his pleading it, so that the whole Bench took notice of him."[60]

Legal expertise trickled down to the localities of England through the justices of the peace. JPs served as the local face of Crown government from the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries.[61]

JPs were gentlemen, several social notches above most jurors. Appointed by the Crown, they held a mixture of powers, including policing their jurisdictions, setting tax rates, and sitting as judges. They dispensed summary justice for minor offenses, and in "Quarter Sessions," held four times a year, they presided over jury trials for serious crimes. JPs developed a tradition of declining wages and fees for their service, and they usually held office for life. They served within their own communities, and many went on to represent their constituents in Parliament.

Considerable disorders rocked late-medieval England, and JPs stood on the front lines. A single justice alone had to control rioters, prevent gangs from making forcible entries, and repossess property for rightful owners. They could commandeer help from anyone nearby and sometimes turned to part-time constables, but such forces frequently proved underwhelming.[62]

Three centuries later, the job continued to be dangerous. "It often happens," wrote a cabinet minister in 1756, "that the very magistrates themselves in the country are deterred from pursuing or apprehending common villains for fear, as they say, of having their houses burnt or some such injury."[63]

Some JPs abused their positions for private gain. For the most part, however, they sought to build goodwill rather than extract profits. Many were politicians, ultimately seeking election to Parliament. Several historians conclude that JPs, along with jury service, helped produce the English "respect for law."[64]

We might suspect, moreover, that the office shaped the distinctive image of the "English gentleman." Because JPs courted local sentiment—for political advancement and for personal security—they wrapped themselves in the law. As decision makers, they inevitably disappointed people, but JPs minimized resentments by presenting their actions as dictated by law and necessity. They presented a persona of disinterested service and "fair play."

To be credible, moreover, the fair-play persona had to be consistent. A JP could not allow personal sympathies or rancor to take over; if someone openly disrespected him, for example, the JP was ill-advised to lash out in anger. A calm, deft response—performed with hauteur—was probably his best option. The JP had to maintain the dignity of his office but avoid using it to gratify his pride, and this meant containing and concealing his emotions. The English gentleman's commitment to justice and fair play, we might say, gave him a stiff upper lip.[65]

Independent Judiciary

Judges can only be expected to be reliably impartial when they are free from extraneous pressures. English judges remained essentially beholden to the Crown until the Glorious Revolution of 1688.[66]

During the Tudor period, judges sometimes ruled against the Crown, but doing so was problematic because they served at the monarch's pleasure—and monarchs often expected cooperation on matters touching their own interests. Under Henry VIII, judges sometimes shifted their opinions in conformity with the king's wishes.

Few judges were removed from office before the seventeenth century, but this may have been due to politic judicial behavior. To the extent that judges were pliant, flexible, and cooperative, the Crown had no need to dismiss them.

The seventeenth-century Stuart monarchs removed many judges. This may be explained by their absolutist pretensions, a newfound judicial intransigence, or both. The practice began with James I's dismissal of Sir Edward Coke, chief justice of King's Bench, in 1616. Many dismissals followed, especially under Charles I. Surviving judges were increasingly seen as royal lackeys.

Judges had almost always held office *durante beneplacito*, or "during pleasure," that is, at the pleasure of the sovereign. During the Civil War and Commonwealth periods, from 1642 to 1660, judges were commissioned *quamdiu se bene gesserint*, or "during good behavior," meaning that they could only be removed for cause.

After 1660, Charles II continued to appoint judges for "good behavior," but he returned to "pleasure" after 1668. Charles II also suspended judges, forced others into retirement, and defaulted on his debts with impunity. James II proved even more imperious. During his brief reign—from 1685 to 1688—he dismissed twelve judges. (In most cases, the judges had refused to recognize the king's right to ignore parliamentary statutes or suspend the law at will.) As we saw, James's high-handed methods—and worrisome leanings toward France, Catholicism, and absolutism—sparked the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

The Glorious Revolution settled matters: English judges would stand as autonomous bastions of state power. The 1689 Bill of Rights blocked the Crown from interfering in legal decisions. The new king, William III, appointed all his judges to serve during "good behavior." The 1701 Act of Settlement guaranteed this form of judicial tenure and also secured judicial salaries. Parliament could not pressure judges by withholding their pay or by tempting them with raises. After 1760, a judge was appointed for his own lifetime, rather than for the king's.

After 1701, and especially after 1760, "good behavior" meant job security. Judges would retain office unless majorities in both houses of Parliament found they had engaged in misconduct and the Crown approved their dismissal. In three hundred years, only one judge has been removed in this manner—when Sir Jonah Barrington was found in 1830 to have misappropriated litigants' money.[67]

Legal scholars strongly emphasize the independence of the eighteenth-century judiciary.[68] As one eighteenth-century magistrate claimed, "The judges are totally independent of the ministers that may happen to be and of the king himself."[69]

All State Actions Subject to Legal Scrutiny

This principle constitutes the core of any rule-of-law system.[70] In theory, English royal authority has operated under the law since the late Middle Ages. To achieve the rule of law in practice, though, it must be possible to litigate and correct official misconduct. Before 1600, there were limited opportunities to do so. In the early seventeenth century, Chief Justice Edward Coke, of the Court of King's Bench, claimed jurisdiction to correct "errors and misdemeanours extrajudicial, tending to the breach of the peace, or oppression of the subjects . . . or any other manner of misgovernment."[71]

The rule-of-law principle was firmly established by the eighteenth century. All governmental powers were subject to the regular law courts, and ordinary subjects could sue for a remedy if any official exceeded his authority. Albert Venn Dicey considered the rule of law distinctively English. "With us every official, from the Prime Minister down to a constable or a collector of taxes," he wrote, "is under the same responsibility for every act done without legal justification as any other citizen."[72]

Low Corruption

The rule of law is meaningless if government officials are constantly twisting or ignoring the rules for their own purposes. Like Venetian officials, British civil servants acquired a reputation for honesty and probity. In large part, this

was because competence, diligence, and merit began to outweigh personal and factional connections as the criteria for hiring and promotion.[73]

After the 1688 revolution, William III's ministers constructed a permanent bureaucracy of able experts who provided continuity from one administration to the next. Even during the "rage of party," the nonpartisan civil service flourished. Walpole's patronage machine slightly undermined bureaucratic neutrality but did nothing to derail its long-term ascendance.

"Patronage" ties connected many eighteenth-century Englishmen to one another, but these were similar to what we call "connections." Men landed government positions largely through personal recommendations; the higher the recommender's rank, the more valuable his word. This created, in one historian's words, "an intricate filigree of clientage" up and down the social ladder.[74] Still, the system accommodated talented but unconnected aspirants. Despite the role of connections in hiring, the eighteenth-century British civil service developed a tradition of impartiality and professionalism. No contemporary state could boast a more efficient administration.

Later reforms cemented the rule-bound character of the bureaucracy. During its imperial crescendo, Britannia ruled the waves—and much of the world besides—with a brisk, businesslike, and no-nonsense Victorian civil service.

A Wealthy Industrializing Nation

As in many nations, the rule of law boosted English fortunes.[75] Of course, other factors like climate, soil, rainfall, and river transportation probably contributed as well. (England was relatively wealthy, even in Anglo-Saxon days.) But a reliable legal environment prepared the way for industrial takeoff.

By the 1690s, England was renowned as a "nation of meat-eaters." All the English "drink sound beer" and "eat good beef," wrote a French cardinal, whereas Frenchmen are "destitute" and "emaciated."[76] Economic historians consider eighteenth-century England—unlike Scotland or France—"famine-proof."[77]

In 1750, England was the richest nation in the world per person. The average income was £12 per year and rising rapidly. This was higher—in real purchasing power—than in many African and Asian nations in the late twentieth century.

Having obtained a bird's-eye view of the rise of constitutionalism and the "rule of law" in Britain, we can return to our main inquiry. Why has a British coup d'état or revolution seemed unlikely, absurd, and even impossible since 1746?

PRIOR EXPLANATIONS OF BRITISH STABILITY

Since British stability became apparent in the late eighteenth century, theorists have generated virtue-based and structural explanations. Some emphasize internalized ideas and values, while others highlight formal aspects of the British constitutional system. Many weave the two kinds of explanations together.

Some wonder whether revolutions have become impossible and express bafflement about why. Usually they fall back upon ideas: the acceptance of constitutional norms and the absence of revolutionary worldviews. This is essentially the "virtue" theory we encountered in Venice. In this view, people do not mount coups d'état because they believe doing so would be wrong.

Charles-Louis de Secondat—the Baron de Montesquieu—inaugurated the systemic study of the British constitution. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, published in 1748, Montesquieu heralded England's unique system. He calls England a republic "disguised under the form of monarchy" and describes it as the one nation in the world whose constitution aims at "political liberty."[78] For Montesquieu, political liberty is "a tranquility of mind arising from the opinion each person has of his safety," where "one man need not be afraid of another."[79]

Famously, Montesquieu attributes British liberty and order to the separation of powers. The executive, legislative, and judicial functions, he argues, operate in largely independent spheres. Each branch checks, moderates, and restrains the others. The balance of forces maintains liberty and prevents the rise of tyranny or arbitrary power. Fragmentary notions of this were already floating around, but Montesquieu assembled them into a coherent theory. Later, the American constitutional Framers would rely heavily on his separation-of-powers analysis.

As a theory of stability, though, separation of powers is weak. It assumes that the judicial and legislative branches will always be available to check any rogue executive actors. But what if a junta abolishes those branches and rules by decree? Separation-of-powers principles cannot explain why no one sends army brigades into the streets or imprisons the judges and legislators.

Despite his emphasis on constitutional structure, Montesquieu also credits the unusual "spirit" of the English. Suffering in perpetual rain and gloom, the English are unhappy, suicidal, restless, impatient, and constantly striving for social advancement. The public remains vigilant and prone to mass hysteria over threats to liberty. A people who "find no rest in any situation" and who "feel nothing but pain," says Montesquieu, "can hardly be lulled to sleep."[80] If any power violated the fundamental laws, he notes, "everyone would unite against that power."[81] While the ordinary people retain their honesty and love of liberty, wrote Montesquieu to an English friend, "it will be difficult to subvert your constitution."[82]

A few decades later, Jean-Louis de Lolme pondered the mysterious calm of Great Britain. Born in Geneva, he moved to England as an adult and first published *The Constitution of England* in 1771.

De Lolme considers the English monarchy unique in world history. Unlike all other kingdoms—and the ancient republics—England does not face a constant threat of men seeking to usurp the "supreme governing authority."[83] He cites the "impossibility" of "invading and transferring" governmental power.[84] The "remarkable solidity of the governing Executive Authority," he says, "takes from the great Men in the Nation all serious ambition to invade this authority, thereby preventing those anarchical and more or less bloody struggles to result from their debates, which have so constantly disturbed other Countries."[85] In other words, England is distinctive because a coup d'état is impossible.

But why? What prevents a British coup? Following Montesquieu, de Lolme credits the separation of powers. He shows how "the different parts of the English Government" balance each other and how "their reciprocal actions and reactions produce the freedom of the Constitution, which is no more than an equilibrium between the ruling Powers of the State."[86] De Lolme highlights the division of English elites into "two distinct Assemblies": Lords and Commons.[87]

Despite spending considerable time on separation of powers, however, de Lolme seems unsatisfied—probably because constitutional rules are not self-enforcing, as many coups within constitutional systems have demonstrated. De Lolme repeatedly describes English stability as "mysterious" and "astonishing."[88]

Aside from stability, England's most impressive and unusual feature is the rigor and impartiality of laws. There is "no Man in England," he says, "who can oppose the irresistible power of the Laws."[89] Independent judges rule without fear or favor and banish "all respect of persons" from their courts.[90] De Lolme describes judicial impartiality as a product of stability and calls it "impossible in other Countries."[91]

> Indeed to such a degree of impartiality has the administration of public justice been brought in England, that it is saying nothing beyond the exact truth, to affirm that any violation of the laws, though perpetrated by Men of the most extensive influence, nay, though committed by the special direction of the very first servants of the Crown, will be publicly and completely redressed.[92]

"Most extraordinary circumstances these!" exclaims the Continental lawyer.[93]

English laws control and restrain all men—including the king—but they also protect everyone. This renders English politics safe as well as flexible. In other monarchies, "a discarded Minister is the cause of more or less

anxiety to the governing Authority," especially if "he happens to have acquired a considerable degree of influence."[94] Such a man is confined to a country estate, banished from Court and capital, and barred from making public speeches or conducting intrigues. In England, on the other hand, fallen ministers are "harmless," and Parliament can be dissolved easily and completely.[95]

Stability, says de Lolme, gives England many "advantages" that are "totally unattainable" in other states.[96] These include restraints on government, freedom of speech, freedom of debate in Parliament, the right to participate in government, and impartial justice.[97] Stability yields liberty, he says, because regimes only grant freedoms to the extent they remain secure.[98]

So again, what makes England stable? "Individuals of the most exalted rank," he says, "do not entertain so much as the thought to raise the smallest direct opposition to the operation of the law."[99] Why not? De Lolme repeatedly invokes a mysterious, hidden dynamic—but never specifies what it is. He posits "some inward essential difference" between England and other nations.[100] Even amidst political ferment, "insuperable impediments" block those who might "raise themselves on the wreck of the governing authority."[101] "A secret force exerts itself, which gradually brings things back to a state of moderation and calm."[102]

De Lolme wants to know why everyone plays by constitutional rules. He yearns, seemingly, for a structural theory. Those persons "who seem to have it in their power" to seize executive authority, he remarks, "are, somehow, prevented from entertaining thoughts of doing so."[103]

But what prevents politicians from imagining themselves as Caesar or Cromwell? And what explains the "astonishing subordination" of military leaders to civilian rule?[104] De Lolme cannot identify the pressure keeping every Englishman in his constitutionally ordained place. He never gets beyond "somehow."

Facing the same question, a renowned Victorian scholar threw up his hands. Albert Venn Dicey crafted a meticulous theory to explain how the unwritten, implicit conventions of the British constitution were enforced.[105] No one would be able to subvert those conventions, he argued, without violating other laws, which were enforceable in court. For example, if Parliament did not assemble for two years, tax revenues would cease to be legally due. Anyone who collected taxes would face criminal charges. The "boldest political adventurer" must "obey the fundamental principles of the constitution," Dicey concludes, because breaching them "will almost immediately bring the offender into conflict with the courts and the law of the land."[106]

But what if the "adventurer" rules by armed force? What if he kills the judges or intimidates them into submission? Dicey acknowledges the problem but calls it impossible to resolve. "No constitution can be absolutely safe from revolution or from a coup d'état," he writes. "No one is concerned to

show, what indeed can never be shown, that the law can never be defied, or the constitution never be overthrown."[107]

Two centuries after de Lolme, scholars remain stuck with vague "somehow" explanations of stability. "Call it socialization or tradition," says Peter Karsten, an expert on civil-military relations at the University of Pittsburgh, "something has been at work in certain competitive democracies to preclude military coups—something other than economic prosperity, constitutional formulas, or careful stroking of military elites."[108]

To explain stability in Britain and other mature democracies, contemporary theorists like Karsten almost always invoke professional military values. (And we will see in the next chapter why this "virtue theory" is unsatisfying.)

Like their counterparts in Venetian studies, the historians of England postulate a structural immunity to revolution but fail to craft a convincing theory. We hear that Crown, Parliament, and judiciary balance each other, ensuring that no one, "not even the monarch," exceeds their boundaries.[109] Radical groups have been too weak to challenge the British state, but that does not explain why military commanders or politicians have failed to seize power. After 1688, one author suggests, few Britons advocated revolution, and none "had the means of achieving it."[110]

But why not? What "mysterious force" has blocked serious revolutionary action in Britain since 1746? Is it the same thing that maintained Venetian serenity for 486 years? Is it the "rule of law"?

If so, how does that prevent a coup d'état?

Chapter Four

The Coup-Free State

What generates stability? How did the Venetians string together 486 years of serene governance? Is it the same mysterious force that has operated in Britain for over 250 years, in America and Sweden for over 200 years, in Switzerland for over 150 years, and in almost twenty other nations for over 50 years?

As we saw in the previous two chapters, late-medieval Venice and early modern Britain each developed a distinctive "rule of law," and in each state, mature rule-of-law institutions correlated in timing with the onset of stability.

The prevailing theory of stability, however, makes no reference to the "rule of law" and has little to say about Venice or Britain, the first states to reach equilibrium. Instead, the prevailing theory asserts that in mature democracies, "professional" military organizations train soldiers and commanders to accept civilian supremacy, such that they do not even consider mounting a coup. This theory requires a stark and surprising negation of self-interest, in that military personnel must always place constitutional considerations above their own desires. This anticoup training must also be systematic: it must operate throughout the political-military establishment and be effectively transmitted to succeeding generations.

This chapter contends that the "rule of law" provides a stronger and simpler explanation for stability. Rule-of-law institutions, by systematically weakening personal loyalty relationships within the government and military, inhibit the formation of grand criminal conspiracies, including those aiming at a coup d'état.

We proceed in the following steps. First, we identify a set of twenty-three "coup-free states." Next, we explore the prevailing "virtue theory" of stability. Last, we see how the "rule of law" better explains the unique and seemingly perpetual peace within coup-free states.

COUP-FREE STATES

A "coup-free state" is a state that maintains independence for fifty continuous years and experiences no coups or serious coup attempts during that time. Obviously, the fifty-year requirement is arbitrary. Some states in history undoubtedly reached this landmark before reverting to coups. I do not claim that the twenty-three states identified here (Venice plus twenty-two coup-free states as of 2010) are the only states ever to have crossed the fifty-year threshold throughout the course of human history, but I do contend that such states are relatively rare. In any case, we can identify with precision the contemporary "coup-free states."

After Venice and Britain came the United States of America, which, since declaring independence in 1776, has never seen a coup or coup attempt.[1] Swedish stability has persisted since 1809,[2] and Switzerland has remained tranquil since 1848.[3] Aside from these cases, the following eighteen states were the only states to remain stable and independent from 1961 through 2010: Belgium,[4] the Netherlands,[5] Luxembourg,[6] Norway,[7] Denmark,[8] Finland,[9] Iceland,[10] Germany,[11] Austria,[12] Japan,[13] Canada,[14] Australia,[15] New Zealand,[16] Ireland,[17] Israel,[18] Mexico,[19] Costa Rica,[20] and South Africa.[21] All other independent states during this period experienced coups and serious coup attempts.[22]

THE PREVAILING THEORY OF STABILITY

Almost everyone who addresses the question of why coups don't happen in what are called the "mature democracies" invokes military professionalism. I call this a "virtue theory" because it depends on inner attitudes, education, and training. Ultimately, it suggests that military officers could seize power but that they won't for ethical reasons.

Louis Smith, an American military historian, explained the U.S. military's failure to mount any coup attempts through inner restraints. "The major factor in civil control," he says, "lies in the fact that the military have never manifested any ambition to usurp first power in America and to overwhelm for all our citizens the great values of freedom under the law. In entering the armed forces, the American does not put off the citizen in becoming the soldier. The habits of obedience to authority and respect for law persist."[23]

Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (1957) helped define the field of "civil-military relations." Huntington argues that Western states since the nineteenth century have developed what he calls "objective civilian control." The essence of objective control is "the recognition of autonomous military professionalism." This produces "professional attitudes and behavior

among the members of the officer corps," rendering them "politically sterile and neutral." Civilian control is assured, writes Huntington, only when the armed forces are motivated by purely "military ideals."[24]

Samuel Finer's *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, published in 1962, presents another classic "internalization" account. Finer explains that "military professionalism" inhibits the desire to mount a coup within "mature political cultures." (He includes Britain, the United States, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and the Netherlands in this category.) When commanders grow immersed in complex technical tasks, Finer argues, they lose interest in politics. The "truly effective check" against a military coup, according to Finer, is a "firm acceptance of civilian supremacy."[25]

Eric Nordlinger, a political scientist and expert on foreign affairs, wrote that "subordination to civilian authority" must be thoroughly internalized. "Soldiers who are imbued with these beliefs and values—what might be referred to as the *civilian ethic*—are attitudinally disposed to accept civilian authority and to retain a neutral, depoliticized stance even when in sharp disagreement with the government."[26]

Military historian Peter Karsten comments that "something" seems to prevent coups within certain competitive democracies and ultimately falls back upon virtue. "For the military to remain subject to civilian control," he writes, commanders must "believe that it *should* remain subject to civilian control."[27]

To my knowledge, the only exception to "virtue theory" has been offered by Bruce Farcau, a U.S. Foreign Service Officer who experienced two coups firsthand while stationed in Bolivia. Farcau identifies the scale and complexity of modern states as factors that make coups difficult or impossible. In the United States, he argues, "even a modicum of control over the country could not be established without seizing dozens of locations in half a dozen massive cities, to say nothing of hundreds of transportation chokepoints, airports, television and radio stations, microwave transmission centers, and many major military bases scattered over tens of thousands of square miles of territory." Ultimately, Farcau concludes, coups depend on "the number, diversity, and dispersion of targets."[28]

Farcau's analysis, however, does not mesh very well with the historical record. Venice, for example, was a highly centralized imperial state, with just a few critical targets inside the city. Yet it seems to have gone for centuries without any coups or coup attempts. Tiny states like Luxembourg and Iceland are similarly coup-free, but historical giants, including Rome, Byzantium, China, and the Ottoman Empire, and modern states such as Russia have lurched from coup d'état to coup d'état.

We might suspect that military leaders are predisposed to embrace "virtue theory" because it burnishes their own patriotic aura and the reputation of the

armed forces. Why not take credit for an extraordinary record of restraint? In fact, to avoid suspicion, military leaders must say they believe in constitutional succession and would never consider mounting a coup d'état. (During the Watergate crisis, for example, one senior commander repudiated rumors of a military intervention by assuring a reporter that he and his colleagues recognized their constitutional duties.[29]) But this does not mean that the virtue-based story that military leaders tell—to the general public, to scholars, to cadets and plebes at the military academies, and to themselves—identifies the true causal mechanism behind centuries of constitutional leadership succession.

There are two main problems with virtue theory as an explanation for long-term stability. First, it simply displaces the causal explanation back one level. Why do some military organizations internalize professional norms, while others retain "unprofessional" attitudes? Presumably, all political leaders—from hereditary monarchs to elected presidents—have sought to instill obedience and loyalty within their security forces. None of the "virtue theorists" explain why or how professional values took root within certain states, but not others.

Second, virtue theory is inordinately complex. It requires a precise mode of education or socialization, throughout the entire political-military establishment, so as to nullify basic self-interest, over very long periods.

Socialization must be precise in that it must instill the wrongness of extraconstitutional action, against the potent human tendency to rationalize what one desires. During crises, for example, when a leadership change may appear vital to everyone's well-being, constitutional values must continue to trump all other considerations.

The socialization must take effect throughout the entire political and military class. This may seem relatively straightforward in a city equipped with a state-run system of education and indoctrination, such as ancient Sparta or modern Singapore. But what about a sprawling, diverse nation like the United States of America? How exactly are all Americans entering the political-military establishment inculcated with constitutional values? Do they learn them in childhood, from parents and teachers? Do they pick them up when they join the military or enter politics?

Obviously, the anticoup training must directly counteract what most people consider basic self-interest. Men must willingly forgo the chance for great power, everlasting fame, and all the riches they could possibly desire, all because they are committed to an ethical principle. Virtue theory violates an ancient perception: that people will frequently do whatever they can get away with. Glaucon makes this point at the beginning of Plato's *Republic*, when he tells the story of the Ring of Gyges. The ancestor of Gyges was a shepherd who discovered a ring that, when turned the right way, rendered its wearer invisible. The shepherd immediately set out to make use of his new

power. He got a job as the king's messenger, committed adultery with the king's wife, murdered the king, and ruled as a tyrant.[30] Of course, the rest of the *Republic* presents Socrates's elaborate response, in which he insists that people can learn to love justice for its own sake. This requires, however, a strenuous ethical education and communal lifestyle for the ruling philosopher-kings. In essence, virtue theory claims that today's mature democracies have achieved this Platonic ideal, with military guardians so well trained that they can easily ignore the temptations of injustice. Such an explanation would surprise many of our constitutional Framers, who thought that men were "ambitious, vindictive, and rapacious," that "if men were angels, no government would be necessary," and that the structure of government must remedy "the defect of better motives" through "opposite and rival interests."[31] Moreover, it is certainly not the case that military personnel are immune from committing ethical breaches or crimes—they simply avoid the crime of conspiring to topple political leaders.

Finally, the whole edifice of rigorous and universal ethical training must last for centuries. This is quite a feat, especially because values and cultural attitudes can change rapidly. Even as new ideas and norms pass through the population, constitutionalism must remain a bedrock principle.

By themselves, each of these four requirements is a stretch. In combination, they seem to demand a suspension of common sense. To put it more formally, the theory requires a long series of tenuous assumptions and inferences. None of this is to deny the existence of genuine idealism, patriotism, or self-sacrifice—it is simply that virtue theory as an explanation for long-term stability places too much weight on these fleeting capacities. Virtue theory requires an inspired idealism among too many people, for far too long, in the face of staggering contradictory incentives.

Still, the question remains: Why are coups absent in certain states? Is there a structural explanation for the long-term absence of coups d'état in states like Venice, Great Britain, the United States, and twenty other states around the world? If so, it might account for the intuitions of theorists from de Lolme to Karsten, who posit a "secret force" or "something" ensuring stability.

Can the "rule of law," enforced by independent and impartial courts, explain stability, nonviolent politics, and the absence of coups d'état? As noted earlier, Venice and Britain each created thoroughgoing rule-of-law systems, and the maturity of these institutions roughly coincided with the onset of stability. Moreover, they were not alone. During the nineteenth century, America, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Belgium exhibited similarly legalistic systems. How exactly might the rule of law inhibit coups?

THE DEMISE OF PERSONAL LOYALTIES

As a substantial body of scholarship demonstrates, personal loyalties and impersonal rules are generally incompatible. When legal rules mediate relationships between individuals, people have less need for, and cannot easily form, strong, diffuse, overriding relationships of personal allegiance and mutual assistance.[32]

Governmental corruption (which is inversely related to the rule of law) is closely associated with strong personal and factional ties.[33] Within a highly corrupt state, members of particular "in-groups" (generally defined through kinship, clan, tribal, and patronage relationships) receive all kinds of special advantages through their network, but in return, they are expected to favor their "own people" whenever possible. If they are state officials or even judges, they are essentially required (by their own people) to practice corruption.[34]

Effective rule-of-law institutions, on the other hand, dissolve these personal loyalty relationships and generate an open-ended network society of relatively detached individuals. This process can be observed historically, alongside the rise of rule-of-law institutions, in both Venice and Britain. Within these states, the rule of law evolved on different timelines, via distinct institutions, but with broadly parallel social effects.

Venice: "Free and without Factions"

Early Venice seethed with feuds and factional rancor. Our evidence for the sixth through tenth centuries consists of endless drama; doges were deposed and blinded, and successors associated their sons in office, attempting to establish a dynasty. Some factions leaned toward Byzantium, others favored the Franks or Lombards, and committed republicans preferred an independent stance.[35]

In the centuries after 1032, as republicanism gained a permanent ascendancy, Venetians enacted many laws to pacify kin-based rivalries.[36] No family could have more than one member at a time on the Ducal Council, the Ten, Great Council nominating committees, or other boards, so government always required interclan cooperation.

The doge's family faced special restrictions. Like the doge, they were only supposed to accept gifts like rose water, leaves, and flowers. *Promissioni* required the doge and his wife, sons, grandsons, and nephews to sell any lands they held in Venice or nearby. To stifle any dynastic hopes, the sons of a doge could barely enter politics. They might become senators but wielded no vote. In fact, Venetians preferred doges without wives or children. When bachelors assumed the ducal cap, they swore not to marry a foreign wife

without their council's approval. A doge could not even meet with relatives unsupervised.

Election rules calmed partisanship.[37] Campaigning was banned; in fact, patricians were forbidden to indicate their ambitions for office in any manner. (As we might expect, some found this rule difficult to follow.) A 1497 statute condemned electioneering as inimical to "peaceful institutions"; a decade later, the Council of Ten regulated dinner parties to inhibit stealth campaigns. Laws even governed how people could congratulate victors.

Nominations by lot introduced random shuffling, making it difficult for allies to engineer outcomes. In the convoluted procedures for electing a doge, for example, five rounds of arbitrary culling generated the final committee, which then drew names from an urn and voted. For other offices, the Great Council chose nominators by lot and voted on nominees during the same day, making canvassing difficult. During voting, nominees and their relatives had to leave the hall. Secret balloting made any form of "party discipline" impossible.

"[T]he Venetians," wrote an anonymous London pamphleteer in 1707, "have made severe Laws against all manner of canvassing or making interest for Places. And besides, they have so contrived the way and manner of their Elections, that they have made it almost impossible for the Electors to form themselves into Parties for any Candidate whatsoever, because of the uncertainty to whose lot it will fall to be Candidates for the Place. The Votes are likewise collected with so much secrecy, that it is impossible for one man to know how another has voted." Such measures, the author argued, could prevent the "intestine commotions" that had long plagued England.[38]

Venetians took pains to weaken links between patrician houses and their followers. One law, enacted after Dandolo and Tiepolo gangs brawled in the streets, prohibited commoners from wearing noble emblems or coats of arms or painting them on their houses. Similarly, security and police officials were barred from having any private, economic, or familial relationships with their armed underlings.

By all accounts, such measures worked. From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, people saw Venice as uniquely free of factions and thereby tranquil.[39] Bartolus de Saxoferrato, for example, was a fourteenth-century law professor at Perugia who thought Venetian patricians were "not easily divided among themselves."[40] Venice avoided "internal plots" and "warring factions," observed a Renaissance chronicler.[41] A noble diarist waxes effusively: his city seems "an earthly paradise, without any tumult of war or suspicion of enemies" because it is "free and without factions."[42]

Modern historians confirm and elaborate this picture. One study examined Great Council nominations during the 1380s. The investigators assumed they would find nobles consistently nominating kinfolk for office. In fact, a man's family provided no clue about his choice of nominee. Not only did

patricians avoid family bias, they formed no discernible factions or alliances of any sort. The finding undermines any suppositions about family-based coalitions, the authors conclude, and also casts "considerable doubt on the conjecture that certain families acted as patrons to client families."[43] The Tiepolo Rebellion in 1310, they suggest, was the "last gasp" of traditional family solidarity.[44]

Ironically, kinship bonds weakened because they proliferated. Nobles intermarried, especially after the "Great Closing" of 1297 defined their caste boundaries. Over time, kin ties within the small patrician world grew inordinately complex, creating a dense thicket of interrelatedness.[45] If everyone is family, effectively no one is family.

Family never became irrelevant, of course. A family's joint wealth shaped members' lives. Children frequently lived together into adulthood, worked out prospective marriages, and managed family businesses. Noble clans retained their pride: an insult to Ca' Morosini—the "House of Morosini"—triggered a street fight in 1364. A man might sail into elected office after his kin performed well in battle.[46]

Still, blood lost its power to congeal. Venetian politics—like its commerce—featured shifting, unpredictable, and kaleidoscopic coalitions. Allies on one issue found themselves opponents on others. The city presented a sharp contrast with the rest of northern Italy, where permanent "Guelph" and "Ghibelline" factions warred. (Guelphs favored the pope, and Ghibellines backed the Holy Roman emperor.) These struggles barely registered in Venice. Historians cite a "unique spirit of cohesion and cooperation," a "comparative solidarity," a "mutual dependence," and a "mutual trust of a kind that in other cities seldom extended far outside the family circle."[47] People still held animosities and grudges, of course, but ironed out serious conflicts in the courts, Senate, and Great Council.

A few authors approach the source of serenity. "Unable to rely on family, faction, or patrons for their political future," comment two historians of the republic, "patricians were obliged to treat all their peers as potential allies, and ingratiate themselves to everyone."[48] Frederic Lane taught at Johns Hopkins, presided at the American Historical Association, and spent decades studying the republic. "The devices for the restraint of faction woven into the machinery of government were sufficiently successful" after 1355, Lane argues, that "none of the men disappointed in the intense competition for honors tried to overthrow the system."[49]

Britain: From Feudal Lords to Temporary Patrons

Anglo-Saxon England was a world of blood feuds and kinship solidarity, where vengeance was a sacred duty. "The family bond is strong," wrote Frederic Maitland, a renowned legal historian; "an act of violence will too

often lead to a blood feud, a private war."[50] As an alternative to feuding, kin groups could accept a *wergeld* payment.

Lordship coexisted with kinship. Lords—like gang leaders or Mafia bosses—extended their protection to kin and other neighborhood clients. Lords were responsible to political superiors, such as the king, for the conduct of their dependents. In practice, kinship and lordship bonds swirled together. Lordship ties frequently brought two families into an alliance. If a man's daughter married his lord's nephew, feudal and blood lines grew thoroughly intermingled. Like Scottish clan chieftains, many lords governed and protected their own kinsmen.

Nonetheless, the rising profile of lordship and vassalage undercut kinship solidarity.[51] The Norman Conquest of 1066, as many have argued, bolstered the power of feudal lords. Primogeniture, or the passage of all property to the first male offspring, came into widespread use after the conquest. Primogeniture, as some historians have argued, was a natural corollary of feudal relationships. To fulfill feudal obligations—to supply lords with military manpower—vassals bestowed feoffs, or lands, to a single heir. Primogeniture tends to weaken kinship because brothers assume wholly different stations. Still, feudalism sustained tight personal allegiances. Vassals were expected to aid their lord in every way, and lords oversaw vassals' interests, such as providing for their widows and orphaned children. A ceremony—homage and fealty—sealed the bond. So while feudalism undoubtedly helped weaken the kinship bonds of earlier Anglo-Saxon society, feudal society maintained exceptionally strong bonds between people.

The later Middle Ages witnessed a slackening of feudal relationships. With an increasingly commercial economy and a burgeoning royal government, the lord-vassal tie grew less total. "Late medieval lordship," according to a celebrated Oxford don, "has not much in common with feudal *dominium*. When a man asked another to be his 'good lord', he was not commending himself and his land; nor did he become anything remotely like a vassal. Rather he was acquiring a temporary patron."[52]

Over a long period, Crown and Parliament slowly restricted the practice whereby lords "retained"—or paid—royal judges.[53] A 1346 statute banned anyone but the king from retaining judges; political pressures in the late 1300s curtailed the practice. After 1595, lords could no longer retain local justices of the peace.

"Livery and maintenance" posed other dangers to public order in late-medieval England.[54] "Livery" was a practice whereby men wore their lord's colors, uniforms, or emblems. It implied the lord's protection and probably emboldened wearers to commit crimes. "Maintenance" was the support a lord gave his man in legal cases, often by corrupt methods like bribery and intimidation. Livery and maintenance were not new: both practices can be

traced back centuries. But they aroused public fury in late-medieval England, probably because people expected more from the institutions of justice.

Over time, the Crown and Parliament reined in livery and maintenance. Statutes passed from 1399 to 1401 restricted livery to members of a lord's household. The Tudors, especially through councils like the Star Chamber, took stern measures against maintenance and judicial corruption.

Feuds and private wars dwindled in the sixteenth century.[55] Still, sharp factional divisions remained at the political heights. Parliamentarians and royalists warred from 1642 to 1649, courtier factions reappeared under Charles II, and the "Exclusion Crisis" of 1679 to 1681 drove the political class into "Whig" and "Tory" parties. In the early eighteenth century, Whigs and Tories inhabited separate social enclaves, eyeing each other with suspicion.

After the Jacobite rising of 1715, treason-stained Tories went into steep decline. Whigs governed for decades and splintered into various leadership groups. The name "Tory" reappeared in the 1780s, but by this time, the nature of partisanship had transformed. Opponents were no longer enemies, engaging in dangerous intrigues and threatening collective retribution. Now parties formed loosely knit coalitions around broad ideological positions. In the 1770s, Jean-Louis de Lolme perceived that "party animosities" and the "victories and consequent outrages of factions" were "in very great measure unknown in England."[56]

The attenuation of personal loyalties is evident spatially as well as chronologically. Strong ties flourished in places royal justice found difficult to reach.[57] Feuds, vendettas, and clan solidarity persisted in the hilly and mountainous fringes of late-medieval and early modern England. Northern England was long seen as a wild, clannish, and feudal backwater; private feuding disturbed Cornwall, in the hilly southwest; mountainous Wales was infamous for chronic lawlessness; and the Scottish Highlands remained clannish and disorderly into the mid-eighteenth century. And of course, the last coup attempt in British history came in 1745–1746, when Highland chiefs brought their clansmen to fight under the banner of Stuart rebellion.

THE THEORY OF WEAK LOYALTIES

Here, we arrive at the long-promised theory of stability. By weakening personal loyalty relationships throughout the political-military establishment, the rule of law makes it inordinately difficult to assemble a grand criminal conspiracy aimed at the seizure of state power.

In essence, high-ranking officials under the rule of law do not trust each other enough to conspire at a coup d'état. In fact, as anecdotal evidence suggests, they cannot even propose a coup in casual conversation, because

their interlocutors are more likely to report the incident than to go along. In this context, merely mentioning a coup with any degree of seriousness becomes far too risky, and the notion effectively disappears from political life.

When loyalties are strong, especially when those ties involve corrupt relationships, it is relatively safe for members of the same "in-group" to propose, discuss, and plan a new criminal enterprise. The suggestion may be considered and refused, or even dismissed out of hand, but the person offering the idea is unlikely to be turned in to the authorities. There are two main reasons for this: first, members of the same faction trust each other more than they trust "outsiders," and second, participants within a "corruption clique" can always retaliate by disclosing the criminal activities of their comrades. Moreover, even a large-scale conspiracy can be achieved, with perhaps only a few risky communications between different cliques.

But in the absence of tightly knit solidarity groups, crossing the threshold into a criminal solicitation or conspiracy (especially involving a serious felony such as treason) becomes fraught with peril. Under the rule of law, with systematically attenuated personal loyalties, people recognize the difficulties of assembling a conspiracy large enough to mount a coup d'état. People understand that if a member of the political-military establishment were approached about joining a coup conspiracy, he would, by balancing risks and rewards, almost certainly choose to disclose the plot to the authorities rather than wholeheartedly join the conspirators. (After all, if someone is eventually going to betray the plot, it might as well be oneself; otherwise, one runs a severe risk of being associated with treason.) This is why even the first steps toward a coup conspiracy—overtures or proposals from one person to another about using force to seize political power—appear to be exceedingly rare in rule-of-law states.

This argument unfolds in the following seven steps. First, we examine the coup d'état as a practical operation, requiring at least dozens, and more likely hundreds, of individual participants. Second, we see how personal loyalty relationships are central to the organization of coups, as well as to the general phenomenon of corruption. Third, we imagine two hypothetical scenarios, designed to pinpoint the obstacles to coup conspiracies under rule-of-law conditions. Fourth, we confront anecdotal evidence suggesting that within rule-of-law states, coup plots are regularly betrayed, and that it is difficult for high-ranking officials to propose a coup. Fifth, we clarify how states can enter self-reinforcing spirals of increasing impartiality and weakening loyalties. Sixth, we address how popular revolutions, as well as elite-led coups, are inhibited under rule-of-law systems. Finally, we develop statistical tests: if rule-of-law institutions inhibit coups d'état, and if the rule of law necessarily entails minimal corruption, we would expect to find that stable or "coup-free" states exhibit particularly low levels of corruption. In fact, as we will find, the correlation between stability and low corruption is robust. Coups

and corruption go together because both emanate from the same basic source: "strong ties" between people, which subvert impersonal rules.

Planning and Executing a Coup d'État

What allows a relatively small, subordinate minority to overthrow established leaders? Edward Luttwak is an entertainingly blunt, Romanian-born defense intellectual. In his classic study, *Coup d'État: A Practical Handbook*, Luttwak details the basic strategy. Coup organizers seize critical government and communications facilities and instantly publicize their victory in order to dissuade challenges. In other words, they race to make their new order a fait accompli.

Coups are complex games, based ultimately upon bluff, psychology, and momentum. We might consider, for example, how a coup d'état appears from the perspective of an ordinary soldier, loyal to the existing leadership. As the coup gets under way, this soldier may notice some odd or unusual events, but he continues performing his job. He might even fire his weapon at "rebel" units. At some point, though, enough evidence may accumulate to convince him that someone else is now in charge. Perhaps the presidential palace is in flames and a new government is announcing itself over the radio. At that point, loyalists like him can feel isolated. Numerically, they may constitute a majority, but they have no way of knowing that fact, communicating with each other, or combining efforts. Rather than fight the new regime by themselves, scattered loyalists may accept what appears inevitable and declare their support. As they do, the coup gains momentum. Every successful coup d'état passes a "tipping point," after which it becomes nearly irresistible.

Coordination is critical. Each coup participant must take drastic and highly criminal steps—like leading an armed assault against major government facilities—and hope that coconspirators do their part. Only a unitary, sudden, and overwhelming onslaught will convince the security forces and mass public to fold. While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of people required to stage a coup, the number appears to be in the hundreds.

Just as a blitz intimidates regimes and their loyalists, it also misleads observers. Academics and journalists routinely discuss coups as essentially bureaucratic maneuvers, whereby "the military" decides to "intervene in politics." This apparently sophisticated locution vastly overstates the degree of coordination and consensus.

For example, Eric Nordlinger asserted that in a coup, "the military clearly signals and sharply asserts its 'rights' as a political player." Why? Nordlinger suggests that "by far the most common and salient interventionist motive involves the defense or enhancement of the military's corporate interests."[58] In other words, coups are waged over the military's resources, salaries, pres-

Figure 4.1. Argentine troops with rifles ready in the Plaza de Mayo across from the Presidential Palace, awaiting developments as a military coup ousts the government of President Arturo Illia, June 28, 1966. Copyright Bettmann/Corbis/ AP Images

tige, and autonomy. This is the interest-group or bureaucratic-turf model of coups, routinely invoked by political scientists.

Like "virtue" theory discussed earlier, this model requires an astounding level of self-sacrifice for nebulous collective goods. In this case, we have to believe that conspirators eagerly risk prison, disgrace, and death to make marginal improvements to the military establishment's fiscal and social position. Ultimately, these academics may be misled by the spectacle of esprit de corps. Crisp drills, starched uniforms, and snap-to-attention discipline all create the illusion of a monolith, as though each individual soldier only seeks the power and glory of the whole. In reality, of course, numerous micro-incentives are pressing and coaxing each soldier into line, including peer opinions, public harangues, duty assignments, leave privileges, promotions, pensions, discharges, and courts-martial. Certainly, soldiers and officers can feel pride in their national forces, branches of service, and units, but this does not make them automatons, oblivious to their own needs. Extraordinary emotional bonds form in combat, where men routinely risk their lives for buddies. Even this kind of heroism, though, hardly implies that soldiers acquire such love for the military bureaucracy that they sacrifice themselves to ex-

pand its budget. And yet, this is exactly the motivational world required by the interest-group model of the coup d'état.

How did smart scholars get here? For one thing, they fail to acknowledge the truly inescapable dangers. According to Nordlinger, who otherwise acknowledges some level of risk, "[S]uccess is almost certain when a clear majority of officers agree upon the desirability of a coup or remain unopposed to the conspirators."[59] But how can a conspiratorial cabal ever know what a "clear majority of officers" really thinks or what they will actually do in a crunch? Many officers behave strategically—hedging their bets by remaining friendly with multiple sides.[60] If outcomes were easy to predict, the proportion of failed coups would be tiny, instead of 50 percent.

We can examine a coup that, on the surface, appears smooth, precise, monolithic, and unstoppable. On September 11, 1973, General Augusto Pinochet rapidly reduced Chilean president Salvador Allende's regime to a small group huddled in the basement of La Moneda, the presidential palace.[61] It would be difficult to find a more streamlined coup d'état. Even so, it was a gamble. There was a real chance that loyalist military units, leftist paramilitaries, and ordinary citizens would oppose it.

This was more than hypothetical. Three months earlier, tanks and armored vehicles had surrounded La Moneda and the Ministry of Defense—but General Carlos Prats, commander of the army, and General Pinochet, his subordinate, organized a counterattack and crushed the putsch, saving Allende's government.

By July, an informal cluster of fifteen army, navy, and air force officers were meeting behind the backs of top commanders. Their discussions grew increasingly vehement. Pinochet remained outside the ring, however, and assured General Prats and President Allende of his fealty to the constitution. General Prats resigned on August 22. The next day, Allende named Pinochet his new commander of the army and directed him to restore discipline. At first, Pinochet complied: he ordered several pro-coup generals to resign. They refused, and Pinochet immediately withdrew the order.

On September 8, army general Sergio Arellano Stark visited Pinochet, informed him about the coup plans, and tried to secure Pinochet's support. Pinochet, he said later, received him with "surprise and irritation."[62] Air force general Gustavo Leigh approached Pinochet at his home the next day. Pinochet's first response was, "You do realize that this could get us all killed."[63] During their meeting, three naval officers arrived, bearing a message from Admiral José Merino. The message asked both Leigh and Pinochet to pledge their support for a coup in writing. Admiral Merino had written two notes on the back. One read, "Gustavo: This is the last opportunity." The other said, "Augusto: Do not fail to act with all of the force of Santiago from the first moment." Leigh signed his agreement; after some hesitation and worrying about the consequences of failure, Pinochet followed suit.[64]

Mónica Madariaga was a relative of Pinochet and served next to him as an aide for many years. She believed he only joined the coup out of fear for his own safety.[65]

Later, President Pinochet recalled a sleepless night before the *golpe de estado*. "My main concern," he said, "was the fear of betrayal by some infiltrated individual or that some column commanding officer might move his troops ahead of time and trigger a response from the government, whose paramilitary forces, once mobilized, could even contain the action by building barricades of heavy vehicles across roads to the city."[66]

Because of General Pinochet's constitutional reputation, many Chileans were surprised by his participation in the coup. When she first heard that a military rising was under way, according to some accounts, President Allende's wife asked, "And what will become of poor General Pinochet?"[67]

After the coup, General Prats fled to Argentina. A year later, as he was turning the ignition, his car exploded. An investigation into his death implicated DINA, the Chilean secret police.

The Chilean coup of 1973 illustrates strategic considerations for individual coup participants. When a coup already appears likely, many people will go along simply to secure a place in the postcoup environment. But to get to this point, the conspiracy must grow from relatively fragile beginnings.

Coups, Corruption, and Trust

Fortunately, some students of the coup d'état eschew the problematic incentives of the "military as single actor" framework. They appreciate the high stakes and try to understand how conspiracies form anyway.

Personal relationships are essential, they report. Edward Luttwak acknowledges that "friendship" and a "shared political outlook" can foster conspiracies, but he finds recruitment usually based upon "family, clan and ethnic links."[68] "It is my opinion," writes Bruce Farcau, "that personal ambition of individual officers and the subsequent struggle of the factions which form around the most charismatic ones have far greater relevance than most social theorists have recognized."[69]

Samuel Decalo describes the typical African army as "a coterie of distinct armed camps," where soldiers owe personal allegiance to commanders, and coup plotters are motivated by "covert ambition, fear, greed, and vanity."[70] Africans themselves do not interpret coups as coordinated military actions, he comments, but rather the spectacular emergence of certain factions to power and privilege.[71] Coup leaders frequently offer high-minded justifications—like corruption or poor economic performance—but Decalo is skeptical. Often, new regimes prove just as corrupt as their predecessors. In fact, Decalo detects a close connection between corruption and coups d'état. No

leader, he points out, can afford to antagonize officers "intent at social plunder" who are "backed by personal loyalty pyramids."[72]

Personal loyalties are central to coup conspiracies but also to the phenomenon of corruption more generally. As a bureaucrat in Ghana reported, if a man refused to "fix" things for family members, he "would be regarded as a bad man and members of the family might refuse to have anything to do with him again."[73] In surveys, many such officials express similar ideas.[74] "Even if I wanted to avoid the practice of awarding contracts on the basis of favoritism," a Nigerian official has commented, "I could not. My people would say that I am selfish and foolish."[75]

The causal arrow goes both ways: personal relationships foster corruption, while corruption builds personal trust. For example, when customs officials accept bribes from drug smugglers (an obvious temptation and a common problem), they are committing serious crimes. In Mexico and Colombia, for example, warlords buy police officials and judges, effectively recruiting them into their private armies.[76] In order to avoid criminal prosecution in turn, corrupt officials may need to share the proceeds with coworkers, supervisors, or law enforcement agents. Offering a bribe—especially to an unfamiliar party—is risky. The other party can report the incident or demand more. Once a regular pattern of sharing illicit dividends arises, though, the danger ebbs, because each partner has exposed himself to criminal sanctions. At this point, the "insiders" share a common danger and purpose and try to keep "outsiders" at bay.

Cost-Benefit Calculations: Two Hypothetical Scenarios

Coups are difficult and perilous in any setting. In rule-of-law societies with weak or nonexistent personal loyalties, individual cost-benefit considerations make it practically impossible to organize a coup d'état.

We might consider a hypothetical scenario: one senior U.S. Army officer (General #1) approaches another (General #2) about using military force to depose the president. How would General #2 respond? Even if he finds the president politically objectionable, his personal interests militate against entering a conspiracy.

On the one hand, the dangers are self-evident. This could be a setup, just to test his loyalty. Even if the solicitation is genuine, the obstacles to success would seem enormous, verging on insurmountable. After all, this is not Haiti, Thailand, or Equatorial Guinea, but the United States of America, where no one has ever attempted a coup! Who knows if it could actually work? Even in unstable states, coups fail about as often as they succeed. To have any chance, Generals #1 and #2 would have to enlist many other officers, including field-level commanders, any of whom could betray the plot.

Supposing the plan worked, then what? Presumably General #2 would play some prominent role in the new regime. But how long would it last? Outrage within the public, political establishment, and nonparticipating military forces might spark a swift counterrevolution. Or the new junta might govern for a period, only to lose their grip later. Through any number of routes, Generals #1 and #2 could find themselves court-martialed and punished as traitors. Conceivably, of course, Generals #1 and #2 could govern brilliantly and usher in a golden age, and posterity might add their heads to Mount Rushmore. But for this to happen, a lot has to go perfectly, and almost nothing can go wrong. Taking all the risks into account, the case for entering a conspiracy appears dubious at best.

On the other hand, consider the alternative: General #2 could simply report General #1. By foiling the plot and preserving democracy, General #2 will probably enjoy a period of media stardom and, potentially, a bright political future: he might easily find himself on the short list for president or vice president. This road to power is much straighter, while incurring few if any risks.

Viewed in this light, it appears miraculous that anyone pulls off a coup d'état. And yet, a drumbeat of coups persists around the globe. The crucial factors are personal trust and the closely related power to derail justice. Consider two other military leaders, General A and General B. If they are brothers, cousins, old friends, or patron-client, they are more likely to collaborate. If Generals A and B are skimming money from military procurement contracts, each is less likely to inform the authorities about any matter, because the other could easily retaliate by disclosing everything. If General A is a "warlord" or "big man," controls a private army of loyalists, poses a clear threat to anyone who crosses him, and can bribe or threaten judges, no one will lightly betray his confidence. The more such conditions apply, the more likely General B is to go along, if General A begins talking about a coup d'état.

Betrayed Conspiracies and Failed Solicitations

Fortunately, we are not limited to hypothetical scenarios and thought experiments to probe the difficulties of organizing a coup under rule-of-law conditions. Over long periods, certain individuals have proposed, discussed, and planned coups, even within coup-free states. These efforts have always failed, however, generally because some of their putative partners have defected to the existing political leadership.

In Venice, the major coup plots of the fourteenth century were consistently betrayed by conspirators. Immediately before the Tiepolo rebellion of 1310, conspirator Marco Donato, perceiving his peril, went the doge and told him about the plans. Subsequently, three or four other people reported suspi-

cious and unusual activities around Casa Tiepolo and Casa Quirini, confirming Donato's story.[77] The day before the Faliero conspiracy was set to hatch in 1355, conspirator Beltramo di Bergamo, a furrier, apparently warned a patrician friend to stay at home the following day, and another conspirator named Marco Nigro tipped off leading noblemen.[78] During the conspiracy of 1372 orchestrated by the Lord of Padua, two Venetian courtesans betrayed their lovers and informed the Council of Ten of the treasonous plans.[79]

In 1413, two rich commoners, named D'Anselmo and Baldovino, attempted to get themselves ennobled. (Through a seldom-used procedure, men could be elected into the nobility and Great Council.) After failing, the two men vented their frustrations to each other, and their talk turned treasonous. D'Anselmo and Baldovino agreed to organize their followers and, in two days, massacre the nobles emerging from the Great Council. After they parted, D'Anselmo panicked. He agonized about possible eavesdroppers and, deciding there was only one way to save himself, went straight to the authorities and spilled the whole story. His partner Baldovino was seized, tortured, and executed. The informer D'Anselmo, on the other hand, was pardoned and was actually made a nobleman.[80]

Finally, during the so-called Spanish Conspiracy of 1618 involving foreign mercenaries, one or two of the mercenaries defected to the Venetian government. Quick response by the government terminated the plot.[81] On all of these occasions, betrayals doomed the conspiracies.

In post-1746 Britain, similarly, we find consistent betrayals by coconspirators and infiltration by government spies. A young Scottish nobleman (code-named "Pickle") kept the British government fully informed about the last major Jacobite conspiracy, the Elibank Plot of 1752–1753, as it was unfolding. Pickle was thoroughly trusted by Bonnie Prince Charlie himself but turned to work for the government because of financial need.[82] During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, government informers regularly and easily penetrated "secret" radical committees, enabling the authorities to make arrests and nip revolutionary activities in the bud.[83] In 1802, an army colonel named Edward Despard appears to have fomented plans for a coup d'état, involving a seizure of the Tower of London and the killing of King George III, but some soldiers within his cabal informed the government. Despard and six coconspirators were convicted and executed in early 1803.[84] Government spies kept tabs on plans for a national uprising in 1817 and the "Cato Street Conspiracy" in 1820, ensuring that they never came close to success.[85]

These Venetian and British episodes speak to the weakness of personal loyalties. Obviously, many conspirators weighed risks and rewards and saw defection to the government as in their best interests. Moreover, if government spies are easily able to find and join subversive groups, it suggests that

the groups are not particularly secretive, selective, or bound by strong familial and personal ties of long duration.

In the United States, we can identify two interesting "solicitation episodes" in which senior officials appear to be suggesting, proposing, or insinuating a coup d'état.

During the U.S. Civil War, General George McClellan apparently contemplated opposing President Abraham Lincoln by force. A Democrat, McClellan commanded the largest Union army in the east. Newspapers called him "Young Napoleon" because of the physical resemblance and his magnetic hold over soldiers. "By some strange operation of magic," McClellan wrote to his wife in the summer of 1861, "I seem to have become *the* power of the land. I almost think that were I to win some small success now I could become Dictator or anything else that might please me—but nothing of that kind would please me—*therefore I won't* be Dictator."[86]

After the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, opposition to Lincoln among certain Northerners grew virulent. Racists were particularly incensed. Democratic groups like the Knights of the Golden Circle and the Sons of Liberty murmured about forcing an end to the war.[87] Republicans called them "Copperheads."

At this time, General McClellan invited three fellow generals to dine with him. After dinner, McClellan told them that his admirers were urging him to take a public stand against the proclamation and that his whole army was ready to follow. The generals were shocked. They pleaded with him to avoid any confrontation with the president and told him that no soldier would stand by him. McClellan agreed but may have been probing their attitudes.[88]

A few weeks later, General McClellan was relieved of command, and his career took a thoroughly constitutional course. McClellan won the Democratic nomination for president in 1864. In a purely Northern election, Lincoln won in a landslide.

The second episode was recounted at the beginning of the book: President Richard Nixon's oblique suggestion to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in December 1973 that they might help him "resist" the "Eastern liberal establishment." As we saw, the Joint Chiefs ignored this proposal, and Nixon did not pursue the idea any further.

These "solicitation episodes" demonstrate that high-ranking officials are not so uniformly virtuous that they refuse to contemplate an extraconstitutional adventure. Instead, it seems, officials cannot orchestrate a coup d'état because they fear to broach the subject in conversation. Even when they have taken the radical leap of insinuating the possibility of a coup—a rare move—they have been unable to find willing collaborators.

Self-Reinforcing Rule-of-Law Spirals

Under the rule of law, people have trouble forming tightly knit cabals—but at the same time, to establish the rule of law, many players, including judges, prosecutors, and police, must disavow factional ties and act impartially. Some might raise an objection to weak loyalties theory here: The rule of law dissolves factions, but since factions must dissolve to generate the rule of law, isn't that circular reasoning?

Not really. In many situations, causality itself is circular. Take the fundamental insight of realpolitik, or "realist," analyses of international relations, for example. When State #1 gains strength, State #2 is threatened and must build up its arsenal in defense. This threatens State #1, which must build up further. Both sides worry about a preemptive attack, and the "arms race" spirals on and on. Or in economics, a boom occurs as enterprises find new ways to make profits; they hire additional employees; those employees spend more money on goods and services; this spurs greater production and more hiring, and onward in a spiral of increasing prosperity.

Venice and Britain entered similarly self-reinforcing spirals. Over several centuries, they built rule-of-law institutions, which dissolved strong ties, which facilitated higher levels of impartiality. At specific points in their evolution, personal loyalties frayed to the point where organizing a coup d'état became essentially impossible.

Preventing Street Revolutions

Weak loyalties theory also explains the absence of spontaneous mass revolutions. Like any other coup plotters, nonstate revolutionaries must attract followers and face the same trust dilemmas. Moreover, revolutionaries appear heroic—and galvanize imitators—only when they sacrifice their own safety to oppose a monstrous or malevolent regime.

After weathering decades of grim surveillance, for example, Eastern Europeans poured into the streets during the fall of 1989. Sheer numbers inspired hope, creating momentum. When portions of the security services refused to crack down, the regimes stepped aside. Similar processes unfolded in 2011, as Tunisians and Egyptians gathered to end decades of dictatorship.

Humane governments under the rule of law, however, do not kindle sufficient outrage. Instead, they make revolutionaries seem dangerous. To most people, it is not credible that the revolutionary overthrow of a rule-of-law government would enhance their safety or well-being.

In established democracies, the closest parallels to insurrectionary violence are urban riots, like those that burned in Los Angeles in 1992 and Paris in 2005. Many such episodes involve relatively poor members of racial minorities who feel aggrieved by systemic bias in the justice system. These

rioters make cities momentarily ungovernable but have no chance of toppling governments, partly because majority populations, along with the security services, do not share their grievances.

Public apathy aside, mass revolutions are impossible because no civilians—no matter how angry or militant—can effectively challenge the immense power of a united political-military establishment. Nineteenth-century British agitators, for example, simply lacked the organization or firepower to challenge the state. Popular revolutions, as many have argued, require factional divisions within the security forces. According to Lenin, "[N]o revolution of the masses can triumph without the help of a portion of the armed forces."[89] A study of fifteen mass rebellions found that disloyalty and fragmentation within the security apparatus was critical for success.[90] Unless the security forces divide, they can contain civilian unrest.

Testing Weak Loyalties Theory

If weak loyalties theory is correct—that rule-of-law institutions weaken personal loyalty relationships within the military-political establishment, thereby inhibiting the formation of criminal conspiracies, up to and including coups d'état—we would expect to find that states exhibiting long-term stability would also exhibit particularly low levels of corruption across the board.

Transparency International (TI), a Berlin-based think tank, ranks countries by their levels of governmental corruption, as perceived by country analysts and business people.[91] Corruption cannot be measured directly because it is an illicit and generally secretive behavior. The TI Corruption Perceptions Index probably represents the best method for measuring relative corruption rates around the world.

Figure 4.2 presents the 2008 TI Corruption Perceptions Index, from the highest perceived corruption to the lowest perceived corruption. The twenty-two "coup-free states"—the states that experienced no coups or serious coup attempts from 1961 through 2010—are in bold.

As we can see, most of the coup-free states are clustered at the very bottom of the corruption index. Moreover, only coup-free states appear there. (Singapore, which has experienced no coups or coup attempts, has not yet experienced fifty years of independence; Hong Kong has never been independent.)

Admittedly, the correlation between corruption and coups is not absolutely perfect. Four coup-free states have somewhat higher corruption scores: Israel, Costa Rica, South Africa, and Mexico. Notably, these states are recent entrants to the coup-free zone. South Africa gained independence from Great Britain in 1934; Mexico saw a final coup attempt in 1938; Israel has remained stable since 1948; and Costa Rica's last coup attempt came in 1955.[92] Costa Rica, South Africa, and Mexico, moreover, are the most tenu-

Most corrupt

Bold = Coup-free states

1	Somalia	46	Nicaragua	91	Senegal	136	Bhutan
2	Myanmar	47	Comoros	92	Panama	137	Macau
3	Iraq	48	Uganda	93	Montenegro	138	Bahrain
4	Haiti	49	Mozambique	94	Madagascar	139	Oman
5	Afghanistan	50	Libya	95	India	140	Mauritius
6	Sudan	51	Indonesia	96	Albania	141	South Korea
7	Guinea	52	Honduras	97	Thailand	142	Taiwan
8	Chad	53	Guyana	98	Saudi Arabia	143	Puerto Rico
9	Equatorial Guinea	54	Ethiopia	99	Morocco	144	Malta
10	Congo, Dem. Republic	55	Eritrea	100	Burkina Faso	145	Botswana
11	Zimbabwe	56	Vietnam	101	Brazil	146	United Arab Emirates
12	Uzbekistan	57	Togo	102	Trinidad and Tobago	147	**Israel**
13	Turkmenistan	58	Sao Tome and Principe	103	Swaziland	148	Dominica
14	Kyrgyzstan	59	Nigeria	104	Suriname	149	Portugal
15	Cambodia	60	Nepal	105	Peru	150	Cyprus
16	Venezuela	61	Zambia	106	**Mexico**	151	Spain
17	Sierra Leone	62	Niger	107	Macedonia	152	St. Vincent & Gren.
18	Guinea-Bissau	63	Mauritania	108	China	153	Qatar
19	Gambia	64	Maldives	109	Bulgaria	154	Estonia
20	Congo, Republic	65	Malawi	110	Romania	155	Slovenia
21	Burundi	66	Egypt	111	Colombia	156	Uruguay
22	Azerbaijan	67	Vanuatu	112	Ghana	157	France
23	Angola	68	Solomon Islands	113	Georgia	158	Chile
24	Tajikistan	69	Moldova	114	El Salvador	159	Barbados
25	Papua New Guinea	70	Belize	115	Kuwait	160	Saint Lucia
26	Laos	71	Armenia	116	Cuba	161	**United States**
27	Ecuador	72	Argentina	117	Tunisia	162	**Japan**
28	Côte d'Ivoire	73	Tanzania	118	Samoa	163	**Belgium**
29	Cent. African Republic	74	Rwanda	119	Croatia	164	**Britain**
30	Belarus	75	Mongolia	120	Namibia	165	**Ireland**
31	Syria	76	Lebanon	121	Turkey	166	**Norway**
32	Russia	77	Dominican Republic	122	Poland	167	**Germany**
33	Kenya	78	Djibouti	123	Lithuania	168	Hong Kong
34	Bangladesh	79	Bolivia	124	Greece	169	**Austria**
35	Timor-Leste	80	Mali	125	Seychelles	170	**Luxembourg**
36	Kazakhstan	81	Kiribati	126	Italy	171	**Canada**
37	Yemen	82	Jamaica	127	**South Africa**	172	**Australia**
38	Philippines	83	Guatemala	128	Slovakia	173	**Netherlands**
39	Iran	84	Gabon	129	Latvia	174	**Iceland**
40	Cameroon	85	Benin	130	Malaysia	175	**Switzerland**
41	Tonga	86	Sri Lanka	131	Jordan	176	**Finland**
42	Paraguay	87	Lesotho	132	Hungary	177	Singapore
43	Liberia	88	Bosnia and Herzegovina	133	**Costa Rica**	178	**New Zealand**
44	Ukraine	89	Algeria	134	Cape Verde	179	**Sweden**
45	Pakistan	90	Serbia	135	Czech Republic	180	**Denmark**

Least corrupt

Figure 4.2. Corruption levels and the coup-free zone: Countries are listed in descending order, from highest perceived corruption to lowest.

ous coup-free states. During the past fifty years, coup plots have been rumored in Mexico and Costa Rica, and black South Africans agitated for revolutionary change—but made no serious attempts to seize power.[93] (South Africa's white oligarchy peacefully relinquished power in 1994.) If any of these twenty-two stable states reverts to coups, it will almost certainly be Mexico, Costa Rica, or South Africa.

Still, the relationship between corruption and coups appears strong. Is it sheer coincidence? The following statistical measures assess this possibility.

Figure 4.3 encompasses all the states that have remained fully and continuously independent from 1961 through 2010 and are thus eligible for membership in the "coup-free zone."

	States with coup events 1961–2010	States without coup events 1961–2010
High corruption (Transparency International, 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index)	**40** (Argentina, Benin, Bolivia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, USSR/ Russia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Togo, Venezuela, North Yemen/Yemen)	**0**
Low corruption (Transparency International, 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index)	**34** (Albania, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, El Salvador, France, Ghana, Greece, India, Italy, Jordan, South Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Yugoslavia/ Serbia, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay)	**22** (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America)

The probability of this pattern arising by chance is 1 in 10,000.
Chi square yielded $p = 0.0001$.

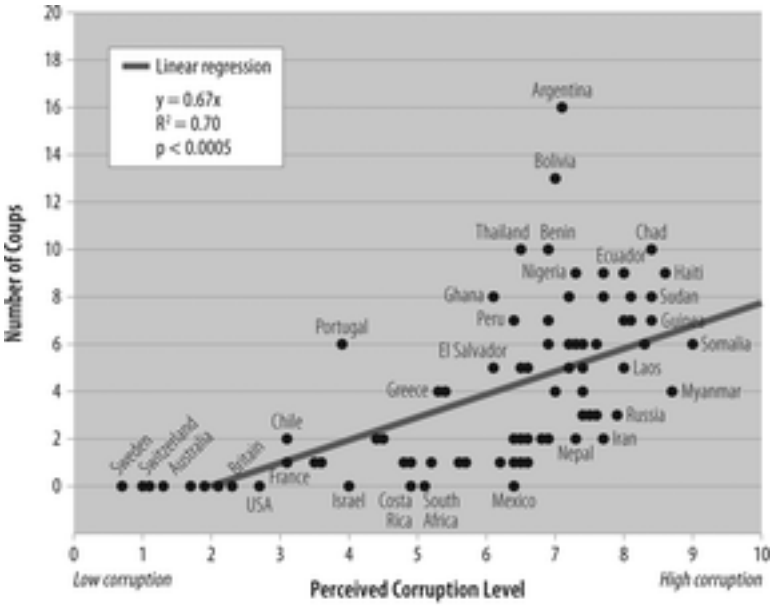
Only countries which functioned as effectively independent states during the entire period from 1961 to 2010, and which also appear on Transparency International's 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index, appear on the table. "High corruption" refers to states in the more corrupt half of the index; "low corruption" refers to states in the less corrupt half. "Coup event" refers to any coup, coup attempt, or executive coup.

Figure 4.3. Coups and corruption I

If coups and corruption were not associated, we would expect the coup-free states in the second column of Figure 4.3 to be distributed roughly evenly between the high-corruption and low-corruption boxes, as the "states with coup events" are. Instead, all of them are in the low-corruption box, and the odds of this pattern arising by chance are one in ten thousand.

Next, we can take a more sophisticated statistical look at the relationship between coups and corruption. Figure 4.4 presents a linear regression, which shows that the more corrupt a country is, the more coups it is likely to have.[94] Such a pattern would arise by chance fewer than five times in ten thousand.

As we can see, corruption and coups are closely associated. They both derive from the same basic source: relationships of personal trust and allegiance that weaken, warp, and defeat impersonal rules.



Perceived corruption level = (10 – Transparency International 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index)

96 states are represented here. This number consists of all states that remained effectively independent throughout the entire 1961–2010 period, with the exception of Taiwan and North Vietnam/Vietnam, which experienced ambiguous coup events.

Figure 4.4. Coups and corruption II

The Most Serene Republic astonished the world, and British tranquility has provoked similar perplexity. As Jean-Louis de Lolme asked in 1771, what is the "secret force" keeping Britain stable?[95] The mystery remains palpable and now extends to a couple dozen states around the world.

The standard answer—internalization of professional military values—is weak. The standard virtue theory places enormous weight on the ephemeral capacities for selfless generosity and public spirit. Virtue theory requires a perfect education, instilled throughout the leadership classes, that counteracts basic self-interest and persists for centuries. Moreover, it simply displaces the explanation back one level: Why have the militaries of Britain and the United States internalized "professional" norms, but the militaries of Pakistan and Haiti, among many others, failed to do so?

A better answer is that the rule of law corrodes "strong ties," making coup conspiracies inordinately difficult to organize. Within rule-of-law states, a collective action problem inhibits the formation of nascent coup conspiracies within the military-political establishment. This makes it unlikely that any official will dare approach even one other official about a coup d'état.

As a practical matter, the idea of a coup grows outlandish and absurd, and vanishes. No one can alter this dynamic, and constitutional government persists for decades and centuries.

Chapter Five

George Washington

The Anti-Napoleon

As the Revolutionary War drew to a close, frustrated American soldiers nearly mounted a coup d'état.

In early 1783, about five hundred officers and nine thousand soldiers of the Continental Army were camped at Newburgh, New York, on the Hudson River about sixty miles north of Manhattan. They had served their country through years of hardship and danger; many officers had paid their own expenses. Congress had finally approved pay for the veterans, in the form of "pensions," but now it seemed the cash-strapped government might renege. Peace negotiations with Britain dragged on, while the officers and men went without pay. A mutinous anger simmered.

The crisis began to boil in December 1782, when the army presented Congress with a petition. "We have borne all that men can bear—our property is expended—our private resources are at an end, and our friends are wearied out and disgusted with our incessant applications," the petition declared. It proposed a lump-sum payment in lieu of pensions and carried an unmistakable threat: any "further experiments" on the army's patience "may have fatal effects."[1]

At a grand committee of Congress in January 1783, a colonel warned that "the temper of the Army" was such that "a disappointment might throw them blindly into extremities."[2] Still, Congress failed to provide the pensions.

At Newburgh, a group of young officers around General Horatio Gates began to incite a mutiny against George Washington's leadership and against Congress itself. On Monday, March 10, an officers' meeting was called for the next day. At the same time, an anonymous address was circulated, disparaging the "milk-and-water style" of the petition. The address proposed an

ultimatum: if Congress did not provide pensions, the army would either seize power or refuse to protect Congress from the British.

General Washington ordered that the "irregular" officers' meeting be postponed until Saturday of that week. Washington implied he would be absent and requested a summary of the proceedings.

On Saturday morning, March 15, officers gathered in the "New Building," a hall built to bring officers from different states together. General Gates opened the meeting, but General Washington made a surprise entry and requested permission to speak.

Mounting the stage, Washington denounced the address as "unmilitary" and "subversive of all order and discipline." "My God!" cried Washington. "What can this writer have in view, by recommending such measures? Can he be a friend to the army? Can he be a friend to this country? Rather is he not an insidious foe?"[3]

Washington reminded the officers of their duties, explained the need for patience, pledged to press their case, and pled with them not to "deluge our rising empire in blood." He took out a letter to demonstrate that Congress had good intentions. Reaching into his vest for his spectacles, he commented that he had grown gray in the service of his country and now found himself going blind. There was an emotional response. Some officers cried openly; the spirit of mutiny drained from the room.[4]

Washington left the room, and the officers passed resolutions against the "infamous propositions" of the address. The closest approach to an American coup d'état was over.

The previous chapter explained how coup-free states operate. This chapter tackles a narrower question: When a state has the potential to stabilize but has not yet established a coup-free structure, what determines whether it will succeed? We examine the United States of America as a case study.

We begin by placing the United States in a larger context: the phenomenon of "offspring" coup-free states. Acknowledging the role of accidental factors, we see how "virtue charisma," as exhibited by George Washington, can play a critical role during the tenuous and contingent period before a coup-free structure takes hold. We examine the enactment of the 1787 Constitution and observe how the tumultuous politics of the 1790s nearly descended into violence. Finally, we review the nearest approaches to a coup d'état in America since 1800, including the Civil War—an unusual and aberrant event within the coup-free zone, one that is not likely to be repeated.

OFFSPRING COUP-FREE STATES

Venice and Britain each became coup-free states on their own. No foreign powers were pushing or guiding them to build "rule-of-law" systems.

To be sure, Venice may have helped Britain by serving as an example. During the Commonwealth period from 1642 to 1660, many English politicians saw Venice as a vibrant republic, suitable for emulation, and the next century's Whig-Hanover regime was even called a "Venetian oligarchy." Despite admiration, however, Venetian institutions were never imported, and the British constitution is indigenous. Little suggests that the coup-free state somehow "spread" or "replicated" itself.

The analysis changes when we come to the next coup-free state in history, the United States of America. Almost certainly, it is no coincidence that the world's third coup-free state is the direct progeny of the second. Colonial Americans lived for decades within a coup-free Britain, governed under the same legal order. This was surely an advantage. When thirteen colonies hived off in 1776, they already had the history, traditions, laws, legal institutions, and individuated, finely sifted character of a rule-of-law society. The legal system continued functioning, with the same basic laws and procedures, on July 5, 1776, and succeeding days. These factors did not guarantee success, but they undoubtedly helped.

In other words, Britain's imperial stretch ultimately spawned a new coup-free state across the Atlantic. In this way, coup-free states can indeed replicate themselves.

In fact, this is why the coup-free zone has expanded so quickly during the past century. Most of today's coup-free states are offspring. Like the United States, they were occupied and administered by a coup-free parent. Figure 5.1 illustrates these genealogical relationships.

As of 2010, there were twenty-two states in the coup-free zone. Of these, ten are progeny of the British Empire. Seven—the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, South Africa, and Israel—are "children" of Britain. Japan is the "grandchild" of Britain, in that the United States occupied Japan after World War II, wrote its constitution, and left it to govern itself in 1952. Similarly, West Germany and Austria remained under Allied occupation until 1955.

Of course, occupation by a coup-free state is no guarantee of stability afterward. The vast majority of former British colonies have been experiencing coups and coup attempts since independence. Likewise, the United States hardly repeated its Japanese success in the Philippines or Haiti, and it seems unlikely to do so in Iraq or Afghanistan. But where Britons settled and became majority populations, as in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, they consistently transplanted rule-of-law institutions and long-term political stability.

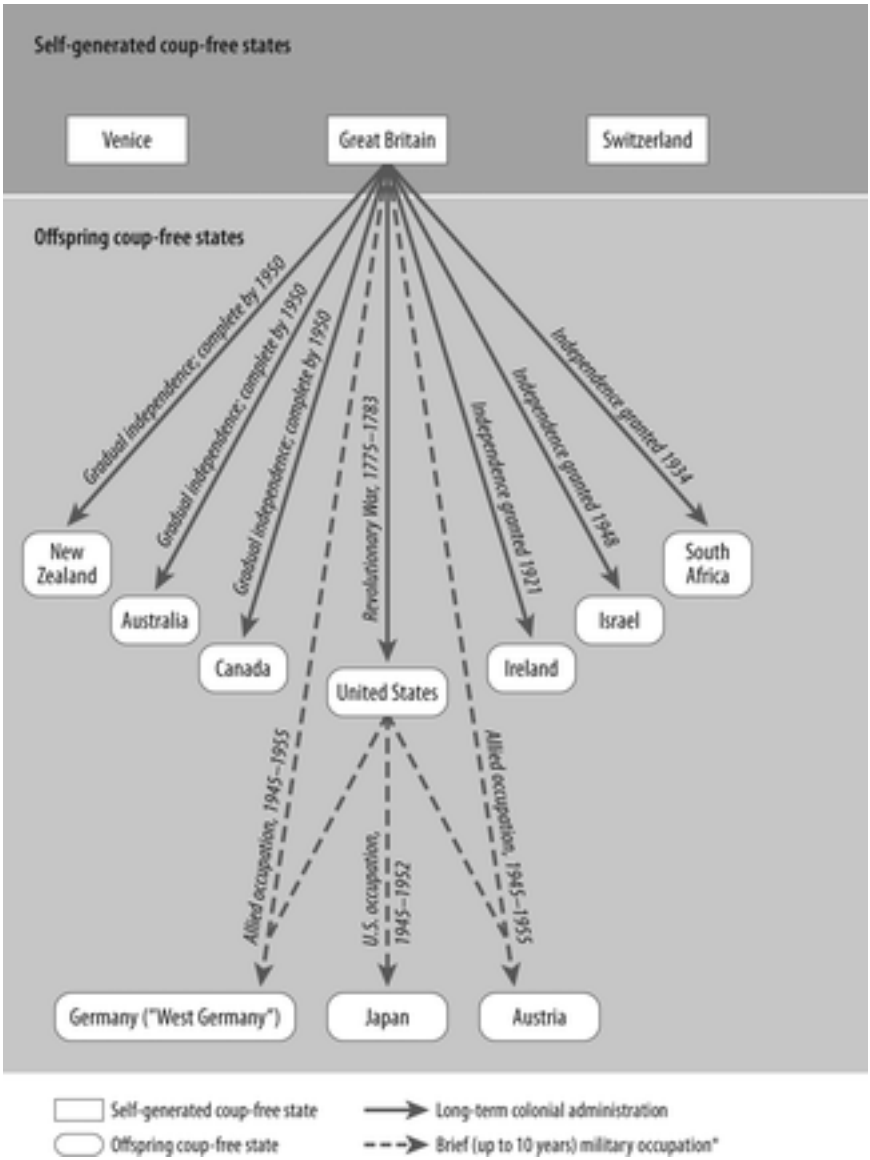
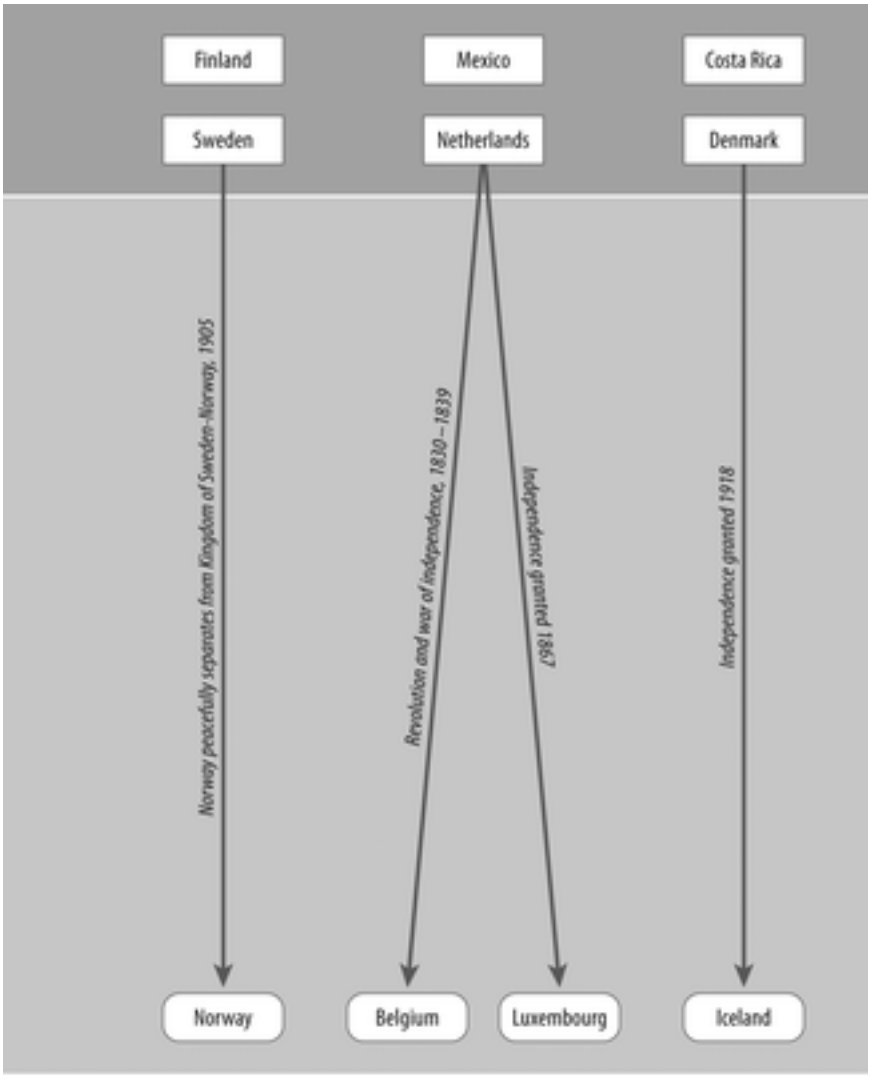


Figure 5.1. A genealogy of the coup-free zone



*Brief Allied occupations of friendly Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland during and after World War II are not depicted here. All these nations had seen decades of independent stability prior to World War II.

Figure 5.1. ***Continued.***

Since 1789, when President Washington took office under the new Constitution, America has seen no serious attempts at coup d'état or revolution. No president has tried to cling to power beyond his term of service.[5] The United States has held a presidential election every four years, even during the Civil War, and constitutional procedures have always determined the winner. Electoral disputes have arisen, but they have always been resolved through legal channels.

The U.S. military has an exemplary record. Scholars note that the "traditions of civilian dominance" have gone "unstained by any contrary experience"[6] and that the armed forces have been "completely faithful to the principle of civilian supremacy."[7] Even conspiracies appear scarce. "[T]here has never been a concerted plan on the part of the military to capture power," says one historian. Nor has there ever been "any conspiracy" to "circumvent the processes of the electoral college."[8] As Lieutenant General DeWitt Smith, commandant of the U.S. Army War College, put it in the 1970s, "We have remained fundamentally within our constitutional framework, raised up *no* men on horseback and few if any who have even let that stray thought pass through their minds."[9]

So how exactly did Americans build their own coup-free state?

GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THE UNDENIABLE ROLE OF ACCIDENT IN HISTORY

To create a nuanced and satisfying deterministic theory, we must acknowledge that accidents routinely shape the course of events. Without George Washington, for example, American patriots might have lost the Revolutionary War. Without Adolf Hitler, there is probably no Nazi Germany and no World War II. Because the existence of such individuals depended upon chance meetings of sperm and egg, we must acknowledge the chaotic and radically contingent nature of history.

At the same time, it would be absurd to say that coup-free states "just happen" to avoid coup events for centuries on end. Are we to imagine that the Venetian Republic got really lucky because whenever anyone considered seizing power, from the Faliero intrigue in 1355 to the end of the republic in 1797—a period of 442 years—they just happened to decide against it? How about Britain's achievement, of over two and a half centuries? Such records call for a deterministic theory, rather than sheer chance producing the same outcome, day after day, year after year.

Still, nothing about our theory of the mature coup-free state precludes random factors—like the personalities, skills, inclinations, and decisions of specific individuals—from contributing to the formation of a coup-free state. Our theory provides the best explanation for two centuries of American

constitutional succession but does not tell us exactly how thirteen former colonies replicated a coup-free structure.

As many people recognized in his own day, if any man in America was capable of making himself king or caesar, it was General George Washington. Washington was widely celebrated, at home and abroad, for his republican virtue. In short, it is distinctly possible that the United States became the world's third coup-free state because George Washington was a good man.

That said, it is never possible to measure the exact proportion of "genuine" altruistic virtue, because many situations elicit "virtue performances." But even if much of Washington's renowned virtue was a conscious strategy, it still counts as virtuous leadership: Washington understood the need to convey humility, patriotism, and disinterested public service, and at Newburgh and on many other occasions, he played his role to perfection. That itself is virtue and undoubtedly helped his young nation join the coup-free zone.

Washington's "Virtue Charisma"

Washington radiated majesty. When he entered a room, eyes veered toward his stately six-foot physique. General Lafayette wrote that he had "never beheld so superb a man," and eighteen years later, an English visitor wrote that Washington "has something uncommonly majestic and commanding in his walk, his address, his figure, and his countenance."[10]

Partly because of his unique magnetism, many feared that General Washington might assume despotic power. At the beginning of the war for independence, for example, revolutionary leaders feared a coup and one-man rule. When Congress appointed Washington commander of the Continental forces, it instructed him to take "special care" that "the liberties of America receive no detriment."[11]

By all accounts, Washington prosecuted the war with scrupulous obedience to the civil authority of Congress and the states.[12] This was, as political scientist Glenn Phelps has recognized, a conscious public relations strategy: Washington sought to establish himself as a republican hero, motivated only by patriotic duty, not by personal ambition. In the early days of the war, Washington refrained from any political involvement whatsoever, fearful that it could backfire and undermine the national cause and his own persona. In 1780, as starvation and mutiny stalked the Continental Army, a nationalist or "continental" faction rose in Congress, seeking to expand central authority against the fractious states. At this point, Washington abandoned any pretense of political neutrality and espoused the continental view. He began writing candid, urgent letters to congressional and state leaders.[13]

But Washington did not appear hungry for power. Whenever Washington's soldiers or officers stood accused of abuses against local civilians, he

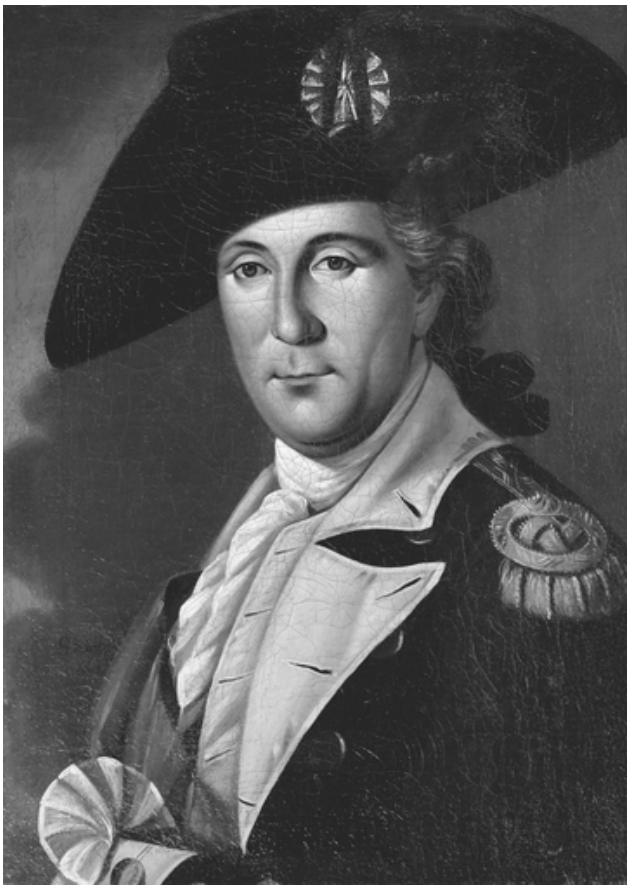


Figure 5.2. Painting of George Washington by Samuel King. The Bridgeman Art Library

turned them over to local authorities. Sometimes he sent a personal letter to the state governor, acknowledging the precedence of civilian authority in the matter.[14] In doing so, Washington eschewed any role as godfather or warlord who would shield his men from the law.

Washington could not even promote his own officers. Sometimes this created problems, as when Washington found himself burdened with incompetent generals or unable to reward merit.[15] Overall, though, this policy reduced the chances of cultish fixation. Soldiers and officers in the Continental Army understood that their career prospects hinged not solely on a relationship with General Washington but upon making multiple and various connections.

In 1776 and 1777, British troops ousted Congress from Philadelphia. Both times, Congress granted Washington extraordinary "dictatorial" powers, and both times he essentially continued his usual practices.

And of course, after peace came in 1783, Washington resigned his position and returned to Mount Vernon. (As he later resigned the presidency after his second term.) Americans credited his restraint. Today, we simply expect our generals and presidents to leave their posts when required. This was not assumed in eighteenth-century America. To England's King George III, Washington's resignations made him "the greatest character of the age."[16]

Some people did encourage Washington to become King George I of America. In 1782, Colonel Lewis Nicola wrote to Washington about the "weakness of republicks" and suggested he wear a crown. Washington shot back, "Let me conjure for you then, if you have any respect for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your Mind, and never communicate, as from yourself, or anyone else, sentiments of a like nature." Washington made sure his response went out immediately. Over the next three days, Colonel Nicola wrote three effusive apologies.[17]

But could Washington have seized dictatorial power? Was it an option? Should we credit Washington's virtue, or did Americans already live within a coup-resistant political structure, even during the Revolutionary War?

It is impossible to know for sure, but there are strong reasons to suspect a coup d'état would have been inordinately difficult in revolutionary America, even for General Washington. James Madison did not think Washington could have made himself dictator, even if he had wanted to. "I have always believed," he said in 1826, "that if General Washington had yielded to a usurping ambition, he would have found an insuperable obstacle in the incorruptibility of a sufficient portion of those under his command."[18] (Madison also thought that Washington wouldn't have, even if he could have.) Colonel John Brooks—a participant in the Newburgh episode—came to a similar conclusion. Among the officers, he said, "there could have been no union in the pursuit of an object of ever doubtful legitimacy: Washington himself could not have effected it." Officers and soldiers had other political loyalties, as well as ties to "parents and other relations, perhaps wives and children," to whom "they were anxiously wishing to be restored." Among the soldiers, a coup attempt "would have been but the watch word for them to abandon their veteran companions, and return to their friends and firesides."[19] Alexander Hamilton concurred with this analysis.[20]

Colonel Brooks identifies one obstacle to national dictatorship during the revolutionary and postrevolutionary periods. The Continental Army was a coalition of state forces, not a national army. More than "Americans," there were Virginians, New Yorkers, and Massachusetts men, and so forth. The revolutionaries envisioned the states as small, independent republics forming

a voluntary confederation to fight the British—not as administrative units within a superstate. Many thought that large republics, like Rome, inevitably sank into decadent monarchy.

Throughout the revolutionary period, states retained the lion's share of power. "Small republic" advocates dominated state governments, gave grudging support to the Continental Congress and Army, and perpetually frustrated General Washington. For years, Washington struggled to relieve the army's often desperate conditions, and he observed that state cooperation correlated strongly with the proximity of enemy forces. When British regiments came near, state governments found resources for the Continental Army, but when the danger passed, states returned to shirking.[21]

General Washington found himself perched on top of an army that probably would have dissolved beneath him had he attempted to misuse it. Any autocratic overreaching on Washington's part, moreover, would bolster the "small republicans," which might lead to defeat. This would prove personally fatal, because the British would surely have executed Washington for treason.

The Constitutional Quasi-Revolution

After the Revolutionary War ended in 1783, centrifugal forces prevailed, as power and initiative returned to the states. The Articles of Confederation created a meager national government. (This document passed the Continental Congress in 1777 and was ratified over the next few years by all thirteen states.) States printed their own currencies and raised tariffs against out-of-state goods. Some states created their own navies, which harassed and seized other states' ships. Border disputes and competing claims over western territory further roiled Confederation politics.[22]

In late 1786, former army captain Daniel Shays led a mob of debtors in western Massachusetts to shut down the county courts and seize a federal arsenal. "Shays' Rebellion" strengthened continental arguments and clout.

A movement to overturn the Articles of Confederation began to coalesce. We know the central event of this quasi-revolution as the "Constitutional Convention" and the conspirators as "Framers." Despite the deeply subversive quality of this undertaking, this event cannot be classified as a "coup" because the Framers did not overthrow the Articles of Confederation by physical force or intimidation. The new Constitution came into effect after a long, peaceful, negotiated, and legalistic process. As historian Sebastian de Grazia has ingeniously explicated, however, there was some semblance of a revolution.

Americans, after all, already lived under a "Constitution"—that's what they called the Articles of Confederation. This Constitution, moreover, clearly spelled out its own amendment process. Congress could propose a change,

and it would take effect after confirmation "by the legislatures of every state."

Nationalists like Alexander Hamilton sought to rewrite the Constitution from scratch. They knew Congress could not produce a successful revision, so they maneuvered for a separate convention. They courted General Washington, who sympathized with their goals but sat on the fence for months. Washington saw that his public image—as a scrupulous servant of the Constitution—would be jeopardized. In letters written in early 1787, Washington cast doubts on the legality of a convention.[23]

On February 21, nationalists scored an important victory in Congress, which recommended that a separate convention meet in Philadelphia "for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation." This convention would then report back to Congress and the state legislatures with "such alterations and provisions therein as shall, when agreed to in Congress and confirmed by the states, render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of Government and the preservation of the Union."[24]

This was arguably unconstitutional. Congress did not have the authority to delegate constitutional debate to another body. Furthermore, the resolution's language—"confirmed by the states"—opened the door to an end run around the requirement that the legislature of every state ratify changes.[25]

Nevertheless, General Washington joined the movement, and in late spring, delegates assembled in Philadelphia. The first decision was "that nothing spoken in the House be printed, or otherwise published, or communicated without leave."[26]

Throughout the summer, conventioneers debated the fine points of statecraft. Most wanted a stronger and more efficient national government, but all of them sought a lasting republican system. The delegates wanted to prevent any single person or faction from seizing power and canceling the Constitution. All other questions, they realized, were secondary. The Framers, in other words, consciously built a coup-free state.[27]

This was a delicate balancing act. The Framers wanted a military powerful enough to defend the country, yet one that would never usurp civilian power. Many Americans feared "standing armies," a political bias inherited from England. One delegate proposed that the national army have a maximum size of two or three thousand men. From the chair, Washington suggested making it unconstitutional for any enemy to attack with a larger force. This got a laugh and killed the motion.[28]

The Framers were not just concerned about the military. They sought to ensure that no one—officer or civilian, inside or outside the government—could wreck the constitutional order, and they recognized that presidents themselves would pose the gravest threat. One delegate reported that the convention tried to "give considerable weight" to the supreme executive,

while guarding against "all possibility of his ascending in a Tract of years or Ages to Despotism & absolute Monarchy."[29]

The Framers made the president the commander in chief but gave Congress the power to create, organize, pay, and supply the armed forces. The president would commission officers, but the Senate had to approve all appointments and promotions.

On September 17, 1787, the delegates unanimously submitted their draft for Congress to consider and proposed that the Constitution be submitted to conventions in every state. This was certainly not the amendment procedure outlined in the Articles of Confederation or even what Congress had asked for in February. Congress had called for amendments, and the convention returned with a brand-new document. The new Constitution declared that nine state conventions, rather than thirteen legislatures, would suffice for ratification. Congress, now dominated by nationalists, overlooked the numerous defects and forwarded the new Constitution, without comment, to the states.[30]

Advocates of the new Constitution appropriated the term "Federalists," and their opponents became known as "Anti-Federalists." The great campaign over the 1787 Constitution was a battle of words, rhetoric, spin, persuasion, and bargaining—but not of guns and swords. In this uncertain context, a vicious circle of fear and violence might have emerged, with the two sides coalescing into enemy camps. Fortunately, this was avoided.

To be sure, both sides expressed strong feelings. To Anti-Federalists, the Federalists looked like a monarchical or aristocratic party, trying to undo liberty and the Revolution by imposing a strong, British-style chief executive, who would ultimately establish a tyranny. To Federalists, the Anti-Federalists championed national weakness, a dangerous vulnerability to foreign powers, and state legislatures that usurped executive and judicial authority.

Despite the heated rhetoric, both sides advocated republican government, albeit in different forms. This lowered the personal stakes for all participants, because any republican government of laws would provide baseline protections for liberty and property. (This was not a "winner-take-all" situation, in other words, where the prevailing side would reap fantastic windfalls, while losers would face death or destitution.)

Admittedly, political careers hung in the balance. Alexander Hamilton of New York City saw a bright future in the "more perfect union"; populist state legislators would encounter dimmer prospects. Still, no one could foresee what would happen to all the players once the new rules of the game took effect. Patrick Henry, for example—the "give me liberty or give me death" revolutionary hero and ardent Anti-Federalist—eventually joined Hamilton's high Federalist camp during the 1790s.[31]

Many Americans of 1787–1788—perhaps the vast majority—were undecided, vacillating, or open to persuasion. Washington's embrace of the Constitutional Convention legitimated the effort in many eyes, because of his scrupulous attention to the rule of law.

Broad contrasts between the two sides can be drawn. Anti-Federalists tended to prioritize local concerns; Federalists lived in a cosmopolitan world of commerce and international relations. Many Anti-Federalists envisioned moral and religious communities of like-minded men engaged in selfless public service. Federalists embraced a more secular, Lockean liberalism, meaning that they saw government as an impartial umpire, to secure private interests. (Anti-Federalist Richard Henry Lee painted Federalists as "refiners weaving webs of reason."[32]) Although there were wealthy Anti-Federalists, men of substantial property, especially creditors, were more likely to support the new Constitution. Anti-Federalists supported direct democracy; Federalists openly sought a more refined, deliberative, and elitist government. Agrarians inclined toward Anti-Federalism; merchants and artisans in cities, seeking tariff protection and support for commerce, preferred Federalism. Connecticut was a Federalist stronghold; other states, especially Rhode Island and North Carolina, were Anti-Federalist holdouts. Older patriots, like Sam Adams and Patrick Henry, tended toward the Anti-Federalist position, while younger men, like Hamilton and Madison, espoused nationalist views. Veterans overwhelmingly favored the new Constitution.[33]

These multiple factors meant that Americans did not split cleanly into warring tribes or factions. Communities and families were divided, and individuals themselves would have felt conflicting impulses. Take a Rhode Island craftsman, for example: as an ordinary citizen, he might have wanted to protect his own state's radical democracy. But if his livelihood depended on foreign or interstate commerce, he may have seen his interests aligned with the Federalists.

On December 6, 1787, the Delaware convention ratified the new Constitution. Other states followed, many by close votes. In June 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to approve, and a month later, the New York convention voted to ratify, by thirty votes to twenty-seven. The electoral college unanimously selected George Washington for president, and he took office on April 30, 1789.

The Tumultuous Politics of the 1790s

For the first year and a half of Washington's administration, political harmony and exquisite manners prevailed. In the summer of 1790, President Washington took Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton on a three-day fishing jaunt.[34] That combination would soon be unthinkable.

At this point, the nascent "parties" remained informal cliques, divided by growing personal and ideological rancor. They were also taboo. In designing the Constitution, the Framers tried to eliminate the "spirit of faction," which they understood as the primary danger to republican government. For the Framers, "factions" implied secretive "cabals," which would plot violence; they did not necessarily see that broad, loosely knit party organizations could be compatible with political stability. Their idea was that officeholders should serve their terms as independent gentlemen. During the 1790s, both sides routinely accused their opponents of acting like a "party" or "faction," while denying that they themselves formed anything of the sort.[35]

The Anti-Federalists, by this time, had given up trying to hold yet another Constitutional Convention and were forming the nucleus of the "Republican" party. For the most part, Republicans accepted the new Constitution but held different ideas about what it meant.

Hamiltonian Federalists envisioned a powerful president, a strong central government, a professional army, commercial expansion, and the United States rising to great power. Jeffersonian Republicans, on the other hand, celebrated strong legislatures, states' rights, volunteer militias, agrarian virtues, and democratic participation.

International tensions soon insinuated themselves into the American party conflict. Specifically, the French Revolution turned France into a republic and served as an inspiration to the Republicans. The Federalists, meanwhile, favored Britain's elitist oligarchy. At a dinner party, John Adams argued that with reforms, Britain would have "the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man"; Alexander Hamilton denied it, stating that Britain already had "the most perfect government which ever existed."[36]

Federalists began calling their opponents "Jacobins"; Republicans attacked the "monarchist" tendencies of Hamilton and friends. Thus began a vicious circle of rising venom and distrust. Each side suspected the other of plotting, perhaps in league with French or British patrons, to overturn the Constitution. Hamilton analyzed this syndrome, even as he perpetuated it. "One side appears to believe that there is a serious plot to overturn the state Governments and substitute monarchy," he wrote in 1792, while "the other side firmly believes that there is a serious plot to overturn the General Government & elevate the separate power of the states upon its ruins. Both sides may be equally wrong & their mutual jealousies may be materially causes of the appearances which mutually disturb them, and sharpen them against each other."[37]

After Britain and France went to war again in 1793, President Washington steered a neutral course between them. (As we will see in chapter 10, neutrality is a perennial choice of coup-free republics, especially relatively small and weak ones.)

At the same time, Washington tried to temper the animosities in his own country and cabinet. He wrote to Jefferson, "My earnest wish and my fondest hope therefore, is that, instead of wounding suspicions and irritable charges, there may be liberal allowances, mutual forbearances, and temporizing yieldings on *all sides*."[38] (Jefferson didn't quite rise to the occasion. He wrote back, describing Hamilton's career as "a tissue of machinations against the liberty of the country."[39])

Washington did not wish to run for reelection in 1792, but Hamilton and Jefferson convinced him it was essential for stability. After four more years, Washington insisted on retiring. Despite predictions of disaster, the republic survived, and Federalist John Adams was inaugurated.

As the United States veered toward war against France in 1798, Federalists sought to hurt their political opponents through legislation. (To be fair, many Federalists honestly believed that Republicans were plotting a rebellion and would join forces with a French invasion.) Congress passed four laws, collectively known as the Alien and Sedition Acts. The Alien acts established registration systems and enabled the president to deport any "dangerous" immigrants (who probably happened to be Republicans as well). The Sedition Law was aimed even more directly at domestic political opposition. Among other things, this law prohibited "any false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings against the government . . . or either house of the Congress of the United States; or the President . . . with intent to defame . . . or to bring them . . . into contempt or disrepute; or to excite against them . . . the hatred of the good people of the United States."[40] In essence, the Sedition Act threatened anyone who complained about, or campaigned against, the nation's leaders.

Both parties, caught in a spiral of mutual fear, sought physical security. The actions of each, of course, only made the opposing party feel less secure. Federalists ensured that officers of the new national army were "politically reliable"; Republicans created state-based arsenals against federal tyranny. In 1798–1799, Virginia built up its defenses, in the event political wrangling turned violent. In the winter of 1799, Hamilton wrote to a fellow Federalist that an army should "be drawn towards Virginia . . . and then let measures be taken to act upon the laws and put Virginia to the Test of resistance."[41]

In 1799, things did not look good. Plot rumors swirled incessantly. From Mount Vernon, the aging George Washington thought he might be witnessing the end of the republican experiment. Watching "with an anxious, and painful eye," he mourned, the situation seemed "to be moving by hasty strides to some awful crisis."[42]

Not all the tension was between the two nascent parties. President Adams worried that fellow Federalist Alexander Hamilton was plotting a coup d'état against him. Abigail Adams warned her husband to "beware of that spare Cassius"—meaning Hamilton.[43]

Then came the election of 1800. Republicans were gaining traction because of public disgust with the Alien and Sedition Acts, but the country had not yet experienced a transfer of power between parties. The Federalist candidate was President Adams, with Charles Pinckney of South Carolina running for vice president. Jefferson headed the Republican ticket, with Aaron Burr as his running mate. Each state voted on its own day, over a period of several months. Going into the final state election, South Carolina's, the electoral college was tied at sixty-five votes for the Federalist ticket and sixty-five votes for the Republican ticket. South Carolina voted for eight Republican electors, seemingly giving the victory to Jefferson and Burr, by seventy-three votes to sixty-five. However, at that time, the Constitution allotted two votes to each member of the electoral college, and under the rules, the man with the most votes became president, while the runner-up became vice president. To avoid a 73–73 tie between Jefferson and Burr, the Republicans planned to have one of their electors vote for someone other than Burr, so that Jefferson would receive 73 votes to Burr's 72. However, this plan was bungled. The Republican vote was 73–73—which, under the rules, threw the election into the Federalist-dominated House of Representatives! Fortunately for the Republicans, the Constitution called for each state delegation to cast one ballot, and the composition of state delegations favored Republicans.

During this period of uncertainty, political tensions mounted and plot rumors multiplied. Federalists feared Jefferson and appeared poised to deny him power by any means necessary. Republicans prepared for the worst. The leader of the House Republicans declared that if a "usurper" claimed the presidency, the Republican states would disregard his orders.[44] Republican governors Thomas McKean of Pennsylvania and James Monroe of Virginia beefed up military preparations. Governor McKean wrote to Jefferson that in the event of a Federalist usurpation, the Pennsylvania militia stood ready "for the arresting and bringing to justice every Member of Congress and other persons found in Pennsylvania who should have been concerned in the treason."[45]

Despite the fearmongering, however, life continued normally in many respects. Jefferson dined at President Adams's house early in January. He sat next to Abigail Adams, the president's wife, and asked her how several congressmen present might vote. She said she didn't know, but they had a pleasant conversation. The following month, Jefferson visited Abigail for tea.

In the House of Representatives, nine states were necessary to produce a winner. Jefferson began with eight votes to Burr's six. (Federalists were voting for Burr in an attempt to deny Jefferson the presidency.) Ballot after ballot failed to achieve a result. As Federalists maneuvered to avoid the election of any Republican, Jefferson paid a personal visit to President Ad-

ams. According to Jefferson, Adams "grew warm in an instant, and said with a vehemence he had not used towards me before, 'Sir, the event of the election is within your own power. You have only to say you will do justice to the public creditors, maintain the navy, and not disturb those holding office, and the government will instantly be put into your hands. We know it is the wish of the people it should be so.'"

"Mr. Adams," said Jefferson, "I know not what part of my conduct, in either public or private life, can have authorized a doubt of my fidelity to the public engagements. I say, however, I will not come into the government by capitulation. I will not enter it, but in perfect freedom to follow the dictates of my own judgment."

"Then," said Adams, "things must take their course."[46] Jefferson soon took his leave.

Jefferson's stubborn position notwithstanding, some assurances on public credit and the navy may have been provided. On February 17, a Federalist representative from Delaware announced he would vote for Jefferson. Federalist representatives from Vermont and Maryland withdrew from the process, allowing their Republican colleagues to decide the issue. On the thirty-sixth ballot, ten states voted for Thomas Jefferson. The following month, America's third president was inaugurated, right on schedule.

In retrospect, all the rumormongering and panic appear overblown—although we will probably never know exactly how close the United States may have come to violence during the 1790s and early 1801. Through some combination of a nascent coup-free structure, General Washington's moderate leadership, and wise choices by others, the young republic entered the nineteenth century with constitutional succession intact.

Washington versus Napoleon

We might briefly compare George Washington to a slightly different revolutionary general, Napoleon Bonaparte. Both were ambitious, but only one crowned himself emperor. What explains the contrast?

Arguably, President Washington did not have much reason to take the Napoleonic path, even if he could have. Suppose he had subverted the Constitution, assumed dictatorial power, crowned himself Emperor George I, and lived in grandiose luxury for the rest of his days. How much would he really have gained? Washington already had money, and he loved his farm at Mount Vernon, just as it was. He didn't have extravagant tastes anyway. Washington wanted to retire—not assume additional responsibilities. As a monarch, moreover, he would continually face threats of revolution and assassination from committed republicans. As a rich, respected retiree under the rule of law, he would remain relatively secure. He had no children, so a

"Washington dynasty" was not even possible. Moreover, this would have destroyed the Constitution that Washington helped create.

Napoleon faced a different situation. After the initial revolution in 1789, France entered a decade of exceptional instability. Coups flowed thick and fast. In 1792, King Louis XVI plotted a return to absolutism and tried to convince foreign monarchs to invade his country. The Paris uprising of August 10 radicalized the revolution, leading to Robespierre and the Terror, which lasted until the coup of 9 Thermidor, Year II (otherwise known as July 27, 1794). The Terror abated, but instability persisted. General Danican attempted a coup d'état in October 1795. As Danican led twenty-five thousand guardsmen and volunteers toward the Tuileries, General Bonaparte rushed to place cannons in a strategic location and scattered the advancing troops. In September 1797, members of the Directory carried out an executive coup. They removed two directors and annulled a recent election because too many right-wingers and royalists had won.

In the United States, there were fears of violence and plotting. In revolutionary France, meanwhile, real violence and genuine plots were part of everyday life. The result: chronic insecurity, especially for those near the apex of the political pyramid. No matter how rich or well-connected one was, political intrigue could sweep it all away, along with one's head.

When General Bonaparte returned from his Egyptian campaign in October 1799, Minister of War Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte was plotting a Jacobin coup, while Director Paul Barras was conspiring to restore the monarchy.[47] Paris was teeming with rumors.

To some extent, coup plotting builds upon itself. Rival conspiracies strengthened Napoleon's incentive to attempt a coup: if he didn't, they would. This is a common scenario; sometimes people are forced to do things simply because others are doing them. A "good cop" in a corrupt police department earns hatred and isolation.

In addition, France was a more family-based society than America, with its British-derived rule of law. Napoleon himself had a core of supporters—his Corsican brothers and old army comrades—ready to follow him. During Napoleon's coup d'état of 18 Brumaire (November 9, 1799), his brother Lucien Bonaparte played a decisive role. (Lucien, who served as president of the Council of Five Hundred, convinced troops to move into the council and evacuate all the representatives.) General Leclerc, who was married to Napoleon's sister, and General Murat, a close friend who would marry another sister within weeks, also played key roles during the coup.

On December 2, 1804, Napoleon crowned himself emperor of the French. His brothers, sisters, and brothers-in-law—many of whom took action on 18 Brumaire—shared his imperial reign. Some became kings and queens of client states across Europe.

THE CIVIL WAR

The next great crisis in America, of course, was the Civil War. This was a monumental trauma and might inspire legitimate questions about the significance of being coup-free. Who cares about coups, one might reasonably ask, when the nation can still tear itself apart through four long and horrific years of internal war? How exactly was the United States "stable" from 1861 to 1865?

Nevertheless, it mattered that democracy survived in Washington, D.C., even while Union and Confederate armies stalked and massacred each other through Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. To the surprise of many Europeans, the 1864 presidential election went ahead as scheduled.

In the same way, the American Revolution had been a secessionist war within the British Empire. And yet, moderate, parliamentary, and lawful government proceeded in Westminster—just as it would over the following two centuries, when anticolonial rebellions erupted in India, South Africa, and Ireland. Until very recently, Britain continued to experience secessionist violence in Northern Ireland. The Venetian Republic faced local rebellions in colonies like Crete and Dalmatia, but politics as usual continued in the Ducal Palace and Great Council. Secessionist civil wars, then, are compatible with political stability at the center.

Secessionist Violence within the Coup-Free Zone

By and large, citizens of coup-free states have been spared major trauma during secessionist wars. (The U.S. Civil War is the most extreme exception.) This is because the violence has usually occurred hundreds or thousands of miles away, across oceans. Soldiers were shipped off to fight, but life proceeded normally in the metropolitan centers.

A couple of secessionist battles have been fought closer to home. The Irish Republic seceded from Britain amidst some violence in 1922, and violence continued in Northern Ireland until a few years ago. Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip after 1967, and Palestinians in those territories have fought Israeli control ever since.

Aside from these few instances of violence, secessionist sentiments within the coup-free zone have been expressed peacefully. Following talks, Sweden and Norway calmly separated in 1905. Flemings and Walloons in Belgium have argued over educational and language policies, but divorce appears unlikely. The fight for an independent Quebec has been waged in Canadian ballot boxes.

Coups and secessionist wars are frequently interlinked. Throughout history, many secessionist wars have begun with coups d'état. When no single faction prevails in a power struggle, territorial division is the natural result.

For example, Macedonian generals began fighting over Alexander's empire immediately after he died in 323 BC. Antigonus, Ptolemy, Seleucus, and others maneuvered their armies into temporary holding positions. Those strategic decisions shaped the next several centuries of history, as the Antigonid, Ptolemaic, and Seleucid dynasties took root in Macedonia, Egypt, and Babylon. When Ashikaga Takauji deposed Japanese emperor Go-Daigo in 1336, creating the Ashikaga Shogunate, Go-Daigo fled to the Yoshino Mountains and built a separate state. More recently, wars for national power have resulted in multiple Koreas, Vietnams, and Yemens. The war for an independent Biafra began when a coup d'état ousted Igbo army officers from power in Nigeria. Rebels like the Shining Path in Peru and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda initially hoped to take power but have settled for regional control instead. States with coups, then, have many more opportunities for secessionist civil wars to arise.

While the coup-free zone is not immune from secessionist violence, it is fairly well insulated. Without a doubt, the American Civil War is the worst violence ever to erupt inside the coup-free zone. It arose out of the special conditions of federalism and slavery in the young American republic, and nothing remotely similar appears likely, or even plausible, in any of today's coup-free states.

Constitutional Succession during the Civil War and Reconstruction

Despite its scale and devastation, the Civil War still failed to derail the clockwork republican government of the United States. When Southern states left, the U.S. government continued to operate—only with smaller territory and fewer people.

President Abraham Lincoln, it is true, exceeded the usual understanding of the president's constitutional limits. "I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional," he explained, "might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the nation."[48] He took many such measures, including calling the militia, raising an army and navy, introducing conscription, suspending habeas corpus, making war on the states, disobeying the Supreme Court, and, as many claimed, depriving persons of "property" through the Emancipation Proclamation. Despite Democratic cries of "dictatorship," though, Lincoln always worked closely with Congress, and there is no indication that he ever sought to retain the presidency beyond his term of office.

Throughout the Civil War, there was no coup, coup attempt, or hint of a coup.[49] There was chatter about "Caesarism," particularly among Europeans, but no one crossed the Rubicon. (But as we saw in the previous chapter, General George McClellan appears to have briefly contemplated a coup and suggested it to three of his generals.)

The closest approaches to a coup d'état actually came after the war. After four grueling years, Northern victory, and Lincoln's assassination, a Southerner moved into the White House! (In 1864, Lincoln had wanted a national unity ticket. He persuaded Republican leaders to drop his Maine abolitionist vice president, Hannibal Hamlin, in favor of Andrew Johnson, a pro-Union Democratic senator from Tennessee.)

As commander in chief of the Union Army, President Andrew Johnson tried to assume total control over Reconstruction. This was awkward. Republicans controlled Congress and worked closely with Union Army leaders like General Ulysses S. Grant. As historian Harold Hyman has shown, General Grant quietly blocked Johnson from exercising effective control over the U.S. Army stationed in the South.[50]

As the election of 1866 approached, each party accused the other of planning to seize power by force. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a political organization of Union veterans that aligned with Republicans during the battles over Reconstruction. GAR leaders wanted Congress to impeach President Johnson, and some planned to support Congress with troops if Johnson tried to resist.[51]

Over President Johnson's vetoes, Congress passed several laws and constitutional amendments. One of these laws was the Tenure of Office Act, which curtailed Johnson's power to dismiss his cabinet officials.

One of Johnson's chief opponents in the cabinet was Edwin Stanton, a Lincoln holdover who remained secretary of war and had long stymied Johnson's effort to interfere with Reconstruction. In August 1867, Johnson fired Stanton and replaced him with General Grant, who was considered more moderate. But in January 1868, the Senate refused to confirm this change, and under the Tenure of Office Act, Stanton was to be reinstated. Grant immediately vacated the office, and Stanton returned.

During this period, President Johnson tried to secure a loyal military force. He offered General William Tecumseh Sherman command over a sizable unit (probably about five to seven thousand men) to be based near Washington. Johnson would create this force purely on his own authority—which was clearly unconstitutional. Rumors rippled through the capital. General Grant, Sherman's old friend and Civil War comrade, convinced Sherman to reject the president's offer. Sherman assumed a post on the western frontier, and Johnson's illicit force never materialized.

On February 21, 1868, President Johnson again ordered the removal of Secretary of War Stanton and named General Lorenzo Thomas in his place. When news of Stanton's dismissal reached the Capitol, Republicans finally saw their chance to impeach Johnson. They asked Stanton to remain in office—which he did, literally, by ordering meals and sleeping on the sofa. Sympathetic congressmen gathered in Stanton's office.

That night, General Lorenzo Thomas told friends he would bring troops and break down Secretary Stanton's door. Stanton heard about this and ordered Thomas arrested and brought before a judge the next day.

Released on bail, General Thomas reappeared at the War Department, but again, Stanton refused to move out. Thomas remarked sadly to Stanton, "The next time you have me arrested, please do not do it before I get something to eat."[52] Stanton put his arm around Thomas, ran his hand through his hair, and ordered a "dyspepsia remedy"; the two men shared a drink before Thomas returned home.

As impeachment proceedings got under way in Congress, crowds flocked to the Capitol. Rumors of covert military preparations flew around the city; there was whispered talk of revolution. One newspaper declared, "[W]e are given to understand that blood will flow in our streets in a day or two."[53]

One key member of the House of Representatives was Republican John Logan of Illinois, who also headed the GAR. By day, Logan helped manage the impeachment process; by night, he slept on a cot in Stanton's office. On February 22, 1868, Logan wrote a note to the commander of the Grand Army posts in the District of Columbia. "The House will impeach A.J.," the note read, "and a Row may ensue. I hope you will quietly and secretly organize all our boys so that they can assemble at a signal . . . ready to protect the Congress of the U.S. in the exercise of their lawful duties."[54]

This was an unusual situation: Congressman Logan controlled an army of committed veterans, but President Johnson had no military forces at his disposal. (Johnson had admitted to Navy Secretary Gideon Welles that he lacked military support against Congress.[55]) Amidst the crisis, Johnson approached General William H. Emory, who controlled army units stationed near Washington. "You can't use me," Emory told his commander in chief.[56]

The House impeached Johnson, and the trial moved into the Senate. Neither side took drastic steps; it became increasingly clear that the confrontation would be strictly legal. To convict Johnson and remove him from office, thirty-six votes were required. On May 16, 1868, the Senate voted; the tally was thirty-five votes to nineteen. Johnson was acquitted by a single vote.

Johnson stayed in the White House, but it was an election year, and he wasn't even a candidate. The Republicans waited a few months and, with Ulysses Grant as their nominee, won back the presidency in the usual way.

Since the 1860s, the prospect of a coup d'état in the United States has grown dimmer and dimmer. To put it another way, serious talk of revolution has disappeared from the political-military establishment and persists only among cultists and kooks.

THE PLOT TO OVERTHROW FDR

During the 1930s, a bizarre fascist plan to overthrow President Franklin D. Roosevelt was uncovered.[57] It remains unclear just how many people were involved, and the number may have been quite small—as in, one person.

In July 1933, a Wall Street bond trader named Jerry MacGuire approached Smedley Butler, a retired major general of the U.S. Marine Corps. MacGuire represented himself as the agent of powerful financial backers. His first proposal was that Butler could lead a few hundred veterans to the American Legion convention in Chicago and take over that organization through legitimate means. Butler refused to commit himself but, mainly out of curiosity, continued meeting with MacGuire.

In August 1934, MacGuire revealed a more ambitious plan. Butler, he said, could lead an organization of half a million veterans. The soldiers would march to Washington, and Butler would become "Secretary of General Affairs." He would then "take over the details" of government from the "overworked" President Roosevelt.[58]

Butler listened, stringing MacGuire along. Afterward, Butler went to a reporter, Paul Comly French of the *Philadelphia Reporter* and the *New York Post*. In September, French visited MacGuire in a Manhattan office. MacGuire telephoned Butler to make sure that French could be trusted. Then, according to French, MacGuire told him, "We need a fascist government in this country . . . to save the nation from the communists who want to tear it down and wreck all that we have built in America. The only men who have the patriotism to do it are the soldiers and Smedley Butler is the ideal leader. He could organize a million men overnight."[59] MacGuire said he had just traveled to Italy and Germany, where veterans had played a similar role. "We might go along with Roosevelt," suggested MacGuire, "and then do with him what Mussolini did with the King of Italy."[60]

French did not publish his exposé of MacGuire until November 1934, when he and Major General Butler testified before the McCormack-Dickstein Committee of the House of Representatives. In his testimony, Butler revealed that MacGuire had implicated figures like Colonel Grayson Murphy, a World War I veteran and director of Goodyear and Bethlehem Steel, the du Pont family, Singer sewing machine heir Robert Sterling Clark, and General Douglas MacArthur.[61]

All these men, of course, denied any involvement. (MacArthur said, "[I]t's the best laugh in years."[62]) It is difficult to gauge the true extent of any conspiracy. When the McCormack-Dickstein Committee called MacGuire to testify, he denied everything but also emerged as thoroughly untrustworthy. The committee failed to call Murphy, Clark, or any others before its mandate expired in January 1935. No criminal prosecutions were initiated. MacGuire died a seemingly natural death, of pneumonia, in March 1935.[63]

The plot may have existed outside MacGuire's imagination, but there is no real evidence for this. The choice of Smedley Butler was certainly odd. Butler was an outspoken left-leaning opponent of what he saw as U.S. imperialism and hardly the man to lead a right-wing coup against Franklin D. Roosevelt.

THE TRUMAN-MACARTHUR CONTROVERSY

Since Reconstruction, the U.S. military commander who was undoubtedly the most capable of launching a coup was General Douglas MacArthur. But MacArthur never showed any inclination to do so.

Why not? It certainly was not because MacArthur lacked ambition or grandiosity. It is also doubtful that he felt an overriding respect for civilian authority.

MacArthur had ardent supporters and admirers, and during his army career, he tried to surround himself with reliable "MacArthur men." During World War II, MacArthur commanded U.S. Army forces in the Far East. General MacArthur ensured that wartime headlines regularly blazed his name. Subordinate generals usually went unmentioned, making it appear that MacArthur personally led every attack.[64]

The MacArthur cult blossomed during his tenure as military governor of Japan, from 1945 to 1951. To visiting journalists, Major General Edward Almond described MacArthur as "the greatest man alive." Not to be outdone, Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer called him "the greatest man who ever lived."[65]

In June 1950, North Korean forces poured into South Korea, and MacArthur took command of U.S. (later U.N.) forces. His surprise landing at Inchon turned the tide—but his overextension deep into the north left U.N. forces vulnerable to the surprise intervention of hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers. MacArthur wanted total victory in Korea, and he was willing to wage all-out war on Communist China to achieve it. He pushed to use Chinese Nationalist troops from Taiwan, as well as a naval blockade and possible atomic assault on the People's Republic.

President Harry S. Truman, on the other hand, did not seek war with China. Truman and his advisors saw the Soviet Union, not "international communism," as the principal adversary. They understood that Western Europe, not the Korean Peninsula, was the main prize. As General Omar Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, later put it, "taking on Red China" would only have created "a larger deadlock at greater expense" and would "involve us in the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time and with the wrong enemy."[66]

MacArthur considered Truman's policy disastrous and thought it was his duty to change it. MacArthur ordered unauthorized missions into Chinese airspace and made public statements that confounded Truman's diplomacy. Republican minority leader Joseph Martin read a particularly inflammatory letter from MacArthur to the House of Representatives in April 1951.

"MacArthur shoots another political bomb through Joe Martin," Truman fumed into his diary. "This looks like the last straw. Rank insubordination. I've come to the conclusion that our Big General in the Far East must be recalled."[67]

At a meeting in the Oval Office, Secretary of State Dean Acheson told the president, "If you relieve MacArthur you will have the biggest fight of your administration."[68] After the decision was made, the president's team worried that MacArthur might resign first if the news leaked out. "The son of a bitch isn't going to resign on me," said Truman. "I want him fired."[69]

At one o'clock in the morning on April 11, 1951, President Truman released a statement to the press: "With deep regret I have concluded that General of the Army Douglas MacArthur is unable to give his wholehearted support to the policies of the United States Government and of the United Nations in matters pertaining to his official duties. . . . I have, therefore, relieved General MacArthur of his commands and have designated Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway as his successor."[70]

Acheson was right—it was Truman's biggest fight. The uproar was immediate and loud. The American citizenry responded with 27,363 letters and telegrams in twelve days, many adopting the tone of Mrs. H. V. Schoepflin of Montclair, New Jersey, who sent a brief greeting: "May God have mercy on your soul for selling your country down the river."[71] (In comparison, fewer than two thousand telegrams came in after Franklin Roosevelt tried to pack the Supreme Court.) Fans booed President Truman at the Washington Senators' opening game. On the Senate floor, Senator William Jenner railed, "[T]his country today is in the hands of a secret inner coterie which is directed by agents of the Soviet Union. We must cut this whole cancerous conspiracy out of our Government at once. Our only choice is to impeach President Truman and find out who is the secret invisible government which has so cleverly led our country down the road to destruction."[72] Listeners in the public galleries applauded. A Gallup poll showed 69 percent of Americans sympathizing with General MacArthur.

MacArthur bounded across the Pacific, landing home after fourteen years in Asia and the eastern Pacific. On April 19, the largest television and radio audience ever (to that point) listened to MacArthur's speech before a joint session of Congress. The next day, 7 million people gave MacArthur the biggest ticker tape parade in New York's history.

A few years later, Dean Acheson described the MacArthur controversy as perhaps the "gravest constitutional crisis" in American history. Acheson

thought the episode ranked among "the crises which were faced during the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War" and that it "might have completely overthrown the constitutional system."[73]

Despite Acheson's comment, the MacArthur affair did not remotely approach Reconstruction-era tensions. MacArthur did make one speech in which he implied that military officers, on some occasions, might rightfully disobey civilian authority.[74]

But MacArthur went no farther. For one scholar, the MacArthur episode merely demonstrates that "the modern presidency controls the modern military."[75] Or, in Harry Truman's words, "General MacArthur was insubordinate and I fired him. That's all there was to it."[76]

The Watergate crisis, referenced earlier in the book, presents a remarkable spectacle. A sitting president, commanding the greatest military arsenal the world had ever seen, could face, along with many of his top advisors, removal from office, criminal prosecution, and jail—yet none of them could stop the inexorable legal process.

The 2000 election debacle was another crisis, but like its predecessor in 1800, this too was resolved through legal channels. Even Americans who disagreed with the Supreme Court's decision in *Bush v. Gore* could still appreciate the fact that it was those nine people who decided rather than a self-appointed cabal.

Even after the American Revolution clipped the umbilical cord to Britain, American legal institutions retained their English-born "rule-of-law" traditions. With its second Constitution, and undoubtedly a measure of good luck in the early days, the United States of America locked into perpetual constitutional succession.

II

Interlude: Deep Background

Chapter Six

True Banana Republics

Now that we understand how coup-free states work, let's take a break from the modern world for two chapters and gain an even broader perspective. We can ask fundamental questions, including the following.

Where do coups come from? Why is history so violent, and why do men perpetrate the vast majority of the violence? Why is every coup-free state a republic rather than a monarchy or dictatorship, and how did republics get started in the first place? What is "patriotic virtue," and under what circumstances do we find people demonstrating an unmistakably selfless, public-spirited generosity toward their fellows?

In this chapter, we return to our biological origins. Chimpanzee politics may help us understand why most states in human history have witnessed chronic intrigue and coups. As we will see, male chimpanzees continually jostle for social rank and sometimes launch sudden attacks to replace a reigning alpha. They also band together to kill strangers. Because chimpanzees are close relatives of ours, do these behaviors imply that the coup d'état is somehow rooted in our DNA?

In fact, many strands of evidence—from primatology to paleontology, anthropology, history, evolutionary theory, sociology, ethology, neuroscience, and pharmacology—confirm that men evolved to compete and fight for social dominance. Playing by the rules of science, and even if we only draw cautious and conservative conclusions, certain facets of human nature are inescapable.

People prefer being dominant and respected rather than subordinate and despised. Among men, disrespect triggers anger and the fight response. (Women also care about rank but usually pursue it in a less physically aggressive manner.) We all like having friends, and we are partial to kin. We

fear outsiders, and because we know that deadly violence between groups or political communities is always possible, we are often tempted to strike first.

In short, men naturally yearn for prestige, fight for power, form alliances, and opportunistically kill their enemies. These elemental motives and strategies explain why the pages of human history are filled with coup d'état after coup d'état.

In 1973, the reigning alpha male of the Kasekela valley community of chimpanzees, in Tanzania's Gombe National Park, was a massive, feisty, but aging chimp named Humphrey. At this time, there were two young adult males—brothers or half-brothers—named Figan and Faben.

Figan was younger than Faben. Several years earlier, however, Faben's right arm had been paralyzed by polio, and Figan immediately assumed dominance over his older sibling. Afterward, the brothers formed an enduring partnership. Even with his right arm dangling, Faben could stand up and mount a vigorous "charging display." (Charging displays can involve running, stomping feet, vocalizing, throwing rocks, drumming on trees, dragging branches, chest beating, and many other loud, dramatic actions. They are usually performed with hair standing on end, which magnifies an ape's apparent size.) When the brothers charged simultaneously, they were effective and intimidating.

With Faben nearby, Figan repeatedly attacked Humphrey. One night, Humphrey was settling into an arboreal nest. Figan began displaying in the treetops above, then hurtled down and crashed into Humphrey. They fell to the ground, and Humphrey ran away. As Humphrey curled into another nest, Figan attacked again. Soon afterward, Humphrey submitted by "pant-grunting" to the younger ape.

Figan was now dominant to Humphrey, but there was no clear alpha male within the community. A tense period followed.

Figan and Faben went after Evered, another high-ranking male. One day they found him on a hillside, sitting in a tree. Figan mounted an adjacent tree; Faben climbed the steep hill, to a point level with Evered. The brothers hovered near their target; both sprang together, tackling Evered. All three chimps crashed to the ground. Evered, screaming in fear, climbed another tree. For an hour, Figan and Faben displayed menacingly below.

After this incident, Evered surrendered conspicuously. Early one morning, he sat below Figan's nest for half an hour. When Figan finally looked down, Evered frantically lowered his head and gave submissive pant-grunts. The uncertain period was over. Figan was the clear alpha.

Figan stayed on top for years, but it was not always easy. Faben disappeared (and probably died) in 1975; Figan struggled without his chief ally. Four high-ranking males occasionally ganged up against him. This coalition was unstable, however, and Figan reestablished his authority. (Even alpha

males sometimes lose fights and confrontations, especially against fleeting coalitions. What sets the alpha apart is that he never pant-grunts to another chimp.)

For a long time, Figan had a small admirer, a young male named Goblin. Goblin watched Figan, followed him, and groomed his fur. Figan usually tolerated the little chimpanzee, and they spent hour after hour together.

By the late 1970s, Goblin was a young adolescent, rising rapidly in the male hierarchy. This was surprisingly early; most male chimpanzees do not reach high rank until their twenties.

Goblin's success was partly due to his bond with Figan. When Goblin challenged community males, they often lashed back in anger. On many occasions, Figan rushed over to support his young protégé. Other chimps grew reluctant to punish the upstart, and Goblin's confidence blossomed.

Goblin first targeted Humphrey, the old bull. By this time, Humphrey had allied himself with Figan. As Goblin intimidated Humphrey, Figan remained aloof, backing neither of his associates. Humphrey submitted to Goblin.

Goblin continued his aggression up the ranks. When he challenged adult males, it was almost always in Figan's presence. Even so, Goblin lost some encounters, receiving wounds in the process. But once his injuries healed, he returned to the ring. By 1979, Goblin could intimidate everyone but Figan himself.

The next step seems inevitable. For many years, whenever Figan arrived, Goblin hurried over to greet his hero. One day, Goblin ignored Figan.

The atmosphere shifted palpably. Now Goblin rarely gave the submissive pant-grunt. Figan grew tense in Goblin's presence. If Goblin appeared unexpectedly, Figan would grin, squeak, and rush to another male for reassurance.

In August 1979, as Figan suffered from sores on his fingers, Goblin made his move. The teenager began posturing aggressively, charging at Figan, and slapping the alpha male as he ran past. Goblin adopted many of Figan's own tactics, like hiding in bushes and launching sudden attacks. Figan turned to senior males for help.

In September, the first major fight between Goblin and Figan was observed. Figan climbed a tree; Goblin pursued and kicked him out. Figan fell to the ground—about thirty feet below—and ran away screaming.

On another occasion, Goblin displayed aggressively at Figan, who fled into another tree. This time, Goblin just sat below, calmly grooming with another male chimp. Figan began whimpering and stayed in the tree until Goblin left.

This was not the end of the struggle. In November, Figan combined with Humphrey and three other males to attack Goblin, and the impudent youngster was badly wounded. For a while, this alliance formation enabled Figan to retain alpha rank.

Time was on Goblin's side, however. The senior males continued to age, while Goblin entered his physical prime. By late 1981, Goblin once again dominated his boyhood idol, and by 1984, he reigned as undisputed alpha male.[1]

Jane Goodall and other researchers observed these events at Gombe National Park in Tanzania. Beginning in 1960, Goodall gradually ingratiated herself into this community of wild chimpanzees. By the 1970s, the chimps of the Kasekela valley had grown accustomed to tall apes with binoculars and notepads. Suddenly, humans could watch political life unfold among their closest relatives.

The stories of Humphrey, Figan, and Goblin echo historical and literary themes of naked ambition, political machinations, and betrayal. But what do they really mean? What—if anything—do they reveal about our own species? Specifically, what do chimpanzee alpha-male contests tell us about human coups d'état?

Very little, some would argue. Many social scientists continue to resist evolutionary biology as a framework for understanding human behavior. Some equate biological theories with racist eugenics, Nazi propaganda, or century-old "social Darwinism." For them, the project of reducing political science, economics, anthropology, and other fields to genetic competition seems vaguely reactionary and Victorian.

It is true that evolutionary psychology—as many practitioners call the field—violates some cherished dogmas of twentieth-century social science. From a biological perspective, human minds do not appear as blank slates, shaped wholly by "culture." There is some cultural variability, of course—but many behaviors appear across the entire human species, and some are shared by apes, primates, and other mammals. (For example, members of all human groups eat, drink, sleep, learn language, gossip, make friends, experience similar emotions, display common facial expressions, practice reciprocity, procreate, and form nuclear family units.[2]) By identifying shared traits and tracing their adaptive logic, evolutionary psychologists present certain behaviors and inclinations as relatively hardwired.

This chapter examines the possible links between great ape behavior and the blood-soaked history of human politics. If we want to understand why humans seem ready to fight for status, unite against strangers, and kill each other, we must ask whether evolution predisposes us to do so.

But how do we identify the evolved features of the psyche? It would help if we could watch hominid ancestors, such as the australopithecines of 3 million years ago, living on the African savanna. But we can't. All we have are a few fossilized bones, and they don't tell us much about how their owners interacted.

Studies of living primates open a window on our evolutionary past. Chimpanzees and humans share a common ancestor: an ape living in East Africa about 5 to 7 million years ago. That much is undisputed, at least among scientists. What is controversial is just what this ape looked like and what behaviors it may have exhibited.

Determining the behavior of ancestral apes, from millions of years ago, is difficult. Direct observation is obviously impossible. Basic evolutionary logic, however, tells us that when closely related species share physical or behavioral adaptations, those adaptations usually stem from a common ancestor.[3]

A metaphor for this methodology can be found in our binocular, three-dimensional vision. Our eyes send impulses to the brain from two vantage points. By combining both data streams, we perceive depth. In a parallel way, multiple closely related species allow us to gaze into the distant evolutionary past.

The best we can do, though, is make statements of probability. We can't state with absolute precision what our ancestors were doing, as though we were observing them from a distant planet with a supercharged telescope. We may, however, determine that certain types of behavior were probably or almost certainly present in ancestral populations.

To determine likely behavioral patterns of our ancestral apes, we can look at five living species: humans, chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans. The last common ancestor of all five lived approximately 12 to 14 million years ago. At that time, the line leading to modern orangutans diverged from the others. The ancestor of modern gorillas branched off about 10 million years ago; the hominid line (leading to modern humans) split off 5 to 7 million years ago; chimpanzees and bonobos parted ways about 2 to 3 million years ago.

If chimpanzees, bonobos, and humans all share an important behavioral adaptation, it was probably present—in some form—in the common ancestor of all three species, about 5 to 7 million years ago. If gorillas and orangutans also exhibit the conduct, that solidifies an already strong inference that the trait is "conserved" (i.e., not new) and pushes back the likely origins of the adaptation by several million years. Some behavioral adaptations are extremely ancient, of course, and originated even earlier in the course of primate, mammalian, or vertebrate evolution.

This approach illuminates likely types of behaviors among our hominid ancestors. These include the australopithecines (1 to 4 million years ago), *Homo habilis* (1.5 to 2 million years ago), and *Homo erectus* (250,000 to 1.5 million years ago). If an adaptive behavioral tendency was present in the ancestral ape 5 million years ago and persists among modern humans, intermediate species probably exhibited the trait as well. Any such behavioral proclivity would have waxed and waned over time and taken on different

characteristics within different species or different populations. Such variability is only to be expected and does not undermine the case for the evolutionary origins of such behaviors.

We begin by looking at three interrelated features of chimpanzee social life: (1) alpha-male dominance contests, (2) male alliances, and (3) violence between communities. As we will see, primatologists have developed compelling Darwinian explanations for these facets of chimpanzee conduct.

Then, we ask whether bonobos and humans display similar behaviors. Bonobos are still poorly understood, but the available evidence demonstrates the same three characteristics—albeit in muted form. What about humans? Can we say anything confidently about the entire species, with its striking cultural and technological variability? Perhaps, but in generalizing across humanity, we will need to proceed with caution. There is strong evidence, for example, that simple hunter-gatherers—a plausible template for human ancestors—practice genuine "egalitarianism." If so, this could undercut an evolutionary link between agonistic apes and ambitious men. On the other hand, if men consistently exhibit dominance contests, personal alliances, and warfare between communities, we cannot ignore the evolutionary implications. They are highly unlikely to be recent innovations or historical accidents. Almost certainly, they are not produced by an "imperialist" or "patriarchal" culture of the past few millennia. Instead, they result from hardwired emotional structures, dating back at least to ancestral species of great apes and possibly deeper into evolutionary time.

If so, the relevance for political science will be clear. If people have always pursued power, banded together in coalitions, and killed their common enemies, this would explain the near ubiquity of coups d'état in human history.

CHIMPANZEES

Male Dominance Struggle

The antics of Figan and Goblin are hardly unique in chimpanzee annals. Dominance struggles unfold constantly at Gombe, at other research sites, and in captivity.[4] "Charging displays" are the primary tactics, but sometimes these are combined with physical aggression, including chasing, hitting, kicking, slamming, biting, and scratching. Still, dominance struggles are rarely lethal.

Dominance contests end when one chimpanzee submits. In the "submissive greeting," a crouching chimpanzee looks up at a dominant individual and delivers a series of short, panting grunts. The dominant chimp stretches to a greater height, with his hair standing on end, thereby creating an illusion of superior size.

Figure 6.1. Chimpanzees scatter as an adult male performs a menacing display. Clive Bromhall/Getty Images

What enables a male chimpanzee to achieve alpha rank? Goodall identifies a number of factors, including age, physical strength, fitness, aggressiveness, fighting skill, intelligence, ability to form coalitions, and persistence.[5] As other researchers have concurred, rank is a central preoccupation in the lives of many male chimpanzees.[6]

But why? Natural selection offers the only plausible theory. (Chimpanzees do exhibit regional variations in activities like tool use and hunting[7] but not in dominance behavior. A purely "learning" or "cultural" model for social competition is not viable. At the same time, young chimpanzees surely discover effective tactics by watching particular elders.)

Among chimp scholars, there is no debate over the basic evolutionary driver of male status competition. High-ranking male chimpanzees get more sex—especially with ovulating females—and father more children.[8] Technically, the evolutionary explanation is that dominant males reproduced more successfully in the ancestral environment. As a result, they passed on the physical and mental attributes of dominance. Today, male chimps are born with emotional predispositions to desire, seek, and achieve high rank. Wild chimpanzees live much as their ancestors did, and high-status males continue to enjoy reproductive advantages.

Female chimpanzees exhibit "sexual swellings"—large, pink, highly conspicuous protuberances around their genitals. These inflate and deflate according to the monthly cycle, reaching maximum size several days before ovulation. In other words, females advertise their fertility.

Male chimps find swollen females highly arousing. They avidly pursue and mate with females reaching maximum tumescence. One estrus female was observed copulating as many as fifty times per day.

During the early period of full swelling, chimpanzees practice free love. All, or nearly all, the community males get to participate, and there is little sign of aggression, hostility, jealousy, or possessiveness.

That changes after a few days, as the female approaches ovulation. Males get agitated, cantankerous, and highly possessive. The alpha male—or the highest-ranking male present—tends to monopolize the estrus female. He stays close and copulates with her throughout the day. If a subordinate approaches, the alpha threatens and chases him away. If a subordinate sneaks sex, the alpha may punish the female. (If he attacked the male, other males would instantly converge on her.) This forceful possessiveness is observed consistently among wild and captive chimpanzees.[9]

Even with constant vigilance, the alpha male cannot achieve a perfect monopoly. At best, Goodall concludes, a strong alpha can "ensure that *most* of the copulations around the time of ovulation are his."[10]

But that's plenty of selective pressure for evolutionary purposes. Over any extended period—and certainly over millions of years—this reproductive advantage builds lean, mean, dominance-seeking machines.

Male Bonding

Obviously, male chimps do more than fight. They also play, hunt, eat, share food, and patrol communal boundaries together. They gang up together, in all kinds of long-term and temporary alliances. And of course, they do a lot of grooming.

Evolutionary biology has two main ways to explain why organisms can be "nice" or "cooperative": kin selection and reciprocal altruism.[11] Kin selection explains why helping genetic relatives can make Darwinian sense. For example, a particular strand of DNA might contribute, through long chains of chemical reactions, to building a brain module for identifying faces. (It is clear that facial recognition takes place within specific brain structures.[12]) Another gene—again via circuitous chemical pathways—may help stimulate a mother's feelings of comfort and well-being during breast feeding. By increasing the probability a mother will recognize and breastfeed her own infant, both genes can boost offspring survival rates. Reciprocal altruism provides another basis for generosity. Here, an organism benefits another

organism and receives payback later. (Of course, this cooperative strategy is vulnerable to "cheating," where the recipient refuses to return the favor.)

Chimpanzees exhibit unmistakable signs of kin selection and reciprocal altruism. Kinship facilitates social bonding throughout the primate order, and chimpanzees are no exception. At the same time, related and unrelated chimpanzees are constantly trading favors. Chimpanzees, as Goodall reports, "can readily remember who helped them (as well as who sided against them) from one occasion to the next."[13] If a partner fails to reciprocate, chimps respond with what is called "moralistic aggression." In other words, they get mad and lash out.

Even amidst the quarreling, scuffling, posturing, and hierarchy of group life, males share common genetic interests, which facilitate cooperation through kin selection. Chimp communities range in size, from twenty to about one hundred individuals. Males remain in their birth communities, whereas many females leave at adolescence. This means that many males are brothers, half-brothers, or cousins.

Even as they squabble over preeminence and pollination rights, male chimpanzees form strong bonds. In part, this is because they face common enemies. Given a chance, their neighbors will eagerly kill them.

Intercommunity Violence

Godi, a young adult male, belonged to the Kahama community. The Kahama chimps lived in a territory directly south of the Kasekela valley. (The Kasekela group included Humphrey, Figan, Goblin, and the other chimps we have already encountered.)

One day in 1974, Godi was foraging by himself, near the Kasekela border. In the north, a party of eight Kasekela chimps gathered. They included Figan, Humphrey, five other males, and one female. They moved south, quietly and efficiently. When they reached the border, they crossed into Kahama territory. They could hear the calls of Kahama chimps but remained silent.

Godi was eating in a tree. Suddenly, he saw eight intruders below. He jumped and ran. Humphrey caught up, tackled him, and pinned him face down. As Humphrey held Godi's limbs, five comrades punched, pummeled, and bit him, charging and screaming in frenzy. After ten minutes, Humphrey let go. The invaders plunged deeper into Kahama territory, hooting wildly, but quickly turned around and went home.

Slowly, Godi got up, bleeding from severe wounds all over his body. He was never seen again and presumably died within a few days.[14]

Since this event, evidence of chimpanzee "warfare" or "raiding" has mounted. While dominance struggles within a chimp community can be

brutal, they are nowhere near as deadly as the relationships between communities.

A gang of chimps on a "border patrol" will travel silently and cautiously along the periphery of their own territory. They stop frequently to watch and listen. They appear tense and startle easily. During a "raid," the chimp gang will drive deep into neighboring territory; they appear to seek out vulnerable loners like Godi or groups much smaller than their own. They only attack when they clearly outnumber their victims and thereby enjoy overwhelming superiority.[15]

After Godi's death, only five adult males remained in the Kahama community. Over the next three years, they all disappeared, one by one. Kasekela males attacked and beat a Kahama female and her two daughters; they died a few days later. By the end of 1977, the Kahama community no longer existed. The Kasekela chimps expanded their territory, incorporating much of the Kahama range.

The bloodshed at Gombe is hardly unique. Researchers at other sites have witnessed similar levels of violence, including the wholesale extinction of another community in the Mahale Mountains of Tanzania.

Why do they do it? Richard Wrangham did his graduate fieldwork at Gombe under Goodall's direction, teaches biological anthropology at Harvard, and has developed the most exhaustive and convincing theory of chimpanzee warfare.[16] He argues that chimp gangs prowl for easy targets. When they encounter a lone stranger, they can easily kill him, at little personal risk. A 3:1 ratio appears significant. When three chimpanzees attack a loner, two can hold him down, as the third inflicts terrible damage. There are no reports of aggressors in such situations receiving serious wounds.

By raiding and killing a stranger, chimps can substantially lower the threat posed by a neighboring community. With one fewer adult male, a community is less likely to assemble a large raiding party and loses another defender. By repeatedly gathering on the neighbors' turf, a community can expand its territorial base. This yields scarce food resources, like fruit trees, and invading communities may incorporate any females inhabiting that terrain.

Such is the nature of male dominance competition, alliance formation, and intergroup violence among chimpanzees. But chimps are only one of our nearest cousins. The bonobo, a species closely related to chimpanzees, may tell a different story.

BONOBOS

A leading primatologist has called bonobos the "hippies of the primate world."[17] In the popular imagination, the bonobo represents a gentle, highly

sexual, egalitarian, peace-loving ape, in stark contrast to the bloodthirsty and hierarchical chimpanzee. While the two species exhibit some characteristic differences, this polarized conception is a caricature.

Our empirical grasp of bonobo behavior is spotty and inconclusive. Whereas many chimpanzees live in relatively accessible woodlands, wild bonobos exclusively inhabit remote, dark rainforests within the Democratic Republic of Congo. Getting bonobos to stay within view is difficult, and human political turmoil has repeatedly interrupted research.

Despite the obstacles, distinctive patterns of bonobo behavior have emerged. The clearest difference with chimpanzees lies in the area of social dominance. Among chimps, all females are submissive to all adult males. The bonobo sexes are "codominant." Social rank does not depend on sex, and the alpha female is roughly equal to the alpha male.[18]

The bonobo female advantage lies in stronger alliances. Unlike chimpanzee females, bonobo females are tightly bonded and highly cooperative. Male bonobos groom avidly and frequently, but they do not team up during aggressive encounters. Females, on the other hand, respond to each other's calls for help and attack in unison.

Among chimpanzees, as we saw, alpha males can monopolize ovulating females, which is why dominance struggles are so heated. Top-ranked bonobo males cannot achieve such a drastic reproductive edge. One reason is female solidarity: if a male tried to boss a female so imperiously, he would probably provoke a massed female attack. Another reason is that females conceal their ovulation, so males cannot know exactly when to impregnate them. Females maintain their sexual swellings and emit no telltale scents. As a result, male sexual interest does not peak on any particular day.[19]

With less at stake, bonobo dominance contests are relatively restrained. Males do charge, bite, hit, and chase one another—much more frequently than females—but they do not appear to inflict life-threatening wounds. They also do not practice "submissive greetings," where subordinates prostrate themselves and dominants magnanimously stretch out a hand. Bonobo chases usually end in symmetrical conciliation rituals, such as back-to-back scrotum rubbing.[20]

It remains unclear whether bonobos practice intercommunal "warfare" in the chimpanzee manner.[21] Researchers have watched bonobo gangs chasing neighbors through border and overlap areas while screaming, drumming on trees, and making aggressive threat-displays. Sometimes, bonobos return from such clashes with bloody wounds. Missing digits and hands are regularly observed—particularly among adult males—while some males lack testicles.

At the same time, bonobos appear capable of what we might call diplomatic overtures. By furnishing sugarcane one day, a Japanese research team inadvertently attracted two communities to the same small clearing. The two

parties emerged from the woods, watching each other. They slowly approached the sugarcane and sat down a few yards from each other. After half an hour, one female crossed the line and engaged a neighboring female in sexual rubbing. Then the two parties mingled comfortably, although the adult males maintained a wary distance. Over the next few months, researchers repeated the same basic scenario thirty times. Females always initiated the friendly contacts. Similar episodes have occurred without sugarcane.[22]

Ultimately, chimpanzees and bonobos share much in common. Both species form territorial communities of about 25 to 120 members, in which males remain in their birth communities, while females transfer out. As is the case with many other primates, mammals, and even nonmammals, males fight for social dominance. Also in both species, the males of a community enforce territorial rights. Such violence is particularly lethal among chimpanzees, but bonobos still chase, fight, and wound the members of neighboring communities.

GORILLAS AND ORANGUTANS

What about the other great apes—our slightly more distant cousins? They are much less communal than chimpanzees or bonobos, but males still fight for dominance and sexual access (as many other male primates and mammals do).

The silver-backed male gorilla maintains a harem of around three or four adult females, with their offspring. He must physically defend his troop against "intruder" males, who try to recruit his females and murder his infants. When strange males confront each other, they make violent threat-displays and fight with sharp canines and strong fists. Even when several males live in the same troop, the dominant silverback takes all, or nearly all, the mating opportunities.[23]

Orangutans are solitary bruisers. The most reproductively successful "big males" claim territories that include multiple females. (Orangutan males have an unusual adaptation. Some males grow very large and dominate territories also inhabited by females. Other males remain the same size as females, and their reproductive strategy consists largely of rape.) "Big males" make booming calls that carry a half mile or further. These calls simultaneously attract estrus females and warn away male interlopers. Whenever two males meet, serious battle ensues. Most big males are marked by injuries such as broken fingers and toes, missing teeth and eyes, and torn lips.[24]

HUMANS

Before we assess what chimpanzee, bonobo, gorilla, and orangutan behaviors may indicate about our evolutionary past, let's take a look at ourselves. Even putting aside the behavior of other great apes for a moment, we would have strong reasons to believe that dominance struggle, personal alliances, and intercommunity violence are evolved features of the human male psyche.

Dominance Struggle

"So far is it from being true that men are naturally equal," noted Samuel Johnson, "that no two people can be half an hour together, but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other."[25]

Hierarchy—sometimes subtle, sometimes overt—appears universal. Even in the most "egalitarian" societies, as we will see, some people find it easy to make friends and influence people. "To say that people generally seek status," argues well-known biologist Edward Wilson, "is to sum up a large part of human social behavior."[26]

High status yields reproductive benefits among a wide range of animals and traditional human groups.[27] When biologists study animal dominance, they always look for an evolutionary explanation through reproductive advantage. The same logic applies to humans: we seek dominance because our high-ranking ancestors were especially fecund.[28]

Males of nearly all species compete for females. This is because females perform valuable functions: they gestate and nurture young. Female reproduction is fairly secure but limited by time, energy, and physical capacity. Male reproduction, on the other hand, is almost limitless. A male can father a huge number of children, but if he does, he necessarily pushes other males into a reproductive abyss. Females can almost always find males willing to mate, but the reverse is not true. Male reproductive competition is sharp and leads to spectacular dominance struggles.[29]

Women—like most female primates—generally invest considerably more time and energy in each offspring than men do. They carry babies in their wombs, give birth, breastfeed, and usually take care of children for years. Human females may compete among themselves, evolutionary theorists note, "but there is a straightforward logic according to which males compete *more intensely*."[30]

For men, the status-reproduction link is particularly clear: leaders procreate well. In many premodern settings, high-ranking men father a disproportionate number of children.[31] These cases include hunter-gatherers, who offer the closest technological and cultural models of our ancestors.

The correlation between rank and paternity grows even stronger in complex, sedentary, agrarian societies. Greater wealth differentials produce

sharper reproductive disparities. According to a survey of 849 different cultures, over 83 percent allowed "polygyny," or multiple wives.[32] In general, only leaders and wealthy men take second, third, or fourth wives; they also have more mistresses. (In recent decades, birth control may have severed the link between male status and reproductive prowess. High-ranking men continue to live longer and copulate with more women, but they do not necessarily father more children.)

If ancestral females preferred to mate with high-ranking males, we would expect to find the same preference among contemporary females, and we do. A study of women from thirty-seven cultures found a common theme: status and earning potential were highly prized characteristics of prospective husbands.[33] (Of course, mountains of anecdotal and popular-culture data reinforce this point.) Female attraction to high-status males has been confirmed in many nonhuman species as well.[34]

"Trivial altercations" bolster the case for dominance seeking as an evolved feature of the male psyche. These begin over seemingly minor affronts—a wayward glance, backtalk—but can rapidly turn lethal. Often they take place in plain sight of many witnesses, making punishment for violent actions highly probable.[35]

Why kill over trifles? Especially when a long prison term awaits? Such episodes confound economistic, "rational choice" expectations. They make little sense, unless we look at them as products of evolved emotions. In the ancestral environment, of course, there were no police, judges, or prison systems. One had to fight for status—as all male apes do—and in dominance competition there are few meaningless interactions. Any male who let others encroach, bully, harass, snub, or generally treat him as an inferior was, in fact, an inferior. "Disrespect" remains a potent trigger because men evolved to respond angrily. Eons of prestige battles have built male brains with an unfortunate capacity for sudden, uncontrollable rage and an overweening desire to be seen as tough, manly, and strong.

Human males may have evolved to fight for dominance, but there is an important counterargument to consider first. As anthropologists have pointed out, simple hunter-gatherer bands are strikingly egalitarian, and they provide the best living models for ancestral humans.[36] Among the !Kung San of the Kalahari Desert, for example, it would be considered shockingly arrogant if anyone claimed to be "headman." Pride is considered dangerous. According to anthropologist Richard Lee, the !Kung are constantly "puncturing the bubble of conceit and enforcing humility." They do this through "a vocabulary of rough humor, back-handed compliments, put-downs, and damning with faint praise."[37] Informal leaders emerge, but they are consistently modest and never overbearing.

Bruce Knauft, a cultural anthropologist at Emory University, uses evidence like this to challenge the link between ape and human hierarchies.

Theories "emphasizing the importance of male sexual competition for reproductive success," Knauft argues, "have difficulty explaining the extreme political and sexual egalitarianism among men in simple societies."[38] He defines "simple societies" as those lacking "recognizable leadership roles and status differentials among adult men."[39] Knauft posits a long "U-shaped" history of political inequality. Dominance battles among ancestral apes, he suggests, gave way to millions of years of simple human equality, followed by the recent rise of complex chiefdoms and states. If true, this would undermine the case for dominance seeking as an evolved predisposition of the human psyche.

Knauft's argument, however, has serious problems. First, he applies an overly formalistic definition of dominance: "recognizable leadership roles and status differentials among adult men."[40] Social hierarchy, as Dr. Johnson observed, can be far more subtle. Even where wealth disparities and official "headman" titles are nonexistent—as among the Aka pygmies and the !Kung—certain men emerge as popular, respected, informal leaders.[41] If this type of dominance prevailed among our ancestors, the evolutionary proposition remains compelling.

Second, Knauft himself recognizes that egalitarianism does not come easy and requires continuous, vigorous, and coordinated efforts against self-promotion. Among simple societies, he notes, "there tends to be active and assiduous devaluation of adult male status differentiation and minimization or denial of those asymmetries of ability that exist."[42] "Self-aggrandizing behavior is disparaged and open coercion considered highly improper."[43] Moreover, these norms are collectively enforced. "In most simple societies, aggressively self-interested persons may be killed with the consent or active collaboration of the community at large."[44]

Such practices create an impressively egalitarian structure, but they do not undermine a biological account of dominance seeking. If values of cooperation and equality truly govern behavior—as Knauft suggests—why should group members need to contain aggressive self-interest through "active and assiduous" leveling? Why should anyone be tempted to dominate others?

Third, contemporary hunter-gatherers may offer poor ancestral models because they are relegated to harsh, barren environments like the Arctic and the Kalahari Desert. Extreme scarcity may generate egalitarianism for two reasons. It is risky to antagonize others, as one may soon depend on their generosity.[45] At the same time, the absence of concentrated resources creates fluidity. With few possessions, people can simply walk away and join other bands.[46]

As soon as scarcity conditions ease, "big men" appear. The //Gana San of the northeastern Kalahari enjoy economic buffers through agriculture and animal husbandry. Wealthier men tend to have multiple wives, and some claim to be "headman."[47]

Lush environments generate denser, more stratified societies, even among hunter-gatherers. Archaeological evidence shows that complex chiefdoms emerged along rivers, lakes, and oceans, where resources were concentrated and defensible.[48] Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest, for example, formed sedentary, hierarchical, "big man" societies amidst the economic plenty of wild salmon. (Anthropological studies, by the way, confirm that usurpations of chiefly power are common in tribal settings.[49])

Did our ancestors enjoy concentrated bounty like salmon, or did they forage for dispersed foods across vast empty landscapes? The answer must be some combination of both. In general, hominids inhabited a variety of ecological niches. At the same time, we would expect our ancestors to gravitate toward resource-rich environments with stable, plentiful food supplies. Most likely, they only moved into marginal areas when forced by population density, politics, or other pressures.[50]

Even if our ancestors consistently formed small, mobile, egalitarian bands, though, the evidence remains overwhelming: humans—especially men—evolved to pursue prestige. Small statistical advantages, played out over millions of years, can build robust adaptations. As we have seen, informal leaders among the !Kung and other foragers enjoy a reproductive edge. To the extent our ancestors formed more sharply stratified societies, the argument grows even stronger. Either way, evolution offers the only convincing explanation for the strength, persistence, and universality of human status seeking.

But how does evolution build brains to compete? So far, we have only discussed ultimate selective pressures, rather than proximate physiological mechanisms. If humans are naturally competitive, we should be able to identify the neural and chemical architecture that stimulates and guides agonistic behavior.

And in fact, scientists have begun to chart this terrain. They have found, for example, that testosterone and serotonin appear deeply involved in dominance struggle. Immediately before competing, young male athletes experience a rise in testosterone—which probably sharpens their mental focus and facilitates risk taking. Afterward, winners experience high testosterone and elation, while losers suffer the opposite. Researchers conclude that success elevates testosterone, which leads to more dominant behavior, which generates more success.[51] Scientists can also manipulate testosterone levels in male rhesus monkeys by enabling them to become dominant or by setting them up for defeat.[52] Similar feedback loops are observed with respect to serotonin. Alpha-male monkeys have more serotonin in their bloodstream than subordinates, and when monkeys are given Prozac or other serotonin-elevating drugs, they routinely achieve dominance over their drug-free brethren.[53]

The chemistry of confidence can be observed in body language. "Winners" typically stand erect, walk with a sauntering or striding gait, and gaze directly into others' eyes. "Losers," on the other hand, tend to stoop and avoid eye contact.[54]

These emotional systems appear to be evolutionary adaptations, designed to calibrate behavior with likelihood of success. "Losing" and "winning" provide critical information about one's place within the environment. Amidst rough-and-tumble dominance struggles, organisms sustain high costs if they continue fighting when they should step aside. According to the "rank theory of depression," low energy and downcast mood encourage an organism to remove itself from the arena rather than receive endless thrashings. Depression also communicates withdrawal, nonparticipation, and harmlessness.[55] Winning, on the other hand, generates confidence and brio, propelling an organism forward into the fray.

Human Bonding

Like chimpanzees and bonobos, we are highly sociable. Our ape cousins forage, groom, have sex, eat, sit around, play, and sleep in groups. Sometimes chimps wander alone, but usually they spend their time in clusters. Humans also value occasional solitude, but most people—especially in traditional cultures—work, talk, eat, sit around, play, and sleep in company.

Groups can defend themselves against predators. Whereas a large predator might easily pick off a lone target, a swarm of prey animals can offer stiff resistance. Baboons and chimpanzees, for example, have been observed "mobbing" and driving away leopards.[56] Hominid groups probably gained similar advantages.

As we are utterly social beings—like chimpanzees and bonobos—much of our mental evolution has probably been directed toward maximizing relationship benefits. Across cultures, people gossip and grouse about who is doing his or her fair share and who is "cheating" because of laziness, stinginess, or other interests. Studies consistently show that two-thirds of conversation is devoted to social relationships: who is doing what with whom.[57]

Gossip efficiently communicates vital pieces of information about another person's desires, inclinations, and intentions. This is helpful because we cannot always gauge a person's inner life directly, for example, by asking them. Our minds are riddled with self-deception, so we cannot necessarily respond truthfully, even if we try. Researchers view the conscious mind as a "press agent" to the outside world, inflating our moral goodness and talents to ourselves and to others. Stinging remarks may hurt precisely because they pierce the veil of self-deception.[58]

What makes gossip "hot" or "juicy"? It is not really the nature of any particular physical act. Consider an adulterous pornographer with a long and

well-known history of philandering in threesomes and foursomes. How newsworthy is his latest tryst? Who cares? Now consider an upstanding high-school principal caught in the same act. People will talk with morbid glee and palpable delirium. This is "hot" because it explodes the principal's storytelling—about being a good-natured, unthreatening person devoted to the community—and reveals a messier range of sordid, narcissistic feelings. The news shifts our basic assumptions about him. Our ancestors who paid attention, and saw through false advertising, did well. For this reason, personal revelations awaken and quicken our minds.

Paradoxically, all this deception and counterdeception does not really undermine a view of human beings as naturally cooperative. Humans evolved to scrutinize their partners and to guard against cheaters, but to form attachments nonetheless. We are wary but willing collaborators.

Still, because of "kin selection," we collaborate far more readily with close relatives.[59] In practice, reciprocal altruism and kin selection marbled together. Human ancestors living in close proximity would have frequently been genetic relatives. This undoubtedly facilitated cooperation and helped mute intragroup violence.

Human Warfare

If humans are naturally predisposed to wage war, we would expect to find it essentially everywhere. And we do. Archaeologist Lawrence Keeley's influential 1996 book, *War before Civilization*, establishes that "war is universally common and usual."[60] The empirical evidence—from prehistory, history, and contemporary societies—is overwhelming. War and conflict pervade legend and folklore. The earliest recorded incidents in human history—such as Narmer's unification of Egypt around 3100 BC—center on conquest. Since then, world history has unfurled as a series of invasions, civil conflicts, imperial campaigns, insurgencies, military standoffs, and total wars.

In addition, there are eerie resemblances between chimpanzee and human tactics. In general, tribal peoples do not fight pitched battles for control of territory. They lack clear chains of command, and they do not close against enemies in an organized, disciplined manner. They may skirmish from a distance but remain ready to flee from danger. As among chimpanzees, surprise raids produce the deadliest results. Usually, male comrades launch a surprise attack, ambush one or several victims, and return home. In some cases, they massacre their enemies. Military historians call this "the skulking way of war."[61]

Some seek respite from all the Hobbesian brutality by imagining they have found truly peaceful societies. Their hopes have always collapsed. The "Harmless People"—the !Kung San—practice blood feuds and have higher death rates than those found in America's most dangerous cities.[62] The "Gen-

tle Tasaday" of the Philippines was an elaborate hoax.[63] A study of ninety-nine hunter-gatherer bands found that nearly all were presently or recently at war.[64] "Primitive" war deaths almost always exceed death rates even in war-torn states, usually by a wide margin. Tribal men are far more likely to experience combat than citizens of modern states.[65]

War is an unquestionably masculine activity. Even where women are allowed to participate, they do so less than men. Everywhere, it seems, genetically related men defend their communities and their territory.[66]

Psychologists describe the "ingroup-outgroup bias" as universal and ineradicable. These emotional and cognitive predispositions are exactly what biologists would predict for a species with a long history of violence between communities.[67]

CONCLUSION: THE EVOLUTION OF COUPS D'ÉTAT

For clear evolutionary reasons, male chimpanzees, bonobos, and humans compete for dominance, form personal alliances, and collectively defend territory against outsiders. Male gorillas and orangutans are more solitary but still compete with violence and ferocity for females and mating opportunities.

We should acknowledge that much about great ape and human evolution remains unclear. There are ongoing disputes in paleontology, for example, over what the last common ancestor of chimpanzees, bonobos, and humans may have looked like, 5 to 7 million years ago. It is even more difficult to determine what our ancestors of 12 to 14 million years ago looked like, how they moved around, or the nature of their social systems.

But our lack of complete knowledge should not stop us from drawing appropriate conclusions. Playing by the rules of science, we must reject the "blank slate" image of human nature, certainly when it comes to social dominance and intergroup hostilities. This pure environmentalist position is incompatible with evolutionary biology, primatology, cross-cultural findings, and neurochemistry. Instead, we must accept that we come into the world with certain genetic proclivities. These include a yearning for status and power, a tendency to anger when we are disrespected, a desire for friends, a preference for kin, a resistance to being used, cheated, exploited, or ripped off, and a fear and suspicion of strangers. These inclinations derive from millions of years of evolutionary history.

All these preferences and associated emotions—pride, anger, empathy, love, moral outrage, fear, and hatred—swirl together in real-life situations. They do not exist in separate compartments. Befriending high-ranking individuals, for example, promotes our "status" and "friendship" interests.

Often, our emotions push us in different directions, so we must balance between them. If a friend, sexual partner, or family member lets us down, for example, we are miffed. We want to punish the "cheater," to show we are not total pushovers. Unless the infraction is extreme, though, we usually seek to preserve the relationship.

Natural selection undoubtedly encouraged smart balancing. Hominids could not simply let others insult, abuse, neglect, or exploit them: they needed backbone. At the same time, an overweening prickliness probably alienated people. To the extent that strangers, wild animals, or extreme conditions posed an immediate threat, it made sense to set aside personal disputes and work together. The same phenomenon occurs among chimpanzees on a patrolling or raiding party who maintain a silent cohesion and avoid squabbling.

Depending on circumstances, our chimpanzee cousins fight individually, team up in small cliques, or unite as a community. Primatologists call this "segmental flexibility" and find the same trait among humans.[68] An Arab proverb sums up the principle: "Me against my brother; me and my brother against my cousin; me and my brother and my cousin against our common enemy."

In different ways, all great apes exhibit cunning and opportunism to enhance their power and reproductive success. Among male chimpanzees, long-term partnerships dissolve when one chimp forges a new alliance, usually in the quest for higher rank.[69] In addition, dominance struggles sap collective strength. When Figan attacked Humphrey, for example, he necessarily weakened the Kasekela community vis-à-vis neighboring gangs. Either chimp could have been injured and rendered unavailable—at least temporarily—for patrolling, raiding, and fighting. Without Figan and Humphrey, the genocidal war against the Kahama community might have gone differently.

Similar conflicts of interest pervade human history. People are constantly negotiating trade-offs between individual desires, personal alliances, and patriotic solidarity.

State building—the accumulation of political control over large territorial units by centralized elites—has been a primary feature of the last seven millennia. In part, state building has occurred because power-seeking males have conquered others. Separate communities have also come together to fight common enemies, creating larger political units for defensive purposes.[70]

But even when people live in large states, they continue to pursue their own interests and, often, the interests of their friends and families. Conflicts between personal loyalties and state laws fill the Germanic sagas and ancient Greek dramas. Officials in developing nations experience similar pressures: their "own people" routinely expect special treatment.[71] Throughout history, people have readily betrayed their state, nation, or leader in the pursuit of

power for themselves, their families, or their tribes or factions. These betrayals have often taken the form of coups d'état.

Given our evolutionary background, we should be pleasantly surprised that some states are *not* banana republics. But we should also understand that our heads continue to swirl with emotions dating back millions of years. Ambition, or the yearning for status, power, popularity, and significance, continues to shape our daily behavior and life plans. Our "simian will to power" is alive and well.

For this reason, if large numbers of people (say, thousands or tens of thousands) fail to engage in certain power-seeking behaviors over many decades or centuries, we should understand this in light of practical incentive structures rather than "norms" or "values." There are too many instances, throughout history and in the contemporary world, of norms being violated, disregarded, and discarded when incentive structures shift, giving way to a "race to the bottom" in search of profits and power. (One has only to think of the 2008 financial crisis, brought on by scores of bankers who clearly disregarded traditional industry norms of prudence and fiduciary duty.) When people can obtain enormous rewards by pursuing an activity, some will always take advantage of the situation. As more and more people join in, the "norm" against such conduct becomes an airy and outdated precept and is soon forgotten.

So while there is a "norm" against conspiring at a coup d'état within the advanced democracies, it is securely backed by the hard incentive structure created by the rule of law. In the absence of that incentive structure, we have no reason to expect the norm to persist or to effectively constrain behavior.

Chapter Seven

Intoxicating Republican Moments

Altogether, the ancient world was a violent and astonishingly brutal place, with chronic coups, wars of conquest, genocidal campaigns, secessionist rebellions, and tyrannical reigns of terror. Our simian will to power expressed itself all too freely.

And yet, as we discuss in this chapter, giant strides were made toward more humane and orderly political systems regulated by law. First, the republican form of government was born. Second, three republics—Sparta, Athens, and Rome—experienced periods of exceptional order. In fact, they may have been "coup-free states," although we cannot use our fifty-year gauge with any certainty because of the limited and fragmentary nature of ancient historical evidence.

Our theory of the coup-free state would predict that these stable periods should coincide with relatively low levels of governmental corruption, and the evidence supports this prediction. Athenian stability and adherence to law reached a high point during the era of Pericles (a charismatic leading politician from 461 to 429 BC), but these declined following his death, and there was a coup in 411 BC.[1] The Spartan and Roman republics saw the longest stretches of apparent stability, with up to a couple centuries between known coups. Both states were renowned in the ancient world for their incorruptibility—and in both states, this reputation precisely coincided with the era of stability.

What produced these advances in good government? Since the dawn of republicanism itself, a vast number of scholars, commentators, journalists, historians, philosophers, politicians, and others have linked republicanism with "virtue," generally understood as a public-spirited devotion to the common good. Previous chapters have already shown why "virtue" constitutes a poor explanation for the absence of coups and coup attempts over long peri-

ods, and we need not revisit that issue. But it might be helpful to explore just why republicanism and virtue are closely associated.

As an empirical phenomenon, however, virtue is slippery. Politicians in a republic may voice concern for the public welfare, but doing so is frequently in their strategic career interests. (Voters, after all, care about their own interests and elect politicians to serve those interests.) Thus, republics routinely elicit "virtue performances." Even politicians themselves cannot disentangle the strands of patriotic feeling from their own power interests. To address this problem, we can look for situations and environments in which selfless, generous effusions of public spiritedness are clear, palpable, and unmistakable.

As it turns out, many republics—from the ancient world to today—begin in spontaneous street uprisings. We explore why such chaotic, riotous settings are surprisingly conducive to creating constitutional systems. We call such events "intoxicating republican moments" because they tend to inspire extraordinary solidarity, generosity, camaraderie, and communal warmth. In short, they bring out the best in people. Other crises, such as war, also trigger this kind of virtue. We see that methods of classical warfare, especially the phalanx formation, may well have generated "intoxicating republican moments" among the troops and probably contributed to the rise of classical republics. Altogether, we conclude, republics and republican ideals are entirely capable of inspiring communal solidarity and public spirit, but this does not mean that such effusions of generosity continue indefinitely. These heightened moments always ebb as the crisis recedes.

Ancient philosophers like Socrates (or Plato, his student) tried to figure out how to make republican virtue a permanent state of mind so as to eliminate factions and civil strife from city politics. Their efforts show just how difficult and monumental they perceived the task.

MONARCHIES AND REPUBLICS

The distinction between monarchy and republic is fundamental and has been recognized for well over two millennia. Aristotle contrasts "kingly rule" with "political rule," where men take turns governing.[2] "My task from now on," Livy declares after telling the story of the republican revolution in Rome, is to "trace the history in peace and war of a free nation, governed by annually elected officers of state and subject not to the caprice of individual men, but to the overruling authority of law."[3] Machiavelli opens *The Prince*, "All states and dominions that hold or have held sway over men are either republics or principalities."[4]

People define these terms in slightly different ways, of course, but the difference boils down to this. In a monarchy, a single leader exercises su-

preme power for as long as he can and usually passes control down to an heir. This is also known as "dictatorship," "despotism," and "tyranny"; in this book, all these terms are used interchangeably. In a republic, officials exercise limited powers, a class of people holds the right to participate, and leadership positions rotate in accordance with constitutional rules.

Within the category of "republic," there is a basic distinction between "oligarchies" and "democracies." In an oligarchy, an elite minority governs. This might be as small as a council of ten or as large as an assembly that includes perhaps one-third of all adult men. In a democracy, we might say, at least half the adult males wield citizenship and voting rights. Obviously, there is a continuum here, and the exact boundary is debatable. By this definition, Sparta and Rome were oligarchies, and Athens was probably democratic.

In the contemporary world, many countries that call themselves republics are effectively monarchies, and vice versa. Kim Jong-un rules the People's Republic of North Korea as dictator. Queen Elizabeth II, on the other hand, does not govern the United Kingdom, which functions as a parliamentary republic.

Which came first, monarchy or republic? This is an interesting question, but an impossible one to resolve. Both forms of government have long roots in human history (and undoubtedly prehistory).

We might be tempted to assume that monarchy is primordial. The vast majority of early states, in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China, were monarchical. The ethnographic record is full of complex "chiefdoms," where one man holds lifelong sway.

But as we saw in the last chapter, many human ancestors probably lived in small, relatively egalitarian bands, without formal "headmen." These foraging bands can plausibly be described as miniscule, highly informal republics.

Luckily, we needn't answer all the questions of prehistory. For our purposes, it is enough to note that early civilizations were mostly monarchical. The evidence from recent millennia suggests that politics was a nearly continuous battle for the throne. And even when republics appeared, political life almost always remained simian, violent, and unstable.[5]

ANCIENT COUP-FREE STATES?

Was Sparta, Athens, or Rome, in our terms, a "coup-free state"? We simply do not know enough to make a sensible case either way. By definition, a coup-free state requires fifty continuous years without a single "coup event." A coup event, we recall, can be a successful coup, an executive coup, or a serious coup attempt. If one hundred armed men (or even fifty or fifteen, in

smaller states) storm the citadels of power and make a serious, highly plausible effort to seize control of the state, that counts as a "coup attempt," even if it is suppressed within an hour. Successful coups are difficult to conceal because the government changes hands. But coup attempts can be quietly defeated. Sometimes, the perpetrators and the government may share an interest in keeping the insurrection secret or in downplaying its seriousness. The perpetrators hope to minimize their punishment, and the government may wish to avoid advertising its precarious position. Given our fragmented, incomplete picture of ancient history, it is impossible to conclude with any confidence that such a coup attempt did not occur during certain slices of time.

In modern states, historical evidence is far more abundant, detailed, and reliable. This allows us to reach reasonable conclusions that particular periods passed without coups or serious coup attempts. There is a vast difference, for example, between our knowledge of Great Britain in the nineteenth century and our grasp of events anywhere during the fourth century BC. At best, one or two ancient historians narrate the main events within a state, and only during certain intervals. They cannot provide the fine-grained picture we have of recent centuries. Ancient evidence is far too fragmented to use our fifty-year gauge with any confidence or precision.

Still, there are tantalizing suggestions that Sparta, Athens, Rome, or all three may have been coup-free. By taking a closer look, we can try to determine just how stable they were and for how long. In addition, we can watch for any broad similarities between these states.

Sparta

Greeks saw Sparta as the world's most orderly state. Thucydides says that after the Spartans adopted their oligarchic republican constitution (usually traced to about 800 BC), they enjoyed more than four hundred years under "the same system of government" and that "the country has never been ruled by tyrants."[6] A character in Herodotus says the Spartans have "taken the utmost care" to avoid tyranny.[7] According to Polybius, the Spartans preserved their liberty "over a longer period than for any other people of whom we have records."[8] Apollo himself, through his oracle at Delphi, apparently endorsed the Spartan constitution.[9] But just how divinely stable was Sparta?

Overall, Spartan continuity is impressive. During the classical era, only two unambiguous coup events were recorded: a slave rebellion in 464 BC and further slave revolts in 370 BC.[10] In 242 BC, there was an executive coup, followed by a countercoup the following year and further coups in 227 and 207 BC.[11] During the next century, Sparta was swallowed by the Roman Empire.

Even during their potentially stable periods, though, Spartans faced an ever-present threat of slave revolt. A class of slaves (known as Helots) vastly outnumbered the citizenry by as much as ten to one. Spartans acquired these slaves when they conquered the Messenians, a neighboring people. Aristotle says the Helots were constantly waiting for the right opportunity to ambush their masters.[12]

This danger undoubtedly shaped Sparta's distinctive habits and institutions. First of all, Spartans were fanatically devoted to military training. The "equals" (i.e., the citizens) were not allowed to work the fields or develop a trade. Also, they were renowned for sobriety. In Sparta, no holiday was set aside for drinking. (A predictable mass drunkenness of Spartan citizens might have encouraged the Helots to slaughter their masters, after all.) Public schools, coarse food in common dining halls, and simple clothing minimized class differences and reinforced Spartan solidarity.[13]

From time to time, the Helots did rebel. There was a revolt in 682 BC, although it is unclear whether this was an attempt to seize power or to secede from the Spartan state.[14] In 464 BC, a tremendous earthquake hit Sparta, leveling almost every house in the city. Immediately, Helots from the surrounding countryside began rushing toward the city, seeking to massacre the Spartans once and for all. This appears to be a coup attempt. When an emergency trumpet sounded, all available Spartans ran to the parade ground with their arms. The Helots killed about three hundred Spartans in one engagement, but they eventually retreated to a mountain in nearby Messenia and remained there for several years before leaving the region under a truce.[15]

In addition to these revolts, we also know of several intrigues and conspiracies by leading Spartans, including by Sparta's constitutional "kings" and leading military commanders. Apparently, none rose to the level of an outright coup attempt. At most, they involved plots, rather than overt military actions, to seize power.[16]

During the fourth century BC, Aristotle censured the increasing corruption of Spartan politicians.[17] Once renowned for stability and honest government, Sparta was losing both, at the same time.

Athens

Early classical Athens was highly unstable. Athenians witnessed a coup attempt in 630 BC, a mass uprising in 594, a coup in 580, coups and countercoups in 561 and 556, a coup in 546, and a democratic revolution in 507 BC.[18]

After 507 BC, however, democracy proved sturdy. We know of one instance of political violence in 461 BC—the possible assassination of Ephialtes, a leading democratic politician.[19] The next fifty years, reportedly, saw

no political bloodshed.[20] A character in Aristophanes's play *The Wasps*, produced in 422 BC, claims the word "tyranny" hasn't been used for fifty years.[21] Also at this time, a writer who has been called the "Old Oligarch" suggested his city was revolution-proof: "I say that it is impossible for affairs at Athens to be conducted otherwise than they are now, except that it is possible to add something or subtract something. Major change is impossible, so that the democracy cannot be dismantled."[22]

Dismantled it was, though, by the oligarchic coup of 411 BC. This regime lasted four months, until an assembly of several thousand—gathered at the usual spot, the Pnyx—abolished the oligarchy and reinstated democracy. After winning the Peloponnesian War in 404, the Spartan commander Lysander imposed an oligarchy of "Thirty Tyrants" on Athens. Suspicious of Lysander, though, rival Spartan leaders encouraged Athenian democrats to mount a counterrevolution in 403.[23]

From 403 until 338 BC, when the Kingdom of Macedonia incorporated Athens, the evidence for stability is even stronger. The democratic victors of 403 instituted a "truth and reconciliation" process: in exchange for a formal accounting of their actions, the "Thirty" received immunity from prosecution. Apparently, this forbearance may have ushered in sixty-five years of stability. Classical scholars write that democracy persisted "without any serious challenge,"[24] with "no significant conflicts between democrats and oligarchs,[25] and "no suspicion of an oligarchic coup."[26]

Rome

We have few sources on Roman politics before the first century BC. One is Livy, who lived from about 59 BC to AD 17. Livy's canvas is vast; his work is titled *The History of Rome from Its Foundation*. Of this massive work, we have books covering the periods from 751 to 292 BC and 222 to 167 BC, as well as a few scattered fragments from the other 107 books, which have been lost.[27]

Livy's account of early Rome reads like the history of any other turbulent state. We find clear-cut coups, revolutions, and coup attempts in 580, 530, 510, 460, 450, and 342 BC, with coup plots, suspicions, and episodes of serious tension in 439, 419, 385–384, 367, and 325 BC.[28]

Then from 292 to 222 BC, there is a break; these books have been lost. When we pick up the story again in 222, the Roman republic is rolling along smoothly. Consuls, tribunes, and other officials are elected like clockwork; temporary dictators are chosen in emergencies. ("Dictators" were officials granted plenary powers for limited terms, such as six months, usually during war.) From 222 until 167 BC, Rome appears to function as a coup-free state. Only a few events come anywhere near a coup attempt, and none rise to that level: the people's assembly was forcibly disrupted on one occasion in 212

BC but the perpetrators were quickly arrested and exiled[29] ; there was momentary popular anger over an edict in 210[30] ; army mutinies erupted in Spain and Macedonia in 206 and 199[31] ; and in 186 BC, a consul alleged that the cult of Bacchus aimed at "supreme power in the state"—but cult members do not appear to have contemplated a coup.[32]

The other main source is Polybius, an earlier historian who lived from approximately 200 to 118 BC. In *The Histories*, Polybius tells the story of Rome during a period also covered by Livy: from the beginning of the Second Punic War in 220 BC through Roman control of the entire Greek world in 167 BC. Like Livy, Polybius reports no Roman coup events during this era. This evidence may be more compelling, in fact, because much of Polybius's narrative takes place during his own lifetime. (If a coup or coup attempt occurred in Rome, in other words, we might assume that Polybius would have heard about it and probably would have included the episode in his history.)

Even more significant, however, is Polybius's contribution as a theorist. He pauses from historical narrative for one book to explore the wondrous stability of the Roman constitution. Normally, he argues, states are subject to an endless cycle of violent revolution. (He presents the cycle as moving in a predetermined order, from kingship, to tyranny, to aristocracy, to oligarchy, to democracy, to mob rule, and eventually back to kingship.)

Spartans broke the cycle first. They created a distinctive constitution, which remained "for a long while in a state of equilibrium" and eliminated "civil discord and strife." Polybius contrasts Spartans with Cretans, who "are involved in frequent seditions, public and private, murders, massacres and civil wars." He also notes that Spartan council members "could be relied upon at all times to take the side of justice."[33]

The Athenians never achieved Spartan longevity, says Polybius, but they did experience "periods of unclouded tranquility" before they "gratuitously and senselessly suffered complete breakdown."[34]

The Romans came next and, through trial and error, created "the best of all existing constitutions," which had "arrived at its best and most perfect form" at the time of the Hannibalic War against Carthage in 220 BC.[35] He describes the powers of the annually elected consuls, the Senate, and the popular assembly, emphasizing the balance between them.

Roman government was not just stable but also distinctly less corrupt than all other states.

> [T]o the Romans nothing is more disgraceful than to receive bribes or to seek gain by improper means. Just as they wholeheartedly approve the acquisition of money if the methods are reputable, so they condemn it absolutely if the sources are forbidden. An illustration of this is the fact that among the Cartha-

> ginians bribery is openly practiced by candidates for office, whereas at Rome it is a capital offense.[36]

Among Polybius's fellow Greeks, "men who hold public office cannot be trusted with the safe-keeping of so much as a single talent, even if they have ten accountants and as many seals and twice as many witnesses, whereas among the Romans their magistrates handle large sums of money and scrupulously perform their duty because they have given their word on oath."[37] (By Polybius's time, we recall, Sparta had already lost its reputation for honest, virtuous government.) He sums up: "Among other nations it is a rare phenomenon to find a man who keeps his hands off public funds and whose record is clean in this respect, while among the Romans it is quite the exception to find a man who has been detected in such conduct."[38]

After 99 BC, the republic experienced incessant coups, coup attempts, conspiracies, executive coups, and civil wars, until it permanently gave way to imperial monarchy. Still, the Roman republic might have been coup-free for up to 243 years, and we have strong reasons to believe it was unusually stable from 222 to 167 BC.

The evidence on the possible ancient coup-free states is fully consistent with the argument developed earlier in the book. The Spartan and Roman republics appear to have developed stronger rule-of-law institutions with lower corruption rates than any of their contemporaries. When the rule of law flourished in both states, they saw few if any coups. Some might be tempted to explain this by invoking the virtue of Roman and Spartan citizens, and this book has made its position on that issue quite clear. At the same time, it is absolutely true that republics and republican ideals can summon virtuous energies and patriotic passions. Let's find out when and how that happens.

VIRTUE AND THE REPUBLIC

Virtue is not just about republican government. Confucius, who lived thousands of miles from any known republics, built an entire political theory, philosophy of life, and religious cult from the premise that virtue created happiness for the individual, the family, and the state.

Virtue theory, as applied to politics, is compelling because of its close relationship to simple and probably irrefutable propositions. Character matters, and the character and decisions of political leaders affect the happiness and well-being of society. Historians and biographers have long illuminated how the habits and temperaments of individual leaders shape the course of events. Human temperaments and capabilities differ widely, and while some leaders govern wisely, others prove disastrous. Moreover, character can be

acquired. Put all these facts together, and it appears that the key to good government is a character-building education.

Since the dawn of republican government, candidates for office have presented themselves as virtuous, public-spirited citizens, interested in the common good. In early republics, people routinely feared that a leader would abuse his powers and establish a tyranny. Republican folk heroes like Cincinnatus were frugal and modest because extravagance and grandeur hinted at monarchical ambitions.

Livy recounts a telling episode from the early years of the Roman republic. Suspicions flew through the commons that the consul Publius Valerius was "aiming at the monarchy." (There were always two consuls at a time, and together they wielded executive authority.) There were two grounds for the rumors. First, Valerius had taken no steps to replace Brutus, the other consul, who had recently been killed in battle. Second, Valerius was building a large house on top of a hill, which could become a fortress. In response, Valerius called a mass meeting. Mounting the platform, Valerius ordered his *lectors* to lower their rods. As Livy comments, this gesture was taken as an admission that the people ruled rather than the consul. Valerius extolled his dead colleague and went on to declare, "No house of mine shall threaten your liberties . . . I'll build my house on the level—more, I'll build it at the very base of the hill, so that you can live above me and keep a wary eye on the fellow-citizen you mistrust." Valerius followed through and acquired the name "Publicola," or "People's Friend."[39]

Stories like this, however, cannot help us adjudicate between "republican virtue" and "republican structure" as explanatory frameworks. We cannot tell if Valerius was as selfless as his rhetoric or if he was just a canny politician. We must dig deeper to learn how and under what circumstances "republican virtue" constitutes a palpable and unmistakable reality.

INTOXICATING REPUBLICAN MOMENTS

Republican virtue is best understood as a collective spiritual experience. Republicanism can lift groups and even entire communities to sublime heights of fellowship, generosity, and patriotism, but such exhilarating times are always temporary.

In this section, we observe the republican passion in three different contexts: surging mob action; soldierly camaraderie; and the attempt by Plato, in *The Republic*, to capture and institutionalize the ephemeral republican spirit.

Mob Action

Many republics begin in spontaneous mob uprisings. Take, for example, our only account of the republican revolution in Rome—which was written by

Livy several centuries after the fact. It probably contains fanciful and inaccurate elements, but it is all we have to work with.

Tarquinius Superbus—"Tarquin the Proud"—was king of Rome. In 510 BC, Tarquin's son Sextus raped a noblewoman named Lucretia. Tearfully, Lucretia told her father, husband, and husband's friend Brutus what had happened. In shame, she plunged a knife into her body. Brutus drew out the bloody blade and supposedly swore, "I will pursue Lucius Tarquinius the Proud, his wicked wife, and all his children, and never again will I let them or any other man be King in Rome."

As Lucretia's body was carried through the streets, horror-struck crowds converged. Brutus urged them to "take up arms against the tyrants who had dared to treat them as a vanquished enemy." He led a vast mob into the Forum, where he spoke in sharp, vivid terms about Tarquin's brutality. "The populace took fire," reports Livy. The mob expelled Tarquin and his sons, then elected two consuls—Brutus and Lucretia's husband—to one-year terms.[40] The Roman republic was under way.

To the extent that we credit this account, we should notice that Brutus quite plainly risked his life. He could not have known in advance that the crowd would erupt at all, much less actually prevail. Had his speech fizzled, Tarquin surely would have executed him. Moreover, those who initially gathered around Brutus were going out on a precarious limb as well.

In 507 BC, a leading Athenian politician—who had previously forced a democratically minded opponent named Cleisthenes into exile—seized the Acropolis with a small contingent of Spartan soldiers. A boisterous and resentful mob gathered and blockaded them all inside. After three days, the Spartans were allowed to leave. Cleisthenes returned from exile and instituted a popular republic.[41]

Ever since these early exemplars, mobs have continued to build republics. We find spontaneous mobs toppling dictators in medieval Venice and Florence, London in 1642, Paris in 1789 and 1848, Mexico City in 1910, Berlin in 1918, Manila in 1986, Bucharest in 1989, Jakarta in 1998, Belgrade in 2000, and Tunis and Cairo in 2011, to name just a few examples.

The relationship between republicanism and mob rule is surprisingly intimate. In ancient city-states, people who inspired, galvanized, or guided the storm of riot found themselves impromptu commanders of a fleeting, undisciplined, but momentarily unstoppable army.

This may not sound like a promising basis for constitutional government. Consider, though, how the line between "mob" and "assembly" could blur. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates talks of political assemblies, in which crowds of men roar their approval or blame with boisterous shouting and clapping, impressionable young men get "swept away" and "borne by the flood" of collective emotion, and "the rocks and the very place surrounding them echo and redouble the uproar."[42]

In a revolution, people take to the streets and, by the overwhelming force of sheer numbers, sweep into fortified government compounds. When they do, the only possible "security" is the sympathy of the crowd. Often—perhaps always—revolutions succeed when mob energies intimidate or coax segments of the security forces into stepping aside or, even better, joining in. This was the critical ingredient in the Eastern European revolutions of 1989, the Moscow countercoup led by Boris Yeltsin in 1991, the Serbian revolution against Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, and the 2011 and 2013 Tahrir Square demonstrations in Egypt. Lenin and Leon Trotsky—two accomplished revolutionaries—thought this part was essential for any revolution to succeed.[43] A study of fifteen uprisings, some successful and some not, confirms the critical role of security forces.[44]

When a chaotic mob takes control, the moment is surprisingly pregnant with a system based on rules, or in other words, a republic. Why? This is the only outcome that matches the shared grievances and interests behind revolutionary action. People pouring into the streets—whether they are Romans in 510 BC, Eastern Europeans in 1989, or Middle Easterners during the Arab Spring—initially face a terrible crackdown. But their angers, fears, and resentments, often built up over many years, propel them forward despite the danger. If they gain momentum and the revolution tips in their favor, they experience a collective euphoria that comes from surviving the danger, destroying a hated regime, and opening the door to a better future. "Now's the time," went an excited chant in Wenceslas Square, as hundreds of thousands of Czechs gathered to oppose the regime during the fall of 1989. Victories in East Berlin, Budapest, and Prague brought explosions of mass joy.[45] "Revolutions change people, at least for a little while," commented one witness. "They become nicer to each other, more thoughtful, more imaginative, for these are moments of collective creation."[46] The crowd may not have an exact blueprint for postrevolutionary governance, but it seeks a definitive break from the past. Anyone who appears poised to step into an old tyrant's shoes immediately incurs the crowd's wrath—as Egon Krenz, Erich Honecker's handpicked successor in East Germany, found out. To curry favor with revolutionary mobs, potential new leaders must communicate entirely new methods of governance. To find popularity, these methods must create protections against the old abuses and should probably allow crowd members some political role, thereby transforming them from despised rabble into citizens who must be courted.

"Group emotions" ignite mob action when they reflect truly collective grievances or interests. The field of "crowd psychology" shows that people sometimes do things in crowds they would not do alone; it does not show that people in chaotic group settings simply forget their individual interests.[47] After all, crowd members usually have an alternative—they can go home. And they often do. Many revolutions play out over days or weeks in which

street turnout ebbs and flows. In the language of economics, spontaneous mob formation is well suited for maximizing crowd utilities.

It is precisely the undisciplined and unpredictable nature of surging mob action that helps produce a republican constitution. If the crowd were contained, regimented, and obedient, a new leader could simply gather a few key supporters, instigate a coup d'état, and assume the despotic mantle. But since the mob does not predictably obey anyone and instead gathers, threatens, and overruns under the spontaneous play of group emotions, it can resist leaders' self-interested shenanigans.

The outcome is not always republican, of course. A popular Genoese rising in 1257, for example, handed power to Guglielmo Boccanegra. Yuan Shikai assumed a brief dictatorship in China after the 1911 Xinhai Revolution. But many of the world's republics—from classical times to the present—have begun in mob action.

Spontaneous mob uprisings require a certain trust and collective spirit to get rolling. Most people need numerical cover and must sense that their compatriots are willing to bear risks to make the revolution succeed. If they prevail, people celebrate in a shared euphoria.

For all these reasons, republican revolutions always glow in collective memory.

Soldierly Camaraderie

Aside from the sheer fact of their beginning in spontaneous mob uprisings, there is a second and independent reason to suspect that the classical republics arose during—and because of—heightened moments of fellowship. This involves the likely role of soldiers, former soldiers, and especially war veterans.

Ancient republics have been linked to a certain method of warfare, the phalanx formation. Classical scholars have waged long battles over the political impact and importance of the phalanx.[48] Because of limited evidence, this project necessarily remains educated guesswork.

The phalanx was a tight formation of well-trained, highly disciplined, and heavily armored hoplite troops. In this formation, hoplites stood shoulder to shoulder, with round shields in their left hands and spears couched between their right elbows and ribs. They were usually eight rows deep, forming a square or rectangle. Upon a signal, the entire phalanx ran straight into enemy lines. "Once the charge is launched," says Polybius, "these rear ranks by the sheer pressure of their bodily weight greatly increase its momentum and make it impossible for the foremost ranks to face about."[49] As two phalanxes collided, the momentum of the back rows pushed the front-row fighters forward. Desperate, bloody chaos erupted, as each side tried to hack a breach in the other. A breach could lead to a "breaking," in which overwhelmed

fighters struggled back from the killing zone, often triggering a panic throughout their army. This was disastrous. When men turned away, they could be chased down and slaughtered with ease.[50]

There are two main links between the phalanx and the republic: timing and demographics. As to timing, true phalanx warfare has been traced to Argos in about 670 BC, although some military historians argue that "proto-phalanx" methods appear in the *Iliad*, composed around 800 BC.[51] Phalanx methods proved highly effective and spread rapidly. By 600 BC, most Greek cities had adopted them; they appeared in Rome by 540. In other words, phalanx warfare may have appeared shortly before many classical city-states became republics.[52]

Demographically, the hoplite class was the citizen class. To be a hoplite, a man required expensive armor, as well as leisure time for military drills and physical conditioning. Paupers were excluded, but nobles on horseback no longer ruled the battlefield, as they had in the previous age. Aristotle tells us that after the fall of the kings, political power was held by aristocratic cavalries, but "as cities increased in size and those with [heavy] arms provided relatively more strength, more persons shared in the regime."[53]

We have additional reasons to consider hoplites likely republican ringleaders. For one, they were obviously well equipped to challenge a tyrant by force. Surely the most potent mobs were men who had already trained, marched, and fought together in the sheer chaos of battle. In Livy's account, when Brutus and his comrades toppled King Tarquin, they had just come from a long siege against the Rutuli. As Tarquin fled the city, Brutus secured the revolution by returning to the army and winning its support.

In addition, we should consider the psychological demands and social consequences of phalanx warfare. The experience of fighting as a phalanx, we might think, led naturally to republican ideas.

Here's why. Phalanx warfare required highly counterintuitive, counterinstinctual behavior.[54] As we saw in the previous chapter, tribal warriors fight in guerrilla-style raids and skirmishes. They launch surprise attacks, kill enemies, and retreat. They do not, in general, fight pitched battles between massed regiments. (Even when battles occur, they tend to be largely symbolic affairs in which warriors advance and retreat haphazardly and launch weapons from safe distances.)

Tribal tactics have an obvious rationale: the human instinct for self-preservation. Even brave men do not readily place themselves in mortal danger. Small communities must preserve their fighters, moreover, not gamble them away in single confrontations.

But large-scale states developed—and probably required—new techniques of military discipline. Warlords who led masses of troops in steady, coordinated attacks could seize rich agricultural lands and cities. Established

states could punish soldiers who refused to advance directly against enemy lines.[55]

Still, pushing men into the horror of hand-to-hand combat is never easy. When ancient armies came within sight of each other, battle did not commence immediately or automatically. Wariness and trepidation predominated.

Some of our best evidence is from poetry. While we cannot take their words as literal truth, bards like Homer probably tried to tell stories of battle that sounded credible and realistic to audiences.

In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon leads by hectoring, chastising, and goading the commanders of his massive coalition. Before one engagement, he sees Odysseus standing with his troops, still waiting for a signal to attack. "You there . . . why are you cowering here, skulking out of range?"[56] Agamemnon taunts men for "cringing" and unmanly conduct as segments of his army silently close in against the Trojan line. "At last," says Homer, "the armies clashed at one strategic point," unleashing "the cries and crash of war."[57]

To close aggressively against the enemy, soldiers must perceive that their companions are equally ready to fight. It would be silly and suicidal for a lone warrior, however heroic, to run into enemy lines. Charging together requires trust.

At the same time, fighting side by side builds trust. Men who experience combat together form intense and durable bonds. This is a supercliché but accurate nonetheless. Men fight for their buddies, and when they see each other in danger, many take extreme risks. Others are touched and humbled and redouble their own readiness to die for friends. Combat units, especially on long military campaigns, fuse into "bands of brothers."

J. Glenn Gray received a doctorate in philosophy and a draft notice on the same day in 1941. "As any commander knows," he later wrote, "an hour or two of combat can do more to weld a unit together than can months of intensive training."[58] Fusion leads to self-sacrifice. "Numberless soldiers have died, more or less willingly, not for country or honor or religious faith or for any other abstract good, but because they realized that by fleeing their post and rescuing themselves, they would expose their companions to greater danger."[59]

In part, comrades in arms form tight bonds because they experience the worst and most exhilarating moments of their lives together. Extreme danger alters consciousness, often slowing down the perception of time. Army Ranger Specialist Shawn Nelson described his experiences during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu to journalist Mark Bowden. Constantly near death, Nelson felt "completely alive," for "moment after moment after moment, for three hours or more." Nelson likened it to surfing inside the tube of a wave—"a state of complete mental and physical awareness."[60]

These experiences have an ancient heritage. In Homer's account of the Trojan War, men become heroes when a god picks them out and favors them with a burst of furious confidence. This is how Diomedes, for example, makes his name.

> Then Pallas Athena granted Tydeus' son Diomedes
> strength and daring—so the fighter would shine forth
> and tower over the Argives and win himself great glory.
> She set the man ablaze, his shield and helmet flaming . . .
> drove him into the center where the masses struggled on.[61]

Such moods are infectious. Sometimes, a wave of energy and inspiration surges through an entire army.

> And Zeus that instant launched above the field
> the most portentous of all birds, an eagle,
> pinning in his talons a tender fawn.
> He dropped it near the beautiful altar of Zeus
> Where the Akhaians made their offerings
> to Zeus of Omens: and beholding this,
> knowing the eagle had come down from Zeus,
> they flung themselves again upon the Trojans,
> with joy renewed in battle.[62]

Amidst the horror and terror, combat lifts men out of ordinary consciousness. Afterward, the only people who can understand are fellow veterans.

It was difficult to send an army out on campaign without generating new loyalties. This was especially true when all the fighting men of a city combined in a single phalanx. Such men all hailed from the same place and spoke the same language. The front line may have been most critical, but every man's job was essential. The phalanx formation created a uniform standard for the appearance, weaponry, and role of a hoplite soldier, breathing a rough egalitarianism into city armies. When the phalanx gained confidence, men saw and felt their comrades' readiness to plunge forward against the enemy. Paradoxically, this aggressive spirit made them all safer and more likely to win a victory.

As the cauldron of battle welded a phalanx together, unit solidarity necessarily overshadowed any prior loyalties, such as to kin or political chieftains. When men returned from campaign, two things would have been obvious. First, if the unit acted together, no one at home could stop it. The phalanx was simply the strongest force in the city. Second, soldierly camaraderie offered a stark contrast to fear-driven obedience and invidious hierarchy. Men who had previously been mere tradesmen or farmers were now seasoned warriors. Especially with their buddies at their backs, they could no longer be easily intimidated.

It was a natural step to consider whether they might govern collectively, especially if they heard about men like them ruling in other cities. Obviously, not all military revolts are republican; many commanders have mobilized troop loyalties to capture a throne. But extraordinary moments of camaraderie were ripe for republican experiments, wherein all soldier-citizens would exercise an equal vote.

If republics were born in military fellowship, we might expect republican armies to enjoy a vibrant esprit de corps. In fact, a chorus of Greek commentators makes this very point. Because each citizen-soldier had a stake in the outcome, in their view, republican armies were more effective on the battlefield than the armies of kings.[63]

Plato's *Republic*: Institutionalizing the Republican Spirit

Aside from the evidence on street revolutions and soldiers, ancient philosophy also illustrates the manifold connections between a heightened collective spirit and the republican form of government.

Socrates, for example, was an apostle of republican virtue. Aside from his philosophical activities, he was an Athenian hoplite who showed toughness and bravery on campaign. With his broad, flat nose, bulging eyes, and paunch, Socrates walked barefoot over ice and snow and, even in the midst of battle, maintained his "lofty strut and sideways glance."[64] Xenophon, one of his students, describes him as unstintingly generous and attentive to others.[65] Socrates created a cult of intellectual inquiry and connected this work with personal virtue. The philosophical life, he taught, allowed people to rise above small-minded pursuits and strive for "the good."[66] For Socrates, this virtue was essential for a republic.

Plato, another student of Socrates, wrote many dialogues starring his teacher. Academics ponder the relationship between Socrates the character and Socrates the man, but we needn't concern ourselves with that debate. Teacher, student, or some combination thereof developed the theories.

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates proposes bold ideas about how the ruling citizens in a republic should live. He begins by acknowledging the endemic problem of factions. "Have we any greater evil for a city than what splits it and makes it many instead of one?" he asks. "Or a greater good than what binds it together and makes it one?"

"No, we don't," says Glaucon.

A few passages later, Socrates addresses the kinship divisions that divide regimes. In most cities, he asks Glaucon, would a ruling citizen address "one of his fellow rulers as his kin and another as an outsider?"

"Many do so," Glaucon replies.

"Doesn't he hold the one who is his kin to be his own, and speak of him as such, while the outsider he does not hold to be his own?"

"That's what he does."

Socrates contrasts the usual state with the ideal city, governed by "guardians," which he and his interlocutors sketch in conversation. "What about your guardians?" he asks. "Would any one of them be in the habit of holding one of his fellow guardians to be an outsider or address him as such?"

"Not at all," says Glaucon. "With everyone he happens to meet, he'll hold that he's meeting a brother, or a sister, or a father, or a mother, or a son, or a daughter or their descendants or ancestors."

Socrates abolishes blood ties in the guardian class. The guardians are to share women and children, abstain from holding private property, and change their beliefs about kinship. As a result, they fuse together in unity.

Remarkably, Socrates even suggests this would create, in our terms, a coup-free state. "Then will the men," he asks, "as a result of the laws, live in peace with one another in all respects?"

"Very much so," says Glaucon.

"Since they are free from faction among themselves, there won't ever be any danger that the rest of the city will split into factions against these guardians or one another."

"Surely not."

Socrates tries to routinize and perpetuate a state of intense bonding. His portrait of the guardians' lives: "With one conviction about what's their own, straining toward the same thing, to the limit of the possible, they are affected alike by pain and pleasure."[67]

Quite plainly, Socrates delivers a spiritual message. By coming to love rational argument and debate as the highest pleasure in life, he argues, the ruling philosophers transcend ordinary desires and ambitions. He compares philosophy to emerging from a cave. Normally, the denizens of a city are like people sitting inside a cave, mesmerized by shadows and ephemera. A philosopher steps into the brilliant sunlight of rational inquiry. "And thus," Socrates declares, "the city will be governed by us and by you in a state of waking, not in a dream as the many cities nowadays are governed by men who fight over shadows with one another and form factions for the sake of ruling, as though it were some great good."[68]

In essence, Socrates's proposal for creating civic harmony is to educate a class of philosopher-kings who share everything in common, avoid family bonds, shed their ambitions for power and status, and devote themselves to rational inquiry and "the good." This is quite a project. Evidently, Socrates himself recognized that building stability through virtue is no easy task.

THE LIMITS OF VIRTUE

Socrates sketches laws and institutions designed to perpetuate a state of heightened generosity, patriotism, and total dedication to the common good, but history and experience teach that such moments are temporary. Usually, they require an imminent crisis or danger, such as revolution, war, or natural disaster.

As a vast Persian army neared in 478 BC, for example, the people of Athens fled to the nearby island of Salamis, leaving the Persians to ransack an empty city. During this time of hardship, Athenians came together, and their political conflicts momentarily subsided.[69] We have seen outpourings of mass fellowship in modern times, such as during the 1940–1941 London Blitz and in New York City following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

In fact, people bond as they confront all kinds of difficult circumstances. French mountaineers, for example, begin addressing each other with the informal *tu* rather than the formal *vous* when they reach a certain height.[70] As Livy notes, "[S]hared danger is the strongest of bonds; it will keep men united in spite of mutual dislike and suspicion."[71]

But when the crisis passes, things return to normal, and people go back to pursuing narrower interests. This is exactly what we should expect, of course, from animals with a simian will to power.

Despite his firestorm of ideas, Socrates may not provide the best roadmap to a faction-free, peaceful republic. For that, Plato's more prosaic student Aristotle may have had the right instincts. Aristotle does not reengineer human motives or dwell in sublime meditation. Instead, he considers "the mean element in every human being" and argues that republican officials "rule justly" when "others have authority over the audits."[72]

In other words, Aristotle favored a "republican structure" alternative to Socrates's "republican virtue" approach. Ever mindful of practical solutions, Aristotle endorsed major policies instituted by Cleisthenes, the leader who instituted Athenian democracy in 507 BC. (And it was this system that may have persisted without coups until the oligarchic revolution of 411 BC, ninety-six years later.) These Cleisthenian policies directly targeted kinship-based factions.

Generally speaking, the Greeks closely associated coups and factional loyalties. They used the same word, *stasis*, to mean both "faction" and "revolution." Similarly, *hetaireiai* were groups of drinking friends, while a *hetairikon* was a group conspiring at regime change. *Synomosiai* meant both "sworn brotherhoods" and "conspiracies."[73]

Following the democratic revolution of 507 BC, Cleisthenes took decisive measures to curtail kinship-based factions. He divided the city into thirty jurisdictions, called "demes." He fostered deme-based solidarity by forcing men to take the name of their deme rather than their father's name. Then, he

invented ten new "tribes," each of which included one deme from the hill areas of the city, one from the plain, and one from the coast. Despite the thoroughly arbitrary and artificial nature of these "tribes," they each developed a group spirit by competing in athletic and musical contests and by producing regiments for the army.[74]

Aristotle recommends Cleisthenes's measures as helpful for new democracies: "[O]ther and more numerous tribes and clans are to be created, private rites incorporated into a few common rites, and everything devised so that all are mixed together to the greatest possible extent, and their previous familiar associations broken up."[75] The Cleisthenes-Aristotle recipe for domestic peace, in other words, is to reshuffle a city like a deck of cards and replace permanent kin bonds with looser, more flexible, and more numerous civic bonds.

And that is essentially what rule-of-law states have been doing ever since.

III

The International Arena

Chapter Eight

Self-Interest, Stupidity, and Confusion

Do coups, or their absence, matter in international relations? This is the question we ask in the last section of the book. If there is a fundamental distinction between coup-prone and coup-free states, we might think, perhaps these two basic types exhibit distinctive approaches to foreign policy.

Let's look again at the map of today's coup-free zone, covering the period 1961–2010, at the beginning of the book. Prospects for war between any two black, coup-free states appear remote, to say the least. The world contains many fault lines where tensions may easily erupt into military confrontation, but none of them run through the coup-free zone.

All the European coup-free states are NATO members, except for Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, and Ireland, which are officially neutral. Canada is also part of NATO; Australia and New Zealand are close U.S. allies and members of the Commonwealth. Japan has a separate security agreement with the United States, which includes the continuing presence of American troops. Israel and South Africa have been aligned with the United States for decades. U.S.-Mexican relations were problematic for a long time after the U.S.-Mexican War, but despite immigration-related tensions, the relationship has blossomed in recent decades. The Reagan administration, Colonel Oliver North in particular, was annoyed with Costa Rica during the mid-1980s but never came close to invading.

A war between any two of these states today seems about as implausible as a coup d'état anywhere in the coup-free zone. The idea that the United States could go to war with Canada is absurd. The same could be said for a war between Sweden and Norway, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, Switzerland and Austria, or Australia and New Zealand.

But why is this? Historically speaking, this is not the usual situation between neighboring states.

Perhaps the peace we perceive within the coup-free zone has nothing to do with stability per se. Maybe these states enjoy peaceable relations because all or most of them are democracies. The theory of "democratic peace," after all, is a well-established perspective in international relations and has found strong confirmation in quantitative studies.

But the "democratic peace" has proven much stronger as a finding than a model. Many theorists agree that democracies do not fight each other, at least very often, but they do not agree on why. Causal hypotheses float through the literature, but no clear and persuasive model has emerged.

Moreover, we can't be sure exactly what is creating the peace. Is it "democracy"? All democracies are necessarily republics—so is it actually a "republican peace"? Some republics become coup-free states—so is it a "coup-free peace"? Because of our overlapping categories, it is difficult to determine just which variable is responsible.

The best way forward is probably to back up and observe the big picture. Do coups impact a state's foreign policy? If so, their absence surely matters as well. If we can draw any general conclusions regarding the behavior of coup-prone and coup-free states in the international arena, this may lead us to understand how an oasis of peace has developed among the world's mature, coup-free, democratic republics.

This part of the book unfolds in the following sequence. This chapter uncovers how coups and coup pressures drive three interrelated pathologies within coup-prone states: (1) leaders' use of war to prevent coups and revolutions ("self-interest"), (2) the persistence of bad policies without correction ("stupidity"), and (3) organizational disarray that hampers rational action ("confusion").

Chapters 9 through 11 address how coups and their absence affect a state's international alliances. Chapter 9 shows that in unstable states, alliances are routinely formed by foreign "meddling"—that is, when another state supports a faction or leader who is engaged in a violent struggle for political power. Chapter 10 shows that, in the absence of foreign meddling, coup-free states have traditionally gravitated toward neutrality, especially when they are small and weak. Chapter 11 shows that, despite the neutralist inclinations of coup-free states, strong, durable, national alliances (i.e., not tethered to particular leaders or factions) nevertheless have arisen between the coup-free great powers over the past century. It also addresses the closely related phenomenon of the "democratic peace" and shows that transparency and predictability produce the peace between democracies as well as the peace between coup-free states. As we discover, the most amicable, rational, and cooperative international relations in world history can be found among coup-free democracies.

We begin, however, with the blundering and counterproductive behavior of unstable states.

COUP PRESSURES AND IRRATIONAL FOREIGN POLICIES

"We are ready," he boomed, "to punish the British if necessary." Leopoldo Galtieri—the graying, rugged president of Argentina—stood at the balcony of the Casa Rosada. Below, a hundred thousand chanting, banner-waving patriots roared in approval.[1]

It was a warm night in April 1982. Weeks earlier, President Galtieri had invaded *las islas Malvinas*, also known as the Falkland Islands, and promised the crowds that Argentina would keep every single meter. Now a British task force was sailing south.

Inside the presidential palace, peace negotiations continued. U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig tried to convince the military junta that Argentina would certainly lose the looming war with Great Britain.

"My son is a helicopter pilot," said the short, dapper Admiral Jorge Anaya. "The proudest day of my life will be when he lays down his life for the Malvinas." Haig replied quietly, "You know, when you see the body bags, it's different."[2]

Did Argentina go to war for the Falklands/Malvinas—desolate and barely populated islands in the South Atlantic—because of "state interests"? It appears unlikely. Instead, President Galtieri and the junta gambled with Argentine welfare and security because of their own political needs.

The American diplomats failed in their peace mission. As a chopper lifted them from the roof, they felt the turbulent energy below. "Don't sign away with ink what was bought with blood," signs demanded. Recalled one aide, "It reminded us of Teheran and the fall of the shah."[3]

U.S. Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman met with President Galtieri at midnight on April 29. Shlaudeman shocked Galtieri with notice that the United States would bolster Britain's technological superiority and impose economic sanctions on Argentina.

Immediately, Galtieri assembled the junta. They argued until dawn, but Galtieri was unable to dislodge Admiral Anaya's adamant position. If they backed down, Anaya argued, their regime could not possibly survive the public fury.[4]

Even after a British submarine sank an Argentine cruiser, the *General Belgrano*, last-minute peace proposals were floated. UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar brokered serious British concessions. A UN administrator would replace the British governor; the British-descended Falklanders could no longer determine their destiny. The deal would end British rule and begin a gradual slide toward Argentine sovereignty.

Figure 8.1. General Leopoldo Galtieri, June 11, 1982. AP Images

"My God," said a member of Haig's shuttle team. "If the British had gone a quarter this way in April, we'd have had ourselves a deal."[5] Still, the junta spurned the offer. As U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick recalled, "[I]t was simply self-defeating madness for Argentina to reject it."[6]

It was self-defeating madness for Argentina. But "Argentina" did not make the call. A small clique of military commanders did. For them, recapturing the Malvinas was never simply about national interests. The project was a survival strategy.

Military leaders initially seized power in a 1976 coup d'état. From the outset, the generals declared two intentions: to crush left-wing terrorists behind a rash of bombings and kidnappings and then to restore democracy. The "Dirty War" ensued, in which military and secret police agents "disappeared" up to twenty thousand people. In the process, many young, middle-class idealists—without militant connections—were swept up and murdered.

The junta experienced coups from within but avoided one-man rule. The commanders of the army, navy, and air force shared power and kept their positions by consulting with senior officers. Decision making was informal and cumbersome.

In July 1981, army commander in chief Leopoldo Galtieri began plotting to overthrow President Roberto Viola. Galtieri brought his close friend, Admiral Anaya, into the conspiracy. Anaya had long hoped to expand Argentine power in the South Atlantic. A Malvinas base, he thought, would allow his navy to control the Cape Horn passage and skirt Chilean installations.

Anaya's hopes meshed with Galtieri's political goals. Galtieri assembled a hard-line coalition seeking to control or delay democratization. He took power in December 1981. (Galtieri ousted Carlos Lacoste, who had toppled President Viola eleven days earlier.) With Anaya at his side, President Galtieri set invasion planning in motion.

The new junta, Galtieri felt, needed a spectacular success. Argentina's economy was in shambles, with 150 percent inflation. By 1981, newspapers were decrying economic mismanagement and calling on the military to step down. Street demonstrations were breaking out; many clamored for justice against Dirty War perpetrators. Political timetables provided for reconstituted political parties and election plans in 1982. Moreover, Galtieri's term as army commander in chief would expire that year, weakening his presidential grip. Galtieri pledged himself to recovering the Malvinas by January 3, 1983, the 150th anniversary of British occupation.

"If everything had gone as planned," a senior military officer recalled, Galtieri would have called snap presidential elections and announced his candidacy "with the certainty of an easy triumph."[7]

Academic observers agree: domestic political considerations drove the invasion. "The regime's adventurism," two argue, was a risky but calculated gamble "not only to increase its prestige, but to ensure its very survival."[8]

In early 1982, Argentina and the United Kingdom reconvened negotiations over the islands' future. (Argentina had pushed for repatriation since the 1960s.) Belligerent words sounded in Buenos Aires, but London continued to stall. The talks ended inconclusively.

On March 30, thousands of trade union workers—defying a ban on political activity—filled the Plaza de Mayo. Shouting "bread, freedom and work" at the Casa Rosada, they demanded a return to democracy. Police countered with water cannons, tear gas, truncheons, sabers, rubber bullets, and live

ammunition. Several hundred demonstrators were injured; two thousand were detained. It was Argentina's worst riot in six years. The same day, police reportedly fired on demonstrators in another city.

The very next day, President Galtieri authorized Admiral Anaya to invade. Naval forces steamed directly for the islands. They landed on April 2, quickly captured sixty-eight British marines, and hoisted the Argentine flag.

Banner headlines heralded the national glory. An "intolerable insult to Argentine independence and nationhood," as *La Prensa* put it, had finally been avenged. Crowds amassed below the Casa Rosada—including the very same union members who had demonstrated three days earlier—to cheer President Galtieri's bold stroke. According to one military historian, the invasion sparked "an immediate sense of national unity and solidarity" and "completely transformed the *junta*'s image among the rank and file in Argentina."[9]

At the same time, the invasion committed Galtieri and his colleagues to a forward position. London, they calculated, would simply accept the fait accompli. The foreign minister considered England "too civilized" to go to war.[10] Galtieri later claimed that he found a British military response "scarcely possible and totally improbable."[11]

Galtieri's calculation was probably an instance of what psychologists call "motivated bias." He needed to capture the Malvinas, so he convinced himself it would work.[12]

After attacking to restore national pride and their own credibility, the junta could hardly back down. One Argentine newspaper editor commented, "Galtieri and the generals are cornered. They have nowhere to go but forward. If they go backwards, they will be swept away."[13]

As we saw, junta leaders agreed. They refused to compromise. After a six-week war, highly trained, well-equipped, technologically advanced, and experienced British forces prevailed. In all, 746 Argentines and 255 Britons died. Major General Mario Menéndez surrendered all eleven thousand Argentine personnel to British commanders on June 14, 1982.

That night, Argentines vented their rage under the Casa Rosada's vacant balcony. "No surrender!" they screamed. "Galtieri, *hijo de puta!*—son of a whore!" Army chiefs arrested President Galtieri two days later.

The new president, retired general Reynaldo Bignone, asked a chastened nation, "What is wrong with us Argentinians?"[14]

Nothing was wrong with the people of Argentina. The problem was structural and much more widespread: coup-prone states are susceptible to irrational, belligerent outbursts.

Reviewing European crises after 1870, one historian concludes, "[S]trained and unstable internal conditions tend to make elites markedly intransigent and disposed to exceptionally drastic, not to say extravagantly

hazardous, preemptive solutions."[15] Beleaguered governments assume their people will rally to confront an external threat, and they choose war for domestic reasons, "even if chances for victory are doubtful."[16]

Other research confirms this analysis. One study finds that regimes vulnerable to coups demonstrate exceptional hostility[17] ; another finds strong correlations between domestic insecurity and international war.[18] As one political scientist comments, "[E]vidence from a large number of historical cases suggests that decisions for war are frequently influenced by the domestic political interests of political elites facing internal challenges to their political authority."[19] "Nations exhibiting high levels of internal instability," another survey concludes, "are more likely to engage in conflictual foreign policies than are nations with lower levels of internal instability."[20]

The belligerence of unstable states derives from a delicate collective action problem. Any sign of weakness—by a leader or regime—strengthens potential coupsters and revolutionaries, who seize upon "national humiliation." A race to the bottom ensues: leaders outbid challengers by reaching for overly aggressive foreign policies. By doing so, they inflame international tensions—often over purely symbolic issues—in ways that readily boomerang against their own country.

In other words, coup-prone states experience unique pressures toward irrational, counterproductive, and self-destructive foreign policies. A rational foreign policy understands the dangers involved in unnecessarily antagonizing other states and realistically weighs the potential benefits of any action against the probability and severity of national harm. This state-level rationality becomes difficult to practice when a coup d'état looms. Suddenly, international threats pale in comparison to domestic danger.

For individual leaders, war is eminently preferable to revolution. In war, leaders can remain relatively safe and comfortable, far behind the front lines. Victory brings glory, but defeat does not necessarily bring ruin. A coup or revolution, on the other hand, is catastrophic. At the very least, leaders suffer a humiliating fall. Loss of property, imprisonment, and death are also possible. Facing this dilemma, leaders readily abandon the national interest. In other words, they risk senseless war to prevent a coup d'état.

The best foreign policy course, we should note, is never self-evident. There is always room for debate between relatively hawkish and dovish positions, each of which can reasonably claim to maximize national interests. Sometimes, one side or another is vindicated in retrospect. (Winston Churchill, for example, has soundly defeated Neville Chamberlain.)

Some decisions, however, are obviously irrational. They expose the nation to grave dangers and predictable losses, in the pursuit of unworthy objectives. In these cases, the probability and severity of national harm clearly outweigh potential benefits—at the time the decision is made. Such deci-

sions would never be made by leaders acting competently and in good faith to promote collective interests.

As noted above, the tragic consequences of war are distributed unequally. Leaders can reap political benefits, even as their countrymen suffer. The long odds of success—and the likelihood of harm—may not be apparent. Public misinformation compounds this problem. Even an idiotic war, then, may rally mass support.

All the evidence about Argentina's misadventure in the Malvinas indicates a betrayal of public trust. President Galtieri and friends did not invade because they carefully weighed the probability and severity of national harm against potential national benefits. To be fair, Admiral Anaya in particular appears motivated by genuine nationalist concerns. But Galtieri's initial plans, his March 31 invasion decision, and the junta's rejection of a favorable UN-brokered deal were governed by a different priority: retaining power.

Amidst successive military putsches and a strong democratic movement, President Galtieri embarked upon a foreign policy gambit that offered the only realistic means of shoring up his fragile position. The personal stakes for Galtieri and other junta members were clear. If antiregime demonstrations spiraled out of control and forced a democratic restoration, new leaders would certainly bring Dirty War perpetrators to justice. Long prison terms loomed.

As we know, the strategy failed. Two days after the surrender in Port Stanley, army commanders removed President Galtieri in a bloodless coup. As Argentina transitioned back to democracy, the junta leaders of 1976 to 1982 were tried for Dirty War atrocities. Many were convicted. President Galtieri, Admiral Anaya, and air force brigadier Lami Dozo were exonerated on human rights charges—but went to jail anyway for their incompetent Malvinas war. (They were later pardoned and released.)

Coup threats generate particularly sharp conflicts of interest. This does not mean, however, that coup-free states always exhibit pure collective rationality or that their leaders are immune from self-interest.

British prime minister Margaret Thatcher faced severe criticism as the Falklands/Malvinas crisis unfolded. A poll in April 1982 showed 80 percent of Britons blaming their own government; another poll at the time named Thatcher the worst prime minister in British history. One member of her cabinet confessed, "To be frank, I don't see how she can survive if she shrinks from a military showdown."[21] During negotiations, Secretary Haig judged that either Thatcher or Galtieri would fall by compromising.[22]

Like Galtieri, Thatcher experienced pressure to take a hard-line stance. The parallel, however, quickly breaks down. Thatcher's aggressive stance was perfectly consistent with British national interests. Simply allowing a regional power to seize British possessions would set a dangerous precedent, from Gibraltar to Hong Kong. British forces, moreover, held stark military

advantages against the Argentines. Political survival may well have motivated Margaret Thatcher—but it did not push her into "clearly irrational" actions. The British response was carefully planned, meticulously executed, and highly successful.

The junta, on the other hand, appears to have hoped that their largely untrained, poorly equipped, and badly organized forces would somehow prevail through grit and determination. It was their only hope, after all. Jeane Kirkpatrick—and many others—saw their intransigence as "self-defeating madness."[23]

The outcome was predictably disastrous. Some Argentine journalists, along with future president Raúl Alfonsín, privately foresaw defeat. From the beginning, Argentine military strategists knew their naval and air forces could be annihilated by a full-scale conflict against a NATO power.

Aside from self-interest, there are two other main explanations for bad decisions: stupidity and organizational confusion. First, stupidity does matter. Leaders can honestly fail to perceive likely consequences. Evidence shows that humans regularly overestimate their own side's capabilities against enemies and that people in positions of authority overestimate their own powers.[24] Stupidity may tip the balance in marginal cases. But stupidity alone has limited usefulness as an explanation for "clearly irrational" wars, because sheer survival instincts mandate rational thinking.

Mutually assured destruction, for example, kept the peace through four long Cold War decades. With their own lives and nations on the line, John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev carefully navigated the Cuban Missile Crisis. Khrushchev later explained his decision to remove the missiles. "What good would it have done me in my last hour of life," he asked, "to know that though our great nation and the United States were in complete ruins, the national honor of the Soviet Union was intact?"[25]

Second, organizational confusion can harm rational decision making. Inertia is particularly troublesome: when leaders cannot agree to change direction, earlier policies persist by default. Calibrating actions to new circumstances may be impossible.

The junta's conduct illustrates this problem. As we saw, personal alliances permeated Argentina's military regime. Top leaders only maintained their positions by cultivating senior officers, who needed to keep their own subordinates happy.

Discussions with this unwieldy coalition proved frustrating. In London, the Haig team encountered a tough but clear bargaining position, which offered limited but sharply defined compromise terms. In Buenos Aires, the diplomats could never tell who held negotiating authority, and proposals were vague and fleeting. "I think it finally dawned on us," said one official, "that the *junta*, because of its competing interests, was unable virtually to take any decision that was different from the one it had originally taken."[26]

Another described the regime as "a bunch of thugs with no one clearly in charge."[27]

Self-interest, stupidity, and organizational confusion are perennial problems, but they particularly bedevil states with coups d'état. Three main advantages help coup-free states avoid these pitfalls.

First, the personal stakes of political defeat are much lower. If a president loses reelection or a governing party replaces the prime minister, there is no danger of violent death. The leader simply enters hallowed retirement, with memoir deals and plum speaking engagements. (Even Richard Nixon, who resigned in disgrace, rehabilitated himself as elder statesman.) Argentine junta members, on the other hand, faced prison.

Second, open debate discourages stupid policy. All coup-free states are republics, where poor decisions can receive endless criticism and mockery. Leaders are not happy about losing power, of course. Mindful of their place in history, though, they are unlikely to step outside a rational policy spectrum. In coup-prone states, on the other hand, leaders may seize control over public discourse and mitigate the political damage of unsound policy. During the Falklands/Malvinas War, for example, the junta intimidated local journalists into trumpeting national glory, even as Argentine surrenders mounted.

Third, coup-free states endow leaders with clear formal authority, enabling them to aggressively maximize national interests. Throughout the Falklands/Malvinas crisis, for example, Prime Minister Thatcher retained full control over British diplomatic and military efforts.[28] President Galtieri, on the other hand, lacked a streamlined command structure. The junta's decision making resembled a Ouija board consultation, with many hands pushing policy directions but no one empowered to negotiate the best possible deal.

THE RATIONAL STATE AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The Falklands/Malvinas War is hardly unique. As we will see, self-interested leadership, stupidity, and organizational confusion figure prominently in modern history. They have combined in various patterns to drive coup-prone states into irrational and self-destructive belligerence.

This pattern presents something of a challenge to current international relations theory, which generally regards states as "unitary rational actors." This means that "state interests" dictate policy choices, regardless of who is in charge; in this view, leaders are mere functionaries who simply translate state interests into policy. Many different perspectives within the field converge on this assumption. The "realist," or realpolitik, school presents states as engaged in a bitter struggle for survival and supremacy within an anarchic world. In the words of one prominent realist, states are best understood as "unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a

maximum, drive for universal domination."[29] "Neoliberal" theorists use the same assumptions to explore the logic of interstate cooperation. Robert Keohane, an international relations theorist at Princeton, adopts the rational state model and shows that states can cooperate and reach agreements precisely because their leaders act "in ways calculated to increase the wealth, security, and power of their states."[30]

The rational state model makes perfect sense—inside the coup-free zone. By learning their own history, and by observing current events, generations of Americans have come to expect their presidents to vigorously pursue national objectives. In this context, equating leaders' personal objectives with national success appears to reflect common sense.

By World War II, as realism began to assume a prominent position in American academia, the United States had experienced one and a half centuries of smooth, nonviolent, and legal transfers of power. Because the nation had never seen coups, it had also never witnessed foreign powers supporting one faction against another and thereby installing their own clients and dependents in the White House. (See the discussion of "meddling" in the next chapter.) No impending coups or revolutionary instability pressured U.S. leaders into disastrous belligerence. American politicians sometimes adopted hawkish positions to win popularity, but their policies steadily and effectively boosted national power. Over time, thirteen eastern seaboard states burgeoned into a colossus, stretching to Alaska, Hawaii, and the Philippines.

In fact, America expanded, in part, by taking advantage of coup-prone states. Mexican politics during the early nineteenth century, for example, was mired in coups. In 1836, Anglo-Texans seceded and formed an independent republic, and on December 29, 1845, they joined the United States. The next day, there was a coup d'état in Mexico City. General Mariano Paredes overthrew President José Herrera, accusing him of avoiding a "glorious and necessary war" over Texas, and immediately sent troops over the Rio Grande. The Yankees crushed the Mexicans and captured the territory that became Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

Fifty years later, Spain fought another irrational war against Uncle Sam. The United States demanded that Spain grant independence to Cuba; in Madrid, Queen Regent Maria Christina and her ministers knew that acquiescence would trigger a coup. Partisans of Don Carlos, an exiled king, called on Spaniards to topple Maria Christina if she agreed to the dishonorable loss of Cuba. Knowing in advance they would lose, the queen's government went to war.[31] Spain duly lost; America gained hegemony in the Caribbean and a colony in the Philippines.

Assuming that all states behave rationally, international relations theorists build complex mathematical models, hoping to capture something important about global affairs. As the journals fill with equations, however, they become irrelevant to policy practitioners. When the president and his team

make military and diplomatic decisions, they do not call in the political scientists to perform regression analyses. Instead, they try to predict how particular leaders, organizations, and nations will respond to their actions. Practical foreign policy hands inhabit a world of real people and personalities.

As we observe in the coming chapters, the rational state model fundamentally distorts our understanding of causality and decision making, at least within unstable states. Leaders of coup-prone states experience distinctive pressures to make decisions on war, peace, and alliance based upon personal power considerations, which frequently proves detrimental or disastrous to national interests. The rational state model offers a better approximation of how stable states operate in the international environment. Even so, it might be preferable to investigate the actual relationships of causality driving international relations—an inquiry that necessarily encompasses living human beings, making decisions within a complex political environment—rather than to rely on abstract postulates and mathematical formulas. By doing so, we just might be able to illuminate general patterns and make progress in understanding politics and international relations.

In any case, there is no argument that coup-related irrationality has been limited to weak or peripheral states in the international system, or to minor events like the Falklands/Malvinas War. Coup-prone great powers have been quite susceptible. In the modern age, the most consequential episodes of self-interest, stupidity, and confusion occurred in Germany.

GERMAN COUP PRESSURES AND THE WORLD WARS

World War I was the twentieth century's horrible mistake. Eight and a half million soldiers died. The Russian Army's collapse along the front in 1917 led to the Bolshevik Revolution, 10 to 13 million Soviet deaths under Stalinist brutality, and the threat of annihilation during the Cold War. German humiliation brought Adolf Hitler, the Holocaust, and 40 million dead in World War II.

The origins of the Great War are well known. In 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Empire encompassed Bosnia-Herzegovina, but Bosnian nationalists wanted to join independent Serbia. On June 28, a young Bosnian—with covert Serbian help—assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to Austria-Hungary. In response, Austrian leaders decided to punish or annex Serbia. The only problem: Serbia was allied with Russia. On July 5, Germany assured Austria of its "faithful support" if Austria found itself at war with Russia. Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28 and bombarded Belgrade the next day. On July 30, the Russian tsar ordered total war mobilization, and Austria followed suit. German leaders, worried about the French alliance

with Russia, ordered a German assault on France, by way of Belgium and Luxembourg. Britain entered the war alongside France and Russia. Four years of hell ensued.

On the surface, the war appears accidental. Once triggered, alliances drew each power into the maelstrom. A massive body of scholarship, however, points to another conclusion: Germany started it.[32] Whereas British, French, and Russian leaders tried to avoid war, German leaders pushed their Austrian allies toward the brink. As the German foreign secretary said in late July 1914, "[N]either London, nor Paris nor St. Petersburg wants war."[33]

Count Alexander Hoyos, head of the Austrian Foreign Ministry, soon realized that Serbia was not Germany's focus. In his memoirs he described the German goal: to "fight an imperialist war of conquest against the Western Powers via us and Serbia."[34] At the end of July, Kaiser Wilhelm II sent a telegram to Austrian emperor Franz Josef. Austria must "throw its main forces against Russia," wrote the kaiser, and not "dissipate" them in the Balkans because "Serbia plays only a minor role in this tremendous struggle."[35]

German leaders waited for Russia to mobilize before declaring war—but only to present Russia as the aggressor, bring the Social Democrats on board, and unite Germans behind the war. The German General Staff's response to Russian mobilization on July 30 provides clear evidence. A Bavarian official noted in his diary, "I run to the War Ministry. Beaming faces everywhere. Everyone is shaking hands in the corridors: people congratulate one another for being over the hurdle."[36]

Later, German leaders admitted guilt. When asked in 1918 whether Germany had really wanted war, the foreign minister of 1914 said, "Yes, we wanted it."[37] This, he explained, was why he could no longer sleep at night. Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg also acknowledged that Germany had started the war.[38]

But why? Why did German leaders push for war? What were they hoping to gain? Certainly, they envisioned realpolitik successes. By destroying French military power, Germany might impose a favorable armistice, end the Franco-Russian alliance, integrate France into the German economic bloc, extract war reparations, and reduce France to a German vassal. In the east, Germany might push the Russian border back to Moscow and build friendly buffer states in Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia.

But do these imperial dreams fully explain German aggression in 1914? After all, any power can seek greater hegemony. Why Germany? Furthermore, war is risky and unpredictable, especially against great powers of similar stature. If it goes poorly, the aggressor can suffer terribly. In Germany's case, this is exactly what happened.

To wavering politicians, the German General Staff argued that war was inevitable and that Germany would weaken vis-à-vis France and Russia by

1917. But it was unlikely that rapidly industrializing Germany would lose military ground. In addition, any Franco-Russian aggression would be unlikely to receive British support—which could prove decisive. German leaders, it appears, sought war for other reasons.

To find out why, we should examine German politics. A weak parliament—the Reichstag—provided a constitutional forum, but most power lay with Kaiser Wilhelm II, his ministers, and the General Staff. Royal coups dangled like a sword of Damocles over the Reichstag.

In 1862, Prussian minister-president Otto von Bismarck cut off parliamentary debate with armed force. "The great questions of the day," he declared before the Prussian *Landtag*, "will be decided not by speeches and parliamentary votes—that was the great mistake from 1848 to 1849—but by iron and blood."[39]

For decades, German elites considered similar measures. Many conservative Junkers—landed Prussian aristocrats—sympathized. As Herr von Oldenburg auf Januschau thundered, "The King of Prussia and the German Emperor must always be in a position to say to any lieutenant, 'Take ten men and shoot the Reichstag!'"[40] Amazingly, the Reichstag rang with applause.

Atop this structure, the kaiser enjoyed tremendous freedom. Wilhelm I played a passive role, letting Bismarck govern. After succeeding in 1888, however, the twenty-nine-year-old Wilhelm II refused to countenance a powerful chancellor. He dismissed Bismarck in 1890.

Kaiser Wilhelm II, unfortunately, was no Bismarck. Historians describe him as "erratic," "impulsive," "volatile," "impatient," "hyperactive," and "immature." "The Kaiser is like a balloon," observed Bismarck. "If you do not hold fast to the string, you never know where he will be off to."[41]

Highly sensitive to perceived slights, Wilhelm II was prone to rage, bluster, and tactless outbursts. The normally polite Queen Victoria called him "hot-headed, conceited, and wrong-headed."[42] After reading one of Wilhelm's speeches, Leo Tolstoy concluded that his mind was diseased.[43]

Bored by routine, the kaiser insisted on controlling policy. The resulting chaos exasperated Wilhelm's ministers. The Foreign Office chief complained to imperial advisor Philipp zu Eulenburg in 1896:

> On 30 August the Kaiser . . . warned the English about the Russians. On 25 October the Kaiser telegraphed to the Chancellor that it was necessary to bind ourselves to Russia and France, as a security for our colonies against a threatening English attack. On 12 November the Kaiser telegraphed to the Chancellor that he had warned Grand-Duke Vladimir about England. On 21 November he told the English ambassador that he would always hold fast to England . . . . How will this end?[44]

Throughout his tenure, the kaiser's intrigue and bombast made other governments nervous. Understandably, they saw Germany as unreliable and unpredictable.

Working-class Social Democrats offered the main domestic challenge to the kaiser and his ministers. Radical talk peppered the air. As the Left agitated, demonstrated, and struck for an expanded franchise, powerful Reichstag, and responsible government—in short, for democracy—the Right called for authoritarian solutions. While the kaiser could have brutally overridden the Reichstag, any such action would alienate large segments of the press and population.

Instead of crushing the Social Democrats, German leaders found it more efficient to galvanize the public with an aggressive international posture. In several elections, imperial chancellors—who needed to maintain a Reichstag majority—won by trumpeting threats, sounding alarms, and rousing nationalist sentiment.

As foreign crisis loomed, the Left opposition faltered and the nationalist, militarist Right prospered. In such moments, Prussian officers went from potential Reichstag shooters to the guardians of Germany. In other words, the entire governing class of imperial Germany—including the kaiser—had incentives to see and magnify dangers to the fatherland. They responded with bellicose steps, including a naval arms race with Britain. By inflaming the international situation, they solidified their domestic position.

This interpretation is hardly new. As one historian puts it, there is now a "far-reaching consensus" among German, British, and American historians that "German foreign policy after 1897 must be understood as a response to the internal threat of socialism and democracy."[45] Another historian contrasts Germany with Britain: "German political elites . . . had an overwhelming incentive to use foreign policy as a method of domestic control; in fact, they had been doing so for years. No similar temptation offered itself to British elites, nor is there evidence that they ever used foreign policy to that end."[46]

Domestic tensions, we might say, pushed Germany hawkwards. In Britain, as chapter 10 shows, the overriding diplomatic goal was to avoid a great power war. This goal, moreover, embodied collective rationality. London's conciliatory stance reflected national interests; Berlin's belligerence reflected the self-interest of the kaiser, his ministers, and the General Staff. In other words, German leaders gambled with their country.

Aside from self-interest—and the kaiser's personal idiocy—Germany exhibits the third dysfunctional feature of coup-prone states: administrative confusion. To evade parliamentary oversight, Bismarck and his successors rendered military authority vague and informal. The war minister—who was responsible to the Reichstag—enjoyed little power. Instead, the Military Cabinet and General Staff controlled the armed forces. One historian describes many "almost independent authorities" within the government.[47] Bis-

Figure 8.2. Kaiser Wilhelm II, circa 1913. Library of Congress

marck, a disciplined genius, could manage the tangled web. Kaiser Wilhelm II could not.

The absence of a clear chain of command became apparent in July 1914. The kaiser regarded himself the ultimate authority but was easily influenced in contrary directions. Subordinates—including Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg and Chief of General Staff Helmuth von Moltke—took critical matters into their own hands. Historians have difficulty pinpointing responsibility for pivotal German decisions in the summer of 1914. It is clear, however, that Moltke hid vital information from Bethmann-Hollweg, including specific Belgian targets that could pull Britain into the war.[48]

Word of partial Russian mobilization arrived in Berlin on July 29. The next day, Bethmann-Hollweg and Moltke both sent telegrams to Vienna.

Bethmann-Hollweg advised the Austrians to conciliate Russia and "halt in Belgrade."[49] Moltke, worried about a Russian advance against Germany, urged total mobilization against Russia. "What a joke!" scoffed the Austrian foreign minister. "Who does rule in Berlin then?"[50]

This was a crucial point in the crisis. Austria and Russia launched general mobilizations. Now Moltke held the advantage, and he drove relentlessly toward war. Moltke convinced Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg to send the tsar an ultimatum: demobilize within twelve hours or face war. Nothing changed. On August 1, Germany declared war on Russia.

During this period, Moltke was experiencing great stress and inner turmoil. He pushed for war but privately confided his doubts. As he told his adjutant, "Few can have an idea of the extent, the duration and the end of this war. Nobody today can have a notion of how it will all end."[51]

That night, the kaiser sought desperately to avoid a two-front war. The Schlieffen Plan (German military plans to attack France by way of Belgium and Luxembourg) was in motion. German soldiers would cross into Luxembourg within an hour. The kaiser, thinking the English had offered to remain neutral if Germany did not attack France, pushed Moltke to cancel the western attack. "Now we can go to war against Russia only," he exulted. "We simply march the whole of our Army to the East!"[52]

"Your Majesty," Moltke said, "it cannot be done. The deployment of millions cannot be improvised." He went on: "Those arrangements took a whole year of intricate labor to complete," and they "cannot be altered."[53]

"Your uncle would have given me a different answer," Wilhelm said with reproach.[54] Still, he allowed the Schlieffen Plan to continue.

Minutes before German troops were to seize a Luxembourg railway station, Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg insisted on a pause. He wanted to wait for Britain to respond to a proposal for Anglo-French neutrality. The kaiser ordered a halt.

"At that moment," Moltke's memoirs record, "I thought my heart would break." The field marshal returned to his office and "burst into bitter tears of abject despair."[55]

Later that night, the kaiser received a telegram. The British, after all, could not guarantee neutrality—even if Germany refrained from attacking France. The kaiser summoned Moltke. "Now you can do what you like," he said.[56]

The Schlieffen Plan went forward. By the end of the following day, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was in German hands, and German troops were advancing rapidly through Belgium. Moltke had his war.

Why did Moltke want war? We can't know for sure, of course. Like many romantic militarists, he seems to have felt that war was a noble calling and peace contemptible. After Germany performed a humiliating climbdown during a Moroccan crisis in 1911, Moltke complained to his wife, "If we creep

out of this affair with our tails between our legs, if we cannot be aroused to an energetic set of demands which we are prepared to enforce by the sword, then I am doubtful about the future of the German Empire. And I will resign. But first I will propose that we abolish the army and place ourselves under the protection of Japan. Then we will be able to make money without interference and to become imbeciles."[57] Despite his bravado, Moltke proved inept in the first weeks of the war, his fragile nerves gave way, and he resigned.[58]

War called for military expertise and consistent logic; within weeks, the generals tacitly sidelined the kaiser. "Am I already such a figure of contempt," Wilhelm complained on August 20, "that no one wants to sit next to me any more?"[59] Later, the supreme warlord mourned, "The General Staff tells me nothing and asks me nothing . . . If people in Germany imagine that I lead the Army they greatly deceive themselves. I drink tea, saw wood, go for walks, and from time to time hear that this or that has been done, just as the gentlemen choose."[60]

By the end of 1916, Generals Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff reigned supreme. Their regime has been called a "silent dictatorship." They overrode Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg's peace initiatives in late 1916, and in July 1917 they successfully demanded his resignation.

By pushing a hawkish line, Hindenburg and Ludendorff extended the war two more years. For a long time, Ludendorff insisted that any peace agreement must allow Germany to keep Belgium—even when the military situation rendered this demand absurd.

Ludendorff's motives were clearly political. Without annexations, Germans would see that their generals had bungled into years of pointless agony. The reaction would be explosive; Hindenburg and Ludendorff could not possibly retain power. Germans were already demanding democratic reforms. Ludendorff wrote to a friend in January 1918, "I continually hope that the Prussian franchise falls through. If I didn't have that hope, I would favor the conclusion of any kind of peace. With this franchise, we cannot live."[61]

In other words, Ludendorff's intransigence derived not from German calculations but from his own. As one historian comments, the letter demonstrates Ludendorff's belief that "annexations were indispensable if the existing political system were to be maintained."[62]

As it turned out, the political system was doomed. Allied progress, especially after the Americans entered the war in 1917, forced Ludendorff to accept an armistice in October 1918. Immediately, Germany erupted in revolution. A newly empowered Reichstag dismissed Ludendorff. On November 9, socialists in Berlin proclaimed a republic.

At Spa, in Belgium, the kaiser made a last-ditch effort to save his empire. The troops, he argued, should march home and suppress the revolutionaries. General Wilhelm Groener refused. "The Army," he said, "no longer stands

behind Your Majesty."[63] Instead, General Groener agreed to serve the new democracy. The troops marched home.

To recap: World War I was not simply the product of cold-blooded national calculations. For decades, domestic political pressures led the kaiser and his ministers to strike belligerent postures. By doing so, they multiplied the probability of war. This, in turn, enhanced their own readiness to consider a first-strike, preemptive strategy. After all, if war was inevitable, why not seize the advantage? At the same time, the kaiser's chaotic regime gave General Moltke the freedom to take unauthorized steps—like urging total Austrian mobilization—which pushed the world into war. Once war began, it quickly reached impasse. Each side dug trenches; the front barely moved. Rational policy demanded compromise. General Ludendorff, however, could not cut a deal and retain power: he needed to bring home a trophy. So the meat grinder kept running.

Long before August 1914, German leaders knew a two-front war against Russia and the Western powers was unwise. However, a noxious brew of self-interested leadership, stupidity, and organizational confusion led Germany down an idiotic path.

And not for the last time. A charismatic Austrian named Adolf Hitler seized power in 1933 and embarked upon a grandiose fantasy of racial purity and conquest. As noted by historian F. H. Hinsley, historians are "nearly unanimous" that "the causes of the Second World War were the personality and the aims of Adolf Hitler."[64] The story of Nazi Germany demonstrates that a coup d'état can place an irrational person in charge and make it impossible to remove him, or even to question his policy decisions. This does not bode well for state rationality.

From *Mein Kampf*, published in 1925, we know Hitler long dreamed of capturing the vast eastern steppe for German *lebensraum*, or "living space." Nazi foreign policy would make a bold, Nietzschean, world-historical leap. The Führer's extravagant vision had little to do with a rational accounting of German interests and probabilities of success.

This was precisely why German military commanders began conspiring against him. On November 5, 1937, Hitler spoke to his top generals for four hours, outlining his plans. "The aim of German policy," he declared, "was to make secure and to preserve the racial community and to enlarge it."[65] They would begin with Austria and Czechoslovakia. Twelve million Germans would be added to the Reich. Three generals spoke up, arguing that Germany was not ready for a European war. They soon lost their jobs, and secret coup plotting began.[66]

In March 1938, Hitler forced Austria into the Third Reich. As he crept toward a Czech assault, conspirators redoubled their plotting. Invading Czechoslovakia, they thought, would surely trigger war with Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. As in the previous war, Germany would lose.

By late summer, the conspirators planned to seize Hitler as soon as he gave a final invasion order. General Franz Halder, chief of the Army General Staff, was involved. He arranged with High Command to give him forty-eight hours notice beforehand, so he could spring the coup and prevent world war.

The conspirators sent agents to London. The agents told British officials—including Member of Parliament Winston Churchill—all about Hitler's Czech plans. They wanted to find out whether Britain would go to war and hoped to convince Chamberlain's government to stand firm. The conspirators depended on British resolve. If Britain caved to Hitler's demand for the Czech Sudetenland, it would destroy their case. They could not convince wavering officials—or the public—that German safety required removing the Führer.

In the summer of 1938, Germany's military hand was not as strong as we might imagine. The Czechs had heavily fortified their western border with Germany. Together, Czech and French troops outnumbered Germans by more than two to one. Adding Britain—not to mention the USSR—spelled disaster.

In Berlin, the public expressed no thirst for battle. As a motorized division paraded through the capital, people ducked into subways. Some watched silently from the curb. Germans were "dead set against war," an American journalist noted in his diary.[67] In 1945, surviving German generals testified unanimously. Germany, they said, would have been rapidly defeated in 1938.[68]

But as we know, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain folded. Hitler promised the Sudetenland would be his last territorial demand in Europe. British and French leaders, eager to avoid another war, grasped this straw. After meeting with Hitler, Chamberlain remarked privately, "In spite of the hardness and ruthlessness I thought I saw in his face, I got the impression that here was a man who could be relied upon when he had given his word."[69] Returning from Munich, he declared, "I believe it is peace in our time."[70]

It was peace for eleven months. Hitler had no intention of stopping. The next target, he announced to his military chiefs in May 1939, would be Poland. "Further successes can no longer be attained without the shedding of blood," Hitler acknowledged. "We cannot expect a repetition of the Czech affair. There will be war."[71]

But Hitler had difficulty making a convincing case. His speech became confused; he repeatedly contradicted himself. "It must not come to a simultaneous showdown with the West—France and England. If it is not certain that a German-Polish conflict will not lead to war with the West, then the fight must be primarily against England and France. Fundamentally therefore: Conflict with Poland—beginning with an attack on Poland—will only be

successful if the West keeps out of it. If that is not possible it is better to fall upon the West and to finish off Poland at the same time."[72]

Was Hitler rationally convinced that Germany would win a world war? Another speech before his generals in August 1939 opens another window on his thinking. For Hitler, German prospects depended on his unique genius. "Essentially, all depends on me, on my existence, because of my political talents," he reflected. "But I can be eliminated at any time by a criminal or a lunatic."[73]

The Führer rambled for several hours. The "fortunate circumstances" of 1939, he claimed, would shortly disappear. His proofs were spectacularly vague. "Our economic situation is such that we cannot hold out more than a few years. Göring can confirm this." Around the world, conditions looked promising. "In the Mediterranean, rivalry among Italy, France and England; in the Orient, tension . . . England is in great danger. France's position has also deteriorated. Decline in birth rate . . . Yugoslavia carries the germ of collapse . . . Rumania is weaker than before . . . Since Kemal's death, Turkey has been ruled by small minds, unsteady, weak men."[74]

Then Hitler returned to a favorite theme. "No one knows how long I shall live. Therefore a showdown, which it would not be safe to put off for four to five years, had better take place now."[75] Hitler may well have started World War II because he was convinced that only he could lead Germany to victory.

This interpretation is strengthened by other comments. Hitler told the British ambassador that he was fifty and "preferred war now to when he would be fifty-five or sixty." The Führer also remarked that "it was surely quite clear to everyone" that Germany would have won the Great War had he been chancellor.[76]

Hitler inhabited a world of ad hominem reasoning. Germany would win because he was in charge. He was a world-shattering genius, an unstoppable historical force. When, after all, had he been stopped? In fourteen years, he turned a small gang of kooks and street brawlers into the German government. He ended democracy, rearmed the nation, and swallowed Austria and the Sudetenland without firing a shot. Likewise, the "master race" was destined to rule because Aryans were naturally supreme. Their enemies, Hitler believed, were vermin. Subhuman garbage could not possibly prevail. "Our enemies are little worms," Hitler said. "I saw them at Munich."[77]

German military commanders, however, thought in more prosaic terms. They worried about resources, food supplies, and industrial capacity. They compared the Axis with Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Their calculations were bleak.

General Georg Thomas, head of the Economic and Armaments Branch of High Command, wrote a risky memorandum in August 1939. He argued that Germany lacked the raw materials and food supplies to win a global showdown. He also produced statistical evidence—as he later recalled—showing

"the tremendous military-economic superiority of the Western Powers."[78] Hitler dismissed his concerns. Generals Ludwig Beck and Franz Halder agreed that war would destroy Germany. They saw no way in the summer of 1939, however, to topple the Führer.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland. Admiral Wilhelm Canaris pulled a coconspirator aside within High Command. "This means the end of Germany," he mourned.[79]

Two days later, Britain and France declared war. A tense waiting period followed in the west. In the east, Hitler and Joseph Stalin divided their Polish spoils. For the moment, the Nazi-Soviet pact—signed in August—was holding.

As Hitler prepared to attack the bourgeois democracies, German conspirators made last-ditch efforts to block him. Invading Belgium and Holland, they thought, would ruin Germany's chances for a "decent peace." "Our only hope of salvation," Ernst von Weizsäcker told fellow diplomat Ulrich von Hassell, "lies in a military coup. But how?"[80]

The problem was that true-believing Nazis had swollen the officer corps, as well as the rank and file. They could not be trusted to move against the Führer.

A classic collective action problem ensued: all the conspirators desired a coup, but none wanted to stick his neck out. General Franz Halder appealed to General Fritz Fromm, commander of the Home Army. General Fromm said he would execute any order from General Walther von Brauchitsch, the army commander in chief. General Beck told General Halder to make the first move, but Halder insisted that Brauchitsch order the coup. Brauchitsch intended to act, but on November 5—the target date—his nerve failed. The conspirators rushed to burn incriminating documents.[81]

Hitler struck the following April. First, he occupied Denmark and Norway. In May, he overran Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The French suffered disastrous defeats—mostly in Belgium—and buckled in June. German troops occupied most of France and worked closely with a collaborationist puppet state. In the face of these staggering victories, the German conspirators backed away from a coup.

But in the long run, their earlier, sober calculations proved accurate. The Axis was unable to match the combined manpower, resources, and industrial might of the British Empire, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

This did not make some form of German victory impossible. From the Nazi high tide of 1940–1941, history might have taken any number of courses. Counterfactual scenarios abound. What if Hitler had invaded England in 1940? Could he have knocked Britons into submission? What if he had refrained from attacking the Soviet Union in 1941? Could the Nazis and Bolsheviks have partnered in global conquest? What if Hitler had blocked

the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor? Would the Americans have remained neutral?

The answers, of course, are unknowable. Still, historians hardly describe Hitler's foreign policy as realistic or pragmatic, and many doubt whether Nazi Germany could have won World War II at all.[82]

Hitler's choice for war, then, appears strikingly irrational. It was not in Germany's national interest to attempt world conquest, and the bean counters in his military command knew it. War was the product of Hitler's fevered imagination, his faith in Teutonic prowess, and his mystical feeling of personal infallibility.

Obviously, Hitler could only lead Germany down the primrose path after taking charge. Nazi Germany was born in a coup d'état. The National Socialists never won a parliamentary majority. As leader of the largest party, Hitler was named chancellor of a mixed government on January 30, 1933. Conservatives imagined they could use him for their own purposes. Within weeks, Hitler controlled the Berlin Police and Prussian Interior Ministry and deployed his brown-shirted thugs against opponents. Nazi terror persuaded the Reichstag to commit legal suicide on March 23, 1933.

Under Weimar democracy, could Hitler have remained in office very long? Glad-handing, flattery, and compromise were not his strengths. One scholar doubts that Hitler, with his psychopathologies, could have survived as a lowly civil servant.[83]

Would the Weimar Republic have launched a world war? It seems unlikely. Weimar foreign policy was conciliatory and cooperative. Germany sought to pay off the harsh reparations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, entered the League of Nations, and embraced the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which made war illegal.

Like the Third Reich itself, Nazi conquests were a triumph of Adolf Hitler's will. Despite years of propaganda, German citizens did not cheer for war in 1938–1939. Despite Gestapo surveillance, Hitler's generals nearly deposed him to keep Germany at peace.

Beginning in late 1941, the conspirators' predictions of weakness came true. Seeking a favorable settlement for Germany, they tried to kill Hitler on many occasions and mounted a major coup attempt in July 1944. Each time, they failed. In May 1945, the Führer was dead, Germany lay in ruins, and military commanders surrendered.

In short, World War II was stupid. It happened only because the Nazi coup of 1933 handed power to a vicious and irrational visionary. It was impossible to question or debate the Führer, so major policy decisions went untested by rational thought. It was impossible to remove him, except by assassination or coup d'état; because these attempts failed, Germany was doomed to an irrational course.

The basic idea presented in this chapter is not particularly new. Shakespeare has King Henry IV advising his son,

> Therefore, my Harry,
> Be it thy course to busy giddy minds
> With foreign quarrels.[84]

Jean Bodin, a sixteenth-century French law professor and political theorist, wrote that finding an enemy was "the best way of preserving a state, and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion, and civil war."[85]

As we have seen, though, ill-considered wars often fail in the long run. Kaiser Wilhelm II, Adolf Hitler, and Leopoldo Galtieri—among many others—lost power upon military defeat. An empirical study confirms the pattern: despite short-term benefits, "intense and costly wars" tend to backfire on regimes.[86]

As we will see, coup-free states have generally avoided catastrophic foreign policies, and in the long run, they have prospered and thrived in the international arena.

Chapter Nine

A Brief History of Meddling

In 556 BC, Pisistratus ruled Athens as tyrant. His sons had already reached adulthood, and he didn't want any more children—but he did have a new wife. He would only lie with her, Herodotus tells us, "in an unnatural way."[1]

Her father found out and was deeply insulted. (Her father was Megacles, head of the Alcmeonid clan. Megacles had helped Pisistratus seize power three years earlier, and in return Pisistratus agreed to marry his daughter.)

In anger, Megacles broke with Pisistratus and reconciled with his political enemies. When Pisistratus heard, he fled the city in fear.

For ten years, Pisistratus and his sons traveled the region, amassing an army. They called upon allies, gathered supporters, and raised funds. Thebes contributed generously, and a certain Lygdamus from Naxos brought soldiers and money.

Finally, the Pisistratids marched to Athens. A well-timed ambush—on a lunching and napping Athenian army—restored Pisistratus to power.

Friends of Pisistratus did well, and enemies fared poorly. With Pisistratus's help, Lygdamus became tyrant of Naxos. Eighteen years later, Pisistratus died, and his son Hippias succeeded him.[2]

This fragment of ancient history illustrates an important principle of international relations: "foreigners" often participate in domestic political struggles. Pisistratus, for example, turned to outsiders like Lygdamus to overcome his local Athenian rivals. In return, Pisistratus installed Lygdamus on Naxos, a large island in the Aegean Sea.

In this book, we use the term "meddling" in a specific sense: when the regime in State #1 supports a domestic faction in State #2 as that faction wages a violent struggle for control of State #2. That "domestic faction" in State #2 might be the current regime or a rebel group.

The goal of this chapter is to understand the relationship between coups and foreign alliances. As we will see, unstable states are perennially susceptible to foreign meddling. When leaders come to power with outside backing, their foreign alliances and obligations are personal and preordained—not guided by an objective analysis of "state interests." (This further undermines the "rational state" model discussed in the previous chapter.) While meddling does produce international alliances, such alliances are tenuous and unstable, because they are focused on particular leaders, factions, or parties. When such regimes fall from power, the state's international alliances and orientations can "flip" instantly. In this way, political instability within a state leads to instability in foreign alliances.

The next chapter will present the other side of the coin: What happens with respect to coup-free states, which are by definition immune from foreign meddling? Coup-free states do not form such meddling-induced personal and factional alliances, and we see a pronounced tendency for coup-free states to adopt policies of permanent neutrality, especially when they are small and weak. But at the same time, despite their traditions of neutrality, coup-free states have gravitated into long-term relationships of cooperation, friendship, and alliance with one another. Unlike meddling-induced alliances, however, these alliances are a durable matter of national consensus and are not dependent on the continued rule of any particular leaders, groups, or parties.

As many scholars and writers have noticed, meddling is ubiquitous. ("History is filled with examples of transnational participation in internal wars"; "history is replete with interventions in the affairs of a state torn asunder by civil strife, by which a foreign state aids one or the other of the contending factions"; "it is hard to name a single year in the last three centuries when some nation was not interfering in another nation's internal affairs." [3])

We can reasonably assume, moreover, that the meddling relationships apparent on the surface of history represent a tiny sliver of the whole. The "historical record" is hardly complete, particularly in matters of intrigue. For obvious reasons, conspirators working with foreign powers to seize power do not publicize their activities, and they have little incentive to leave written records.

Coup-free states escape foreign meddling, but it is not quite the case that they are the only states to do so. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a few states appeared that were not constitutionally stable but nonetheless remained fairly impervious to meddling. In large, powerful, industrialized, bureaucratic states—like Prussia-Germany from 1862 to 1944 and the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1992—political contenders do not appear to have drawn significant partisan support from abroad.

This is because states that are small, weak, and unstable make ideal meddling targets. The larger and more powerful a country, the more difficult it is for outsiders to dictate political outcomes. The United States easily blocked communism in Grenada and El Salvador, for example, but found the job considerably more difficult in Russia, China, Cuba, and Vietnam. A study of military interventions between 1815 and 1975 confirms this. Out of forty-five cases where one state introduced its regular armed forces into another state's regime conflict, forty-one involved a great power meddling with a small state.[4]

There is a good reason why meddling has flourished throughout world history. Meddling offers a cheap and easy solution to foreign difficulties; a quick coup d'état can flip an enemy state into a friendly ally. Deadly internal conflicts enable foreign states, leaders, factions, and individuals to multiply their security, wealth, and influence by implanting a friendly regime. Generally, they find willing collaborators. When local factions are at each other's throats—in covert conspiracies or open civil wars—each side almost inevitably seeks foreign allies. Because of meddling, domestic and international tensions grow intertwined.

At the same time, when one state supports a rebel faction in the other, the two states move closer to outright war. One study shows that out of about sixty international wars between 1815 and 1939, thirty-one were preceded by civil disturbances within one of the warring states. In twenty-six of these cases, the conflicts internationalized because one side, usually the rebels, aligned themselves with a foreign power.[5]

International treaties have long sought to end meddling. They have never succeeded for very long. This tradition extends back at least to the Wars of the Roses. French king Louis XI reached a nonintervention pact in 1462 with England's Lancastrian queen Margaret. Louis broke it the following year and then made a similar agreement with the new Yorkist king Edward IV.[6] Louis XIV promised to stop supporting the ousted Stuart dynasty in the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick, reneged, and then pledged again in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht.

Antimeddling pacts sprouted like mushrooms in the twentieth century.

Central American leaders, for example, tried to end their chronic meddling by treaty in 1906. They declared that no government "shall in case of civil war intervene in favor of or against the Government of the country where the struggle takes place." The treaty broke down, largely because the dictator of Nicaragua continued intriguing against his neighbors. Another conference in 1922 produced a similar deal, but meddling persisted for decades.

Nonintervention is a cardinal principle in contemporary international law. It is enshrined in the UN Charter, as well as in the founding statutes of the Organization of American States and Organization of African Unity, the

Helsinki Declaration of 1975, and numerous other documents and communiqués. As in previous centuries, however, the norm is frequently honored in the breach.

MEDDLING CASE STUDIES

The remainder of this chapter illustrates meddling in four different contexts: European colonialism, Nazi meddling, the Cold War, and contemporary radical Islam. By observing the pervasiveness of meddling throughout these periods, we can better appreciate why states meddle, why they find willing collaborators, and how meddling continues to shape the course of world affairs.

European Colonialism

From the beginning, colonialism was meddling. European powers gained footholds—and steadily expanded their control—by taking sides in the chronic coups and civil wars of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In return, the propped-up native elites served their European allies. This section briefly examines the beginnings of the Spanish and British empires.

New Spain

When Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés landed in Mesoamerica in 1521, he encountered an Aztec Empire torn by chronic strife. The rulers of city-states had long struggled for dominance and imposed various forms of imperial hegemony when they could.[7]

The Aztecs proper—also called Mexica—lived in Tenochtitlán, a city built on two islands in Lake Texcoco, in the mountain-ringed valley where Mexico City now stands. Tenochtitlán gained regional supremacy in 1428 when it defeated Azcapotzalco, center of the Tepanec Empire, following a saga of meddling between the two cities. Aztec power inspired fear and loathing. "Hatred of the Mexicas," notes one scholar, "smoldered in conquered provinces and the independent enclaves."[8]

Enter Spanish adventurer Hernán Cortés. His four hundred soldiers conquered an empire of millions by making local allies against the Aztecs. When they arrived in 1519, the city of Tetzcoco was in open rebellion. Cortés first battled the inhabitants of Tlaxcala, but subsequent peace talks—through multiple translators—yielded an alliance. Spanish ranks swelled with Tlaxcalan warriors.

Cortés crossed the mountains to reach the Valley of Mexico. As he looked down, the colorful city of Tenochtitlán—with its stone buildings and two hundred thousand inhabitants—rose from the middle of blue-green Lake

Texcoco, surrounded by sparkling air and white-capped mountains. It seemed like an "enchanted vision," wrote Bernal Díaz del Castillo, one of Cortés' men. "It was all so wonderful that I do not know how to describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, seen, or dreamed of before."[9]

Mysteriously—people continue to guess why—Emperor Moctezuma II greeted Cortés warmly and escorted the Spaniards into a palace in the heart of Tenochtitlán. After an uneasy period, Cortés and thirty Spaniards showed up at Moctezuma's palace, armed and ready for battle, and turned their host into a captive. For reasons that remain unclear, Spanish troops massacred dozens of Aztec nobles at a religious feast. The city erupted in fury. The Spanish attempted to pacify the angry populace by presenting Moctezuma. As the emperor addressed the crowd, he was hit by a rock; he died several days later. Their protector gone, the Spaniards fled the city. Many Spaniards, weighed down by stolen treasure, were killed during the retreat.

Cortés regrouped in Tlaxcala. From there, expedition parties visited communities surrounding the Valley of Mexico, and a grand coalition took shape. Tens of thousands of native warriors joined Cortés for his final assault on Tenochtitlán. The city fell on August 13, 1521. Aztec rule was over; the history of "New Spain" began.

Ten years later, another Spanish adventurer performed a similar feat with the Incas. Francisco Pizarro found a more centralized empire in the Peruvian highlands but still found deep ravines of local hatred. When he arrived in 1532, a horrific succession struggle had just taken place, in which Atahualpa finally defeated his brother Washkar to become emperor. After capturing and ultimately executing Emperor Atahualpa, the Spaniards replaced him with a series of puppet Inca rulers, beginning with Tupac Huallpa, a royal on Washkar's side of the civil war. Spanish authority only persisted through decades of Inca rebellions because tens of thousands of native warriors fought alongside the foreigners.[10]

The British Empire

Supposedly, the British Empire was acquired in a "fit of absent-mindedness."[11] While somewhat overstated, the quote captures the unplanned, highly incremental, and frequently defensive nature of British imperialism.

As they explored, settled, and traded around the globe, Britons gradually embroiled themselves in local politics. When they acquired a small interest somewhere—a trading post, say, with certain privileges—they developed a stake in governance. British activities were a boon to some natives and an unwanted intrusion to others. Seeking to preserve or extend their position, Englishmen naturally formed preferences between competing local elites, and from there it was a short step to active political participation. When they marshaled resources behind a leader or faction, Britons bargained for further

advantages. Eventually, the British stake in local affairs included the power to collect taxes and control the armed forces, reducing native rulers to figureheads.[12]

The first major case was India. Technically, most of the subcontinent belonged to the Mughal Empire, but by the middle of the eighteenth century regional governors, or nawabs, had won effective control. The Mughal court in Delhi received tribute, but India was essentially a patchwork of independent states, many of them tiny. During the eighteenth century, there were about 180 million Indians altogether—constituting about 20 percent of the world population.

A corporation drove colonization. The English East India Company established factories and trading concerns along both coasts of India, negotiating continually with local rulers. The company did hire security forces—usually about a hundred Europeans and Indians per major factory—but these remained small and poorly trained until the mid-eighteenth century.

The Anglo-French war (over the "Austrian Succession") inflamed commercial rivalries in 1744. The French provided substantial military support to the nizam of Hyderabad against his internal and external rivals and acquired privileges in return. To counter the threat of French-backed rulers, the English company formed its own "subsidiary alliances."

Subsidiary alliances proved an unstable equilibrium: they ineluctably drew the East India Company toward direct control. Unpredictable weather, crop failures, and inefficient administration meant that rulers frequently defaulted on subsidy payments, and debts to the company mounted. The company could not make timely payments to its native soldiers, undermining their loyalty and reliability, and began to insist on direct control over revenues.

In Bengal, the wealthiest and most productive region of India, the company crossed a major threshold to imperial power. The nawab of Bengal died in 1756 and was succeeded by his grandson. With pretty, delicate features and a streak of cruelty, the twenty-three-year-old Mirza Muhammad Siraj ud-Daulah, often referred to as simply "Siraj ud-Daulah," immediately began antagonizing his subjects.

Siraj ud-Daulah mistrusted the English, suspected them of intriguing against his succession, and was angered when the company built military fortifications in direct defiance of his orders. Two months into his reign, Siraj ud-Daulah seized the burgeoning British settlement in Calcutta. An infamous incident occurred; the nawab's men pushed forty to seventy British soldiers into a tiny cell, where dozens died of heat and suffocation.

Company leaders in Madras tapped Robert Clive, a thirty-one-year-old official. Slightly plump but a proven military leader, Clive sailed to Bengal with about two thousand British and Indian troops and easily retook Calcutta

in January 1757. For several months, Clive and the nawab exchanged letters, edging warily toward coexistence.

Volatile Bengali politics intervened. The imperious Siraj ud-Daulah antagonized Jagat Seth, head of a fabulously wealthy banking family. Whereas the previous nawab had showered favors upon the Seths, Siraj ud-Daulah squeezed them for money, insulted them in public, and even threatened forcible circumcision. In addition, the Seths—like many other major Bengali merchants and landowners—dealt extensively with the East India Company.

The Seths, in alliance with other leading Bengalis, hatched a conspiracy. The plotters chose Mir Jafar, an aging paymaster of the nawab's army, to replace Siraj ud-Daulah as nawab of Bengal. In April 1757, a wealthy Sikh merchant fell ill, and company officer Luke Scrafton visited him. In the privacy of his bedroom, the merchant told Scrafton about the coup plot. Scrafton, in turn, wrote to Clive, who conferred with a company committee. The company decided to support the coup—for a price. The committee submitted its terms to Mir Jafar; the deal included millions of pounds sterling for the company and hundreds of thousands for committee members personally. Mir Jafar agreed.

Two agonizingly tense months followed. Key plotters—including the Sikh merchant and Mir Jafar—appeared to waver.

Still unsure of his partners, Clive marched a small army toward the nawab's camp at Palashi, or "Plassey." On the day of battle, Clive's three thousand Europeans and Indian sepoys faced Siraj ud-Daulah's army, which numbered about fifty thousand.

Unfortunately for Siraj ud-Daulah, Mir Jafar and other conspirators led most of his troops. As the fighting began, the conspirators simply watched and did not order their men into battle. Perceiving mass disloyalty, Siraj ud-Daulah ordered a retreat. Clive's men attacked, sowing confusion and panic. The nawab fled. A few days later, a fakir, or holy man, recognized Siraj ud-Daulah despite his disguise. The nawab was captured, stabbed to death, and paraded through streets on an elephant.

Mir Jafar was now nawab of Bengal, but his key ally, Robert Clive, held many trump cards. Suddenly, the company enjoyed access to Bengali revenues. The company's army ballooned in order to defend company interests against rival states and internal challenges. In 1764, the company crushed a rebellion and demanded the office of *diwan* (revenue collector). Afterward, the nawab of Bengal became essentially a British pawn.

With Bengali resources, the British gained leverage and capacity for further meddling. In other words, Indian taxpayers financed British conquest. British expansion was partly defensive, to protect Bengal against independent states like Awadh and the Marathas. Of course, simple greed also played a role. Britons like Robert Clive made vast fortunes manipulating Indian politics. At the same time, many wealthy Indians were drawn to the British

courts established after 1772, where they could protect their property by law rather than depend on uncertain personal connections.

One by one, the company acquired a controlling stake in other states, usually through subsidiary alliances. Awadh, Benares, Bihar, the Carnatic, Delhi, Hyderabad, the Marathas, Mysore, Orissa, and Tanjavur, among many others, fell into Britain's orbit. By 1820, only the Punjab posed a serious threat to the English East India Company.

The British pushed their frontier all the way to Afghanistan, where they backed a puppet ruler in the 1830s to block Russian encroachment. The "Great Game" was on, but British meddling to secure the subcontinent hardly ended in Kabul. Preservation of India drove much of Britain's nineteenth-century imperial spree.

Of course, we should not overstate India's importance. British leaders also found compelling local reasons to find, coax, install, and protect client rulers in Asia and Africa, as they had in India. Still, the Indian jewel always sparkled in the background. The eastern coast of Africa was particularly strategic. "From an Indian point of view," said the Earl of Kimberley at the India Office in 1884, "I regard it as of very serious importance that no Foreign Power should oust us from that coast."[13]

British gunboats began meddling along the African and Arabian coasts during the Napoleonic Wars. Occasional subsidies and threats to local rulers sufficiently protected British trading and security interests. As in India, French competition forced Britain to extend her commitments. British arms installed a new sultan of Zanzibar in 1859, defeating a French client along the way.

Still, concerns for Indian security triggered the "scramble" for Africa in the 1880s. Like civilization itself, the scramble began in Egypt. Egypt forms a land barrier between the Mediterranean and Red seas; the Suez Canal, completed in 1869, sliced open a waterway. European warships could now steam directly to India.

Egyptian rulers, or khedives, had gained practical independence from their nominal Ottoman overlords in 1805. In 1838, the Royal Navy had ousted a French protégé and installed a British ally in Cairo. Indirect influence, combined with British naval supremacy, secured the canal against rival powers.

As in India, debt collection and French competition intensified colonial pressure. Khedive Ismail sought to modernize with foreign loans, but corruption and inefficiency derailed his plans, and Egyptian debt mounted. In 1878, France pushed an intrusive payment plan, and British leaders felt compelled to go along. Egypt converted to a constitutional monarchy, and the new government included a British and a French minister.

The foreign manipulation triggered a militant nationalist reaction, led by Egyptian colonel Ahmed Arabi. Khedive Ismail rode the nationalist wave,

dismissing the new government and abandoning the financial controls. Anglo-French pressure forced Ismail from office, and he was replaced with his own son Tewfik. In September 1881, Ahmed Arabi surrounded Tewfik's palace and forced the khedive to dismiss another pro-foreign ministry.

Amidst anti-European riots, a British fleet bombarded military forts at Alexandria. This fanned the nationalist blaze, which swept Colonel Arabi to power. The British government worried that France would either take direct military action or reach a separate understanding with Arabi. Either way, French control over Suez was unacceptable. "[T]he interests of England and of India," declared the Earl of Northbrook, "demand that no other nation should be allowed to dominate Egypt."[14] In addition, Arabi himself threatened to destroy the canal.

Liberal prime minister William Gladstone disliked imperial adventures but felt compelled to act. "As regards the Suez Canal," Minister Sir Charles Dilke explained to the House of Commons, "England has a double interest; it has a predominant commercial interest, because 82 per cent of the trade passing through the Canal is British trade, and it has a predominant political interest caused by the fact that the Canal is the principal highway to India, Ceylon, the Straits, and British Burmah, where 250,000,000 people live under our rule; and also to China, where we have vast interests and 84 per cent of the external trade of that still more enormous Empire."[15]

Gladstone assured the members of Parliament that British forces would exit quickly and allow the Egyptians to "manage their own affairs." They would restore the khedive and train a loyal army for him. The Egyptians, Gladstone declared, were ready to adopt "free institutions" and a "reign of law" in order to attain the "blessings of civilized life."[16] As one minister later recalled, "[W]e were all desirous of a speedy evacuation and believed that the conditions which we had laid down would be accomplished in the course of a year or two at the outside."[17] By 275 to 19, the Commons voted to invade Egypt, overthrow Arabi, and protect the canal.

The British remained in Egypt for fifty-four years. Several factors made departure unpalatable. Egyptians saw the khedive as a foreign puppet. Lacking authority or popularity, he remained dependent on British guns. Additionally, Britain took responsibility for Egyptian debts and could not withdraw unless Egypt became solvent, which required close supervision. Finally, a regional military threat—the Mahdi army of Sudanese Islamists—endangered Egypt and the canal.

At a cabinet meeting in April 1884, Gladstone wearily concluded, "We have done our Egyptian business, and we are an Egyptian government."[18] Before the Commons, he admitted the possibility of poor judgment but argued that the decision to invade appeared necessary and unavoidable at the time.

Egypt appeared a dubious prize, but it certainly extended Britain's global reach. In direct response, France and Germany began claiming their own African territories. Amidst the "scramble," international conferences partitioned the continent.

Moreover, Egypt pulled the English deeper and deeper into East Africa. Egyptian life has always depended on the Nile. By damming the Upper Nile in Sudan, a hostile power might destroy Egypt. Additionally, the Sudanese Mahdists posed their own danger, even if they lacked technical capacity to build a dam. By 1885, Britain was pushing the Egyptian defense perimeter south to Khartoum. British leaders saw French and German inroads in Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya as threatening to the Upper Nile. In response, they made local allies and established protectorates throughout East Africa.

The incremental logic of imperialism is clear. To maintain Calcutta, the British took Bengal. To protect Bengal, they acquired India. To secure their crown jewel, they seized Egypt and the Suez Canal. To keep Egypt safe, they occupied vast stretches of East Africa. The lesson: the more you have, the more you can acquire, and the greater your incentive to expand further.

The centrality of meddling is equally clear. As historian Ronald Robinson demonstrated, European powers consistently inserted themselves into fissures and crevices presented by indigenous factional violence. Local leaders, desperate to crush their internal and external enemies, welcomed European assistance. Even when some elites spurned foreigners, counterelites offered to collaborate.[19]

Nationalist movements finally succeeded in the decades after World War II, as European powers relinquished their grip. Letting go, however, proved difficult. Even after granting formal independence to Egypt, Jordan, and Tanganyika, for example, Britain continued sending military forces into leadership struggles.

Nazi Meddling

Adolf Hitler meddled throughout Europe for two purposes: to install fascist allies and to gobble up smaller countries.

As soon as Hitler came to power in 1933, he began funding and encouraging the Austrian Nazi Party. The Austrian Nazis blew up railways, power stations, and government buildings, murdered regime supporters, and attempted a putsch in 1934. In 1938, Hitler's threats forced the Austrian regime to include Nazis in their government. Once installed, they invited Germany to invade. As troops streamed over the border, leaders in Vienna proclaimed Austria "a province of the German Reich."

Despite an international agreement not to meddle in the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1938, Hitler gave substantial assistance to Francisco Franco's Nationalists, while the Soviets helped the left-leaning Loyalists. After seizing

the Czech Sudetenland, Hitler installed a pro-Nazi regime in Prague. During World War II, Italian rebels deposed Benito Mussolini. Hitler sent troops to rescue Il Duce from prison and reestablished him in northern Italy.

When Hitler decided to swallow coup-free states, on the other hand, he found meddling impossible. He was forced to simply invade and occupy. While Norway remained independent, right-wing politician Vidkun Quisling received German money and talked of a coup d'état. The German minister in Oslo, however, warned Hitler that Quisling "need not be taken seriously" because his influence and prospects were "very slight."[20] After the German invasion, collaborators like Quisling served as pure puppets but enjoyed no local support. In fact, Quisling's treachery spurred Norwegian resistance. With German troops already controlling Oslo, Quisling stormed a radio station and proclaimed a new regime. His treason shamed Norwegians, who rallied heroically against the Nazi occupiers.

The Cold War

Fortunately, the Soviet Union and the United States avoided direct confrontation during their "long twilight struggle" from the late 1940s to the late 1980s. The Cold War remained purely a meddling contest, fought by global proxies.[21]

The meddling began immediately following the October Revolution of 1917—and the first target was Russia itself. British, French, American, and Japanese troops went into Russia to support the "Whites" against the "Reds," initially because the new Bolshevik regime made peace with Germany amidst World War I. Obviously, the effort failed, and the Reds held power for another seventy-five years.

During World War II, a common peril urged wary cooperation between the West and the USSR. At war's end, the Red Army occupied Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and eastern Germany. In each case, Joseph Stalin used his leverage to install friendly Communists. If local leaders or societies strayed—as in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968—Soviet tanks reinstalled orthodox puppets. For their part, the victorious western allies ensured a return to liberal democracy in West Germany, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. By 1955, a clear line between East and West cut through Central Europe.

Asia, Africa, and Latin America, however, remained in play. In a sense, colonial meddling simply became superpower meddling. Scholars describe intervention as a "fundamental," "permanent," and "structural" characteristic of the Cold War[22] and note that meddling constituted the "main source of international tensions."[23]

Many regimes adopted communist or democratic facades, but their ideological commitments were usually shallow. Coups, instability, and simple changes of mind brought frequent switches of allegiance. Soviet premier Yuri Andropov bemoaned the "heritage of backwardness, internal strife and conflict" plaguing the Third World.[24]

The "domino theory" preoccupied both sides. The United States fought in Vietnam, and the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, because their leaders feared that losing one ally to the other camp would trigger cascading effects.

Opponents of the Vietnam War tended to question or downplay the domino theory. Just because a movement for national liberation came to power in one state, why should other states follow the same ideological trajectory?

The answer, of course, is meddling. Successful revolutionaries in one state might assist similar movements in other states. The more revolutionary states, the more resources become available for like-minded insurgents. From one success, theoretically, the revolution could metastasize, communizing vast portions of the globe.

Was this just hyperbolic fearmongering? Or were domino effects real and consequential during the Cold War?

Russia became the first Marxist state. By 1921—only four years after the October Revolution—Soviet assistance began shaping Chinese politics. At first, the Russians supported the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang, against the warlords entrenched in many provinces. The Chinese Communist Party began as a small left-wing contingent within the Kuomintang but quickly attracted its own patrons in Moscow. Annoyed by Soviet intrusions, Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek began purging Communists and leftists from Kuomintang ranks, which led to civil war. In the final stage, from 1946 to 1950, the Soviet-backed Communists defeated the American-supplied Nationalists. As Chiang Kai-Shek retreated to Taiwan, President Harry Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Straits, blocking a complete Communist victory. Still, Americans asked, "Who lost China?" and Republicans pointed to Truman. With Eastern Europe already under the hammer and sickle, another domino had toppled.

Immediately, the People's Republic of China began exporting revolution. In Korea, Soviet client Kim Il Sung faced certain defeat in November 1950 as American troops, flying the United Nations banner, advanced north. In response, hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers poured across the border, pushing the Americans and South Koreans back down the peninsula. Both sides agreed on a truce, and a Stalinist dictatorship entrenched itself in Pyongyang. The People's Republic installed friendly puppets in Tibet and formally annexed the Himalayan Buddhist theocracy.

Sometimes the Soviets and Chinese hastened decolonization by funding and arming national liberation movements. With help from Moscow and Beijing, for example, Ho Chi Minh pushed the French out of North Vietnam

in 1954, and the Hanoi regime eventually captured Saigon in 1975. North Vietnam, in turn, repeatedly intervened in neighboring Laos and Cambodia. The Soviets and Chinese also backed Communist independence organizations in Angola.

Sometimes, meddling backfired. By supporting the losers, foreign powers could push the winners into the opposite geopolitical camp. A good example is Cuba. The Soviets, aware of heavy U.S. influence and propensity to intervene, did not even consider the Western Hemisphere in play. But tiny Costa Rica sent a critical shipment of arms to Cuban rebel Fidel Castro. As Castro led guerrilla forces in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1958, he wrote to a friend about watching Fulgencio Batista's forces fire American-made rockets. "I swore to myself," Castro noted, "that the North Americans were going to pay dearly for what they were doing. When this war is over a much wider and bigger war will commence for me: the war I am going to wage against them. I am aware that this is my true destiny."[25] Following Castro's victory, neither the CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion nor various assassination plots helped seduce the new Cuban dictator.

The Cubans became meddling specialists for the Communist Bloc. After coups in Algeria and Ghana in the mid-1960s, Cuban forces began supporting a number of African regimes, factions, and parties. They guarded presidents in Congo and Guinea-Conakry, built popular militias in Sierra Leone and Equatorial Guinea, provided military advisers to Mozambique, and sent tens of thousands of troops into Angola and Ethiopia. In general, Cubans were seen as less provocative to the West than Soviet troops.

Castro also meddled closer to home. He shored up the Marxist clique in Grenada, assisted the Colombian M19 insurgents, and supplied critical armaments to the Nicaraguan Sandinistas for their 1979 revolution. The ripple effects continued. Once in power, the Sandinistas began arming leftist guerrillas in El Salvador and Honduras.

Although apt in some ways, the domino image is misleading in several respects. First, in a real domino chain, the initial domino's job is done quickly, and all subsequent work is performed by later dominoes. In the Cold War, the USSR continued spreading Marxism-Leninism for decades, although frequently abetted by secondary agents like East Germany and Cuba. (The list of Third World countries targeted for Soviet meddling is vast. It includes Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Cambodia, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Iran, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Korea, North Yemen, the Philippines, South Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.)

Second, the domino theory implies that there are only two positions—"upright" and "fallen"—and that all the fallen dominoes remain allies. Moscow and Beijing, however, parted ways in the 1960s. Instead of combining

efforts, they sometimes meddled at cross-purposes. In order to balance Chinese influence in Tanzania, for example, the Soviets actually backed anti-Communist Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. China and the Soviet Union also supported rival parties in Zimbabwe and Cambodia.

Third, the domino theory might imply that all conflicts were merely theaters within a single, all-encompassing geopolitical contest. Some Cold War–era wars and interventions, however, had only tenuous connections to the East-West divide.

Fourth, the domino image implies that states were independent, freestanding entities before Communist subversion. As we have seen, however, the great powers guided, shaped, and captured Third World politics long before the Soviet Union beckoned. When the Soviets and Chinese fostered liberation movements in Asia and Africa, they simply added another foreign source of support. Latin American states won independence from Spain in the 1820s but thereafter experienced meddling by neighbors, an occasional European power, and the United States.[26]

With these caveats, falling dominoes remain a viable metaphor for the twentieth-century explosion of Leninist movements, parties, and states. Communism died when Mikhail Gorbachev stopped all the meddling. His decision not to intervene allowed a different process to unfold in the fall of 1989. Mimicking one another in rapid succession, Eastern European nations poured into the streets and won real independence.

The Cold War never really heated up, at least between the superpowers. Third World factions and armies fought most of the combat, usually against their own countrymen. Sometimes, as in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, they were joined by superpower troops. Mostly, however, they just aimed Russian- and American-supplied guns at each other.

Recent Meddling Flashpoints and Radical Islam

The root cause of meddling—chronic coups and civil strife—has clearly survived the Cold War. Religious and ethnic loyalties constitute primary bases for cross-national violence, as witnessed in the intensive meddling that culminated in the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s and the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980 because the newly installed Iranian mullahs were supporting Hussein's Shi'a enemies and undermining his grip on Iraq and because Hussein hoped to discredit Ayatollah Khomeini and trigger regime change.[27] In Rwanda, Hutu leaders—who had initially come to power with support from neighboring states—perpetrated a mass murder of Tutsis to retain their precarious grip on power. They were ultimately stopped by Tutsi rebels who, because they had earlier helped President Yoweri Museveni seize power in Uganda, enjoyed Ugandan backing.[28]

Radical Islam presents a new global framework for meddling. The movement began as a cabal of Egyptian revolutionaries called the Muslim Brotherhood, which formed in Cairo during the 1920s and sought for decades to overthrow the Egyptian government, which it viewed as a Western lackey.[29]

At the same time, the movement has always been thoroughly internationalist. The Muslim Brotherhood immediately developed a presence in Sudan, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The goal, as espoused by founders like Sayyid Qutb and more recent Islamist leaders like Osama bin Laden, is not simply a new government in Egypt. It is a revived caliphate—a superstate encompassing the entire Muslim *Umma*, or community of faith, from Morocco to Indonesia.

From the beginning, the movement has been an international web of thinkers, clerics, organizers, political parties, revolutionaries, and terrorists. To be sure, many groups are necessarily focused upon local and immediate concerns. But the overarching, long-term goal—a Muslim state under Shari'a law—fosters cooperation, organizational linkage, and camaraderie throughout the web.

Technically, this type of mutual support only becomes "meddling," in the sense used in this chapter, when a state takes sides in internal armed conflicts. But alliance between rebel factions is closely related. And when Islamic militants have come to power in Iran, Afghanistan, and Sudan, they have begun meddling beyond their borders.[30] Just as in the Cold War, a revolutionary movement is metastasizing, even as it suffers local defeats. Even more than "international communism" ever did, radical Islam constitutes a supranational movement.

"We are the soldiers of God," said a voice in classical Arabic on behalf of a mysterious group named Islamic Jihad. "We are neither Iranians, Syrians, nor Palestinians, but Muslims who follow the precepts of the Qur'an."[31]

This telephone call came after the October 1983 suicide bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, which killed 241 American soldiers. Even then, American policy makers did not really take the jihadist threat seriously. For understandable reasons, the United States continued to be preoccupied with the Soviet Union. Through the 1980s, America poured billions of dollars—funneled through Pakistan—into the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. But the jihadis never intended to stop in Afghanistan.

Osama bin Laden, son of a billionaire businessman close to the Saudi royal family, was one of the young men who traveled from the Arab world to Afghanistan. Afterward, he remained committed to the internationalist vision. "We also stress to honest Muslims," he declared in early 2003, "that they should move, incite, and mobilize the [Islamic] nation, amid such grave events and hot atmosphere so as to liberate themselves from those unjust and renegade ruling regimes, which are enslaved by the United States. They should also do so to establish the rule of God on earth. The most qualified

regions for liberation are Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, the land of the two holy mosques [Saudi Arabia], and Yemen."[32]

National revolutions are crucial, of course, but they are merely preludes to integration of the *Umma*. Moreover, this orientation helps explain the prominence of terrorism. If the goal were simply piecemeal revolutions in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and so forth, and the formation of separate Islamist regimes, it is unclear how flying airplanes into American skyscrapers helps accomplish these tasks. But if the idea is to provoke the West to attack Islamic countries and thereby "awaken" Muslims everywhere, terror makes sense.

In any case, cross-border alliances have proliferated. (These are complicated, of course, by the Sunni-Shi'a split. Iran backs Shi'a militants like Hezbollah in Lebanon but does not appear to promote the Sunni al-Qaeda terror network.) Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have long been meddling in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union and the United Arab Emirates have also meddled there, and of course the United States remains deeply embroiled. Since the outbreak of civil war in 1975, Lebanon has been a meddling hotbed—by Syria, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Iran, among others. Hamas, the militant Palestinian party that seized control of Gaza, has received assistance from many sides, including the Saudis. (And during the January 2006 Palestinian elections, the United States channeled support to their Fatah opponents.) Somalia has seen intensive meddling by the United States and Ethiopia, both of whom oppose the radical Islamic Courts.

These are just a few examples. We can expect radical Islamists, moderate Arab dictatorships, new Arab democracies, Iran, Israel, and the United States to continue supporting armed factions throughout this volatile region.

In terms of the basic meddling structure, how much has really changed since the times of Pisistratus? Pisistratus intervened on Naxos to make his ally Lygdamus tyrant, after Lygdamus helped him defeat his Athenian enemies. Leaders throughout the world aligned themselves with European colonial powers, then with Cold War superpowers, and now with Western or Islamist patrons, to crush their local rivals.

None of these foreign policy decisions can be reasonably ascribed to the "interests of state." In many cases, leaders took actions that were clearly detrimental to "the state" and its people. During the colonial period, for example, strategic decisions by Asian, African, and Amerindian elites obliterated any semblance of an independent state. When regimes rely on foreign powers for their positions, power, and privileges, an objective or impersonal calculus of "state interests" does not guide state action. We should expect similarly self-interested motives wherever meddling occurs.

But when instability and foreign meddling come to an end as states build coup-free structures, the possibilities for state rationality are greatly enhanced. Next, we turn to the logic of neutrality.

Chapter Ten

The Neutrality Instinct

Aside from so-called dark matter, most of the known universe consists of hydrogen and helium. These two elements offer useful analogies for international relations.

On Earth, hydrogen is usually trapped in larger molecules. The hydrogen atom's outer "shell" lacks an electron, so it bonds easily and forcefully with atoms carrying an extra one, like oxygen. (Separating pure hydrogen requires considerable energy, which is why it remains an inefficient fuel.) The oceans, and our bodies, are full of bonded hydrogen.

Helium, on the other hand, is almost completely inert. Helium's outer shell is full, rendering it self-contained, autonomous, and aloof.

Like hydrogen atoms, states with chronic coups are highly reactive: they bond easily with outside entities. When local factions are killing each other—by covert intrigue or open civil wars—each side cultivates foreign allies. Because of meddling, as we saw in the previous chapter, many leaders and governing factions begin with foreign alliances already in place.

Like helium atoms, coup-free states are self-sufficient. Leaders of stable republics engage in diplomacy, but their political fates are determined at home. Such leaders do not fear domestic overthrow, so they need not seek foreign patrons. In fact, doing so could easily constitute "treason," and political opponents would certainly attack unseemly foreign loyalties or obligations. As a result, coup-free states present no gaps or crevices allowing manipulation by foreign hands.

This is why coup-free states display a recurring neutrality habit. Before the twentieth-century world wars, as we will see, all coup-free states practiced neutrality. The smaller and weaker they were, the more insistently and permanently they isolated themselves. After their fifteenth-century heyday, the Venetians withdrew into neutral isolation, which they perfected during

their eighteenth-century decline. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg practiced neutrality. Great coup-free powers like Great Britain and the United States occasionally took sides and intervened abroad, but they always returned to an isolationist position vis-à-vis other great powers. Today, stable Costa Rica has adopted neutrality, in a region notable for instability and meddling.

This pattern is best explained by basic cost-benefit considerations. All coup-free states are republics. In republics, leaders can be corrected or removed if their foreign policies prove harmful or disastrous.

For small states, neutrality is clearly optimal. By joining a great power war, they expose themselves to invasion and occupation. Even worse, they might become the battlefield. And to what end? They are unlikely to tip the balance anyway. If the belligerent powers are evenly balanced, the small state could easily find itself on the losing side and suffer the horrors and deprivations of war. If there is a clear disparity between warring sides, all the more reason to stay out; a small state's meager contribution is unlikely to be decisive anyway. It cannot help a weak power win, and its assistance to the strong is fairly meaningless. Even if the small state joins a winning coalition, its losses can easily overwhelm any gains.

Because of these basic calculations, the citizens of minor republics have long viewed neutrality as collectively optimal. As Livy tells us, there were "three classes of leaders" in Greek cities during the Hellenistic period of the second century BC.

> Two of these, by fawning either upon the Roman power or upon the friendship of kings sought private wealth for themselves by the oppression of their cities; the middle group alone, in opposition to both these others, strove to safeguard that freedom and their laws. These last won greater popularity among their own people, but correspondingly less favor with the foreign powers.[1]

In early-medieval Venice, similarly, factions aiming at monarchy allied with the Franks or Byzantines, while only committed republicans charted a neutral course.

Coup-free states, moreover, are a special type of republic—a permanent one. Only they can make a convincing claim to permanent neutrality.

But this does not mean that every coup-free state is permanently neutral. Nor does it mean that unstable states are incapable of declaring neutrality in specific contexts. It simply means that coup-free states find it easier to maintain a consistently neutral posture amidst international conflict than their unstable cousins.

The causal arrow goes the other way as well. Venice and Switzerland were neutral before they were coup-free; Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands,

Ireland, Finland, and Austria began practicing neutrality at roughly the same time they stabilized.

Why should neutrality facilitate stability? When a state adopts a permanently isolationist, nonaligned posture, the relationships between local factions and outside powers necessarily weaken. Outside powers grow less interested in cultivating local clients because they cannot secure a military alliance anyway. At the same time, local politicians must maintain a distance from outside powers in order to credibly demonstrate their commitment to peace and neutrality. Stripped of foreign patrons—who are frequently at war themselves—local factions find it easier to coexist.

Through the centuries, neutrality has been a natural position for coup-free states, especially when they are small and weak. Only during the past hundred years has a countervailing principle triumphed within the coup-free zone: cooperation, friendship, and alliance. That is the subject of chapter 11. For now, we focus on the gravitational pull to neutrality.

VENICE

Through the eighteenth century, European powers and principalities clashed and bonded according to the baroque intrigues of their ruling families. In this highly reactive world, the Venetian Republic was distinctly autonomous and aloof.

During its unstable days, Venice experienced chronic meddling by foreign powers. From the eighth through tenth centuries, strife between pro-Byzantine and pro-Frankish factions tore the city.[2]

Venice began practicing neutrality, on a more or less consistent basis, after the republican revolution of 1032. By the twelfth century, other Italian cities called upon Venice to mediate their disputes.[3] From the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, and again beginning in the sixteenth century, neutrality was the traditional Venetian posture.[4] In other words, Venetians tossed neutrality aside during their fifteenth-century glory days and then resumed the policy during their long decline.

Still, Venetian neutrality was never absolute and should not be understood as a complete withdrawal from the world. Venice fought its own wars but usually shied away from entangling alliances. Venice joined the Fourth Crusade's sack of Christian Constantinople in 1204 and seized the jewels of Byzantium's Adriatic empire. Venice fought Genoa in the late thirteenth century, then Austria and Padua in the late fourteenth century, and tried to poison the Holy Roman emperor in 1415. The Serenissima was immune to meddling after 1310 but meddled in neighboring states like Padua, Florence, Mantua, and France from time to time over the next four hundred years.

As Venetian financial and military strength rose in the fourteenth century, the city increasingly shed its aversion to alliances. The republic allied with Florence in 1336, Milan in the 1370s, Verona in the 1380s, Ferrara in the 1390s, Florence in the 1420s, the pope and Genoa in the 1430s, the pope again in 1461, Persia in 1472, the Holy Roman emperor, Spain, and Milan in 1494, and France again in 1498.

Still, alliances were controversial, and many opposed them. When Venetian nobles sought alliance with Florence against the Duke of Milan in 1423, Doge Tommaso Mocenigo lectured them on the correct Venetian posture. "Live in peace, fear nothing, and trust not the Florentines!" He continued, "Round you is naught but war, fire, tribulation. Italy, France, Spain, Catalonia, England, Burgundy, Persia, Russia, Hungary are all at war. We wage war against the infidels only, and great are the praise and glory we reap."[5]

Because Venice was coup-free, the central government monopolized Venetian diplomacy. Elsewhere throughout Renaissance Europe, exiled nobles routinely established a presence at foreign courts. Venice was the only major fifteenth-century Italian state to have no disgruntled factions intriguing against it at the French court.[6]

Venice reached the zenith of its power in the 1460s. Even during its heyday, Venice tended to keep friends at arm's length, refusing to enter wars on their behalf. The republic's friendship also tended to be short-lived. Historian William Bouwsma describes the Venetian "talent" for adapting to shifting circumstances and its "deep antipathy to entangling alliances."[7] Her "coldly self-centered policies" and "apparent disdain for the interests of other states," he comments, contributed to "the almost universal and nearly fatal detestation she had aroused by the early sixteenth century."[8]

By refusing to form strong alliances, Venice freed itself to pursue opportunities. This yielded benefits, but Venice paid a public relations price. The Most Serene Republic was seen as arrogant, cold, and calculating. The Florentine Niccolò Machiavelli, for example, saw Venice as an ungrateful friend and unreliable ally.[9]

The Duke of Milan gave the secretary of the republic an earful in 1467. "You Venetians," he began, "if you knew how you are universally hated, your hair would stand on end . . . you are alone, with all the world against you, not only in Italy but beyond the Alps also."[10]

Centuries later, historian William Thayer compared the Renaissance Venetians to the Victorian-era British. "She carried herself with haughtiness," he wrote, "making no more effort than the modern Britisher to dissemble the belief in her own superiority. Like England, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, she had not a friend in the world, not a neighbor who would not have rejoiced secretly to see her humbled."[11]

Arguably, Venice's image problem was partly attributable to its committee system. For all their faults, monarchs are at least recognizable as human

personalities. The Venetian Council of Ten was an ominous, secretive, faceless institution.

Moreover, the rotating committee system made Venetian foreign policy somewhat erratic. When a king defects opportunistically, his reputation suffers, and his word is less meaningful. A council with rotating membership, however, is less constrained by individual commitments. New members join, votes tally differently, and policies shift accordingly.

Venetian neutrality undercut any incentive for others to come to the republic's defense, because Venice would be unlikely to repay that kindness with a strong, durable alliance. The result: Venice had many acquaintances and business partners but no friends.

The League of Cambrai was an extraordinary event in European history, and it exemplifies the danger facing a resolute loner. In 1508, a collection of bitter enemies put aside their differences and collaborated to seize Venetian territories. The Holy Roman emperor, the kings of France and Spain, the pope, and the dukes of Savoy, Ferrara, and Mantua joined in. In May 1509, the republic suffered a shattering military defeat and lost much of its mainland territory.

Afterward, Venice exploited the tensions within this rickety, unlikely coalition. It pulled the pope over to its side in 1510 and allied with the French in 1513. The republic also sharpened its intelligence system and diplomatic corps. For the next three centuries, Venetian ambassadors submitted extensive and systematic reports on the minutiae of European affairs to the Council of Ten. Today, these reports are uniquely valuable historical sources. The cloak-and-dagger work contributed to Venice's image problem, but it paid rich political dividends. By 1517, the republic had regained much of its territory.

Partly because Venice provided a stable and secure environment, foreign powers established embassies, banks, and clandestine associations along the canals. Venice became the center of European intrigue; as host, the government watched closely.

Also, the Council of Ten maintained tight surveillance over Venetian diplomacy. Venetian diplomats lived under strict rules: no fraternizing with foreign counterparts. When they went abroad, Venetian ambassadors could only direct their correspondence to the Ten. Within Venice, foreign diplomats were not allowed private contact with the doge or senators; business was transacted in official committee meetings. Enforcement could be harsh. In 1639, for example, the doge's nephew was strangled in prison for being seen in a gondola with a secretary of Spain. Such measures prevented informal cliques from forming around foreign emissaries; they provide another way in which the commitment to neutrality helped maintain stability.[12]

Venetian power declined steadily after the fifteenth century. Trade routes to the New World and around Africa to the east slowly rendered Venetian

dominance of Mediterranean trade obsolete. Venice grew poorer and shabbier, but its constitutional gears continued to mesh like a Swiss watch.

By the late 1500s, Venice had resumed its habitual neutrality, and the Venetians began speaking a new language of pacifism and international morality.[13] Once again, other nations turned to Venice to mediate their disputes. Long before Sweden, Venice occupied the Sweden niche in world affairs.

In about 1612, Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador to Venice, wrote that the "general course" of Venetian foreign policy was to "maintaine a neutrality" amidst the "divisions betwixt other Princes and states."[14] The following century, another Englishman, James Howell, praised Venice for its long history as a neutral peacemaker. "Another cause of the *longevity* of this Republic may be alleged to be, that She hath allwayes bin more inclined to *peace* than *war*, and chosen rather to be a Spectatrix or Umpresse, than a Gamestresse." Moreover, "all Christendom is beholden unto this wise Republic," because she has "labourd more for the generall peace and tranquility of Christendom, and by her moderation and prudent comportment hath don better Offices in this kind than any other whatsoever."[15]

Many Venetians praised neutrality as rational and linked it to stability. Renaissance patrician Gasparo Contarini, for example, thought neutrality preserved his city from factional violence.[16] (Modern historians have also made this connection.[17]) Paolo Paruta, another sixteenth-century Venetian statesman, agreed that neutrality created the happiest society. "To enjoy the sweet fruits of peace," he wrote, "is the true purpose to which all military institutions and operations should be directed." "Therefore that prince or that republic which directs all its thoughts and attention to wars," he continued, "is not on the path that can lead it to well being, which consists not in dominating many peoples but in ruling with justice and keeping its subjects in peace and tranquility."[18]

Outside observers concurred: Venice practiced a thoroughly rational foreign policy. According to a French aristocrat, the Venetians followed "all the maxims of their true interest"; an Englishman declared Venice had "allwayes bin one of the most politic and pragmaticall'st Republics on Earth."[19]

Venetian neutrality was neither perfect nor pacifistic. When attacked, Venice fought back. In 1571, Venice formed a "Holy League," joining the pope and Spain to confront the Ottoman navy. Venice again warred against the Turks from 1635 to 1660, 1684 to 1699, and 1714 to 1718.

Still, Venice sustained a roughly independent posture through centuries. After the Venetians concluded their final Turkish war in 1718, weakness enabled them to perfect their neutrality, and they entered a long, peaceful twilight. After the fall of the republic, a French historian described the eighteenth-century Venetian regime: "[I]solated amid her fellow-nations, imperturbable in her indifference, blind to her own interests, insensible to insults, she sacrifices all to the single object of giving no offence to other states."[20]

Between 1718 and 1797, Venice fought no wars and studiously avoided military alliances. Even after 1789, as French radicalism exploded across Europe, Venice remained aloof. In the summer of 1796, Napoleon occupied Venetian territory, but still Venice refused to ally with either Austria or France. A year later, Napoleon terminated the Venetian Republic, engulfing the city within the burgeoning French empire.

At that time, John Marshall was America's "minister extraordinary" in Paris. French and British diplomats warned him that America, if it insisted on neutrality, could end up like Venice.[21]

BRITAIN

British foreign policy after 1746 bears a family resemblance to the Venetian pattern.[22] As we recall, Britain was vulnerable to foreign meddling, but only until 1746.

In the early eighteenth century, British foreign policy was primarily driven by fears of a Stuart restoration, engineered by France or another Continental power. These fears were realistic. Foreign governments tried to change the British regime by coordinating invasions with local rebellions on many occasions. For example, a French fleet set sail in 1708 (but was chased away by the British navy); a Spanish force landed in Scotland in 1719 (but quickly surrendered); French ships preparing to invade in 1744 were destroyed by storm; another French invasion in 1745–1746 was canceled as the Jacobite army retreated to Scotland.

French leaders routinely tried to control Britain by threatening to support the Jacobites. In 1731, the French envoy in London responded angrily to a new British-Austrian alliance, remarking that France could simply *jouer le Pretendant*, or "play the Pretender."[23] In 1745, after the attempted Franco-Jacobite invasion, Britain signed a Quadruple Alliance with the Dutch Republic, Austria, and Savoy-Sardinia.

Victory over the Jacobites in 1746 and the subsequent dawning of permanent stability did not turn Britain into Switzerland. As a rising global empire, Britain could not possibly avoid international wars, tensions, agreements, and entanglements. But the movement from an alliance-based strategy toward isolationism with respect to the great powers is unmistakable.

European observers like Frederick the Great of Prussia commented on Britain's devotion to trading profits and determination to avoid Continental wars.[24] In the early 1770s, the British government's attitude hardened that a strong navy, rather than alliances, provided the best security against France. "About foreign affairs we are absolutely asleep," lamented Edmund Burke, adding, "His Prussian Majesty, God bless him, does all in his power to awaken us."[25]

It would be too simplistic to claim that isolationist views reigned supreme thereafter within the British foreign ministry. During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods, Britain again entered Continental alliances against France; from 1815 to 1914, Britain fought in one Continental conflict, the Crimean War, alongside France against Russia. Isolationism rose and ebbed according to the international situation and the inclinations of particular British leaders. But among the European great powers, Britain remained distinctively isolationist in outlook and strategy until 1914 and again during the 1930s.

British "isolationism" was not simply a conscious strategy. As in Venice, it was also a function of the constitutional system for sharing and rotating power. Sir George Macartney, envoy to Russia during the mid-1760s, bemoaned how "frequent changes in the Administration" rendered Britain "ridiculous" and even "despicable" abroad.[26] The British constitutional order was stable; a particular ministry, however, might last only until the next House of Commons vote. At times (such as the 1760s), this generated sharp twists in foreign policy.[27] After failing to receive a promised subsidy in 1762, Frederick the Great dubbed Britain "Albion Perfide," or treacherous and disloyal England.[28] The moniker stuck. In private correspondence, Otto von Bismarck complained of the "absence of security in alliances" with Britain, noting that London's foreign policy shifted with the "fleeting cabinets of the day."[29]

Nineteenth-century foreign secretaries and prime ministers sought a role for Britain as neutral arbiter. In 1815, Viscount Castlereagh wrote to a British emissary about the new world order. Britain would work for peace, he noted, not by leading balance-of-power coalitions but by "exercising a conciliatory influence between the Powers."[30] His successor, George Canning, believed Britain should be "umpire" of Europe and "teach democratic governments respect for tradition and despotic governments the principles of Liberalism."[31]

At mid-century, Britain produced a third of the world's industrial output, and "free trade" was a dominant political banner. Free trade advocates sought to make foreign policy serve economic rationality. They also believed that economic exchange between nations would bring profound peace, rendering balance-of-power diplomacy obsolete.

Britain spent the late nineteenth century in "splendid isolation."[32] (The term was approvingly coined by a leader of the Canadian parliament.) The Schleswig-Holstein crisis of 1864 marked Britain's last attempt to intervene in the politics of Western Europe for forty years.[33] Britain declared neutrality in various conflicts, including the U.S. Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877, and the Spanish-American War of 1898. William Gladstone wrote that England "should not foreclose and narrow her own liberty of choice by declarations made to other Powers"[34];

Benjamin Disraeli described Britain as a "moderating and mediatory power."[35]

By the early twentieth century, European alliance blocs were growing more rigid. Germany's 1871 seizure of Alsace-Lorraine left it permanently at odds with France. In 1893, Russia and France formed the "Dual Entente," pledging mutual support if Germany attacked either of them. This, in turn, strengthened the German-Austrian-Turkish bond, known as the "Triple Alliance." Britain remained independent and even hinted at joining the Triple Alliance.

The Continent was increasingly divided between two armed camps. During the 1899–1902 Boer War, Britain was diplomatically ostracized, leading British politicians to rethink the wisdom of splendid isolation. In 1904, Britain and France reached a set of agreements known as the "Entente Cordiale." In 1907, Britain reached accords with Russia (France's ally), creating the "Triple Entente."

There was no guarantee that Britain would enter any future wars alongside France or Russia. The ententes did not pledge military support. Still, they solidified Anglo-Franco-Russian relations and thereby threatened the Triple Alliance and accelerated the ongoing naval arms race.

It was the German invasion of neutral Belgium that brought Britain into the Great War. Sir Austen Chamberlain (Neville's half-brother) was a leading British politician of the early twentieth century. According to him, one "cardinal principle" had animated British foreign policy since the Spanish Armada: Britain "could not allow the Low Countries to be dominated by the greatest military power of the day."[36] Chamberlain's historical analysis was accurate. The Rhine, Scheldt, and Meuse rivers empty into the narrow North Sea, right across from the Thames estuary leading to London. Especially in the days before railroads, waterways provided a quick method for moving large numbers of troops, rendering England vulnerable to attack from the Low Countries.[37]

Even as Britain's Triple Entente partners France and Russia veered toward war with the Triple Alliance in July 1914, British participation was not inevitable. British leaders warned Kaiser Wilhelm II that if Germany invaded Belgium, Britain could not remain neutral. (And as we saw in chapter 8, the kaiser asked for the invasion of Belgium to be canceled but was told that it was too late to alter the strategy.) Germany invaded Belgium on August 3, and the next day, Britain entered the war.

After the war was over, Britain joined the League of Nations, which made it less diplomatically "isolationist" than the nonparticipating United States. The essence of neutrality, however, is a refusal to fight in foreign wars. When war loomed again in the 1930s, the British government did everything in its power to avoid it. In attempting to "appease" Hitler, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was following a long and popular tradition of British

nonparticipation in Continental conflicts. Immediately before the Munich Agreement of September 1938, Chamberlain spoke to the British people over the radio. "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is," said Chamberlain, "that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing."[38]

Within a year, however, Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, Winston Churchill replaced Chamberlain, and Britain went to war. When the smoke finally cleared in 1945, Britons had little doubt that "Munich" and "appeasement" had brought disaster. As the Soviet peril dawned, maintaining the alliance with the United States and other Western democracies seemed the only solution. NATO was born, and splendid isolation receded into history.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

For its first century and a quarter, and again from 1920 to 1941, the United States was a neutral power.[39] Sweden, Belgium, and the Netherlands, among others, emulated America's policy of permanent neutrality. The early republic helped establish the international law of neutrality, partly by defending its own neutral shipping and trading rights.

Even though a French alliance had been critical during the Revolutionary War, the young nation quickly asserted neutrality. In 1793, war broke out between revolutionary France and an alliance that included Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Spain. President George Washington asked his cabinet for advice. Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson agreed on a neutral course—although Hamilton's version of neutrality tilted toward London, while Jefferson's favored Paris. Washington issued a proclamation that the United States would remain "friendly and impartial toward the belligerent Powers."[40] In his Farewell Address, Washington urged the nation to remain neutral: "Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?"

This was undoubtedly an instance when neutrality promoted stability. As we recall from chapter 5, the Federalist-Republican split was endangering domestic tranquility. Going to war on one side or the other would only aggravate tensions and could make it more likely that the jilted power would encourage domestic subversion.

America's first postindependence war—the War of 1812—was fought to defend its neutral shipping rights against British harassment during the Napoleonic Wars. During the century after Waterloo, relatively few wars disturbed the peace of Europe, none bothered American shipping, and the United States remained a staunch neutral.

Of course, America did not practice neutrality in the self-contained, purely defensive, Swiss manner. Americans saw a continent full of opportunities, and the Monroe Doctrine defined an aggressive perimeter for isolationism.

The Monroe Doctrine was essentially a joint Anglo-American response to the threat of Continental meddling in the New World. In the early nineteenth century, Russia owned Alaska and was establishing trading posts as far south as California. The Latin American colonies revolted against Spanish and Portuguese authority and declared independence, but Spain sought to recapture its New World empire, and Russia appeared poised to support that effort. British and American leaders were alarmed by the Russo-Spanish threat. (Britain still held Canada, of course, as well as other possessions in Latin America and the Caribbean.)

In his annual message to Congress, submitted in December 1823, President James Monroe issued what came to be known as his "doctrine." Referring to Russian claims in the Pacific Northwest, Monroe asserted that "the American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers." He contrasted republicanism with absolute monarchy and declared that any attempt by European autocracies to "extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere" would be seen as "dangerous to our peace and safety."[41]

Even though the Monroe Doctrine implied American protection for the new Latin American republics, the Monroe administration made it clear that the United States was making no specific commitments or alliances: it would act as it saw fit, as circumstances evolved. In any case, the Russo-Spanish threat faded following the death of Tsar Alexander I in 1825, and the Monroe Doctrine was nearly forgotten as America turned its focus to continental expansion.

The Civil War brought renewed focus to foreign affairs, as President Abraham Lincoln worked to prevent Britain from allying with the Confederacy. At war's end, the United States turned inward again. Scholars usually find their own subject matter important, but two historians describe American foreign policy from 1865 to 1890 as involving "a number of minor international problems, many of which scarcely deserve mention."[42] President Grover Cleveland summed up the prevailing American philosophy in 1885: "Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none."[43]

Even as the United States officially adhered to its neutral posture, however, America and Britain formed a "special relationship" at the turn of the twentieth century. Trade, language, democracy, social connections, and compatible geostrategic interests all helped bring the nations together; chapter 11 takes a closer look at how this happened.

In August 1914, imperial Germany invaded neutral Belgium and set off a chain reaction of collapsing neutrality. Britain felt threatened and entered the

war within days. For the United States, which had maintained neutrality in European conflicts since 1776, the process took nearly three years.

On August 4, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson issued a routine and uncontroversial proclamation of American neutrality. As the Great War drew on, however, this stance grew increasingly difficult. The truth was, America did not stand equidistant from the belligerent powers and was not disinterested in the outcome.

American sentiments had been largely pro-British since the late 1890s; German aggression against neutral Belgium merely reinforced these sympathies. Before the war, Britain had been America's principal trading partner. Despite German predation, Britain still controlled the seas, and U.S. armament sales went overwhelmingly to the Allies. (And for payment, the United States extended various forms of credit.)

Understandably, Germany saw U.S. "neutrality" as insincere. German agents were sent to bomb and arson American munitions factories and ships in order to prevent American arms from reaching Britain. Their efforts mostly failed, but they solidified anti-German feelings.

The most important factor bringing the United States into the war, however, was the German attack on neutral shipping. The German strategy was to isolate Britain and prevent arms and other necessities from reaching British shores. To accomplish this, the German admiralty pressed for unrestricted submarine warfare. German leaders knew this meant war with America but calculated that Britain would sue for peace before the United States mobilized. In early 1917, German submarines were ordered to sink all neutral ships in enemy waters.

The final blow to American neutrality was the "Zimmermann telegram," which British agents intercepted and decoded in February 1917. The telegram showed Germany intended to enlist Mexico as an ally in exchange for "generous financial support" and "an understanding" that Mexico would "reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona."[44] American public opinion lurched in favor of war, and President Wilson signed the congressional war resolution on April 6, 1917.

The United States tipped the balance along the western front. When peace arrived, Wilson pushed for the League of Nations, which would commit American troops for collective security. Senate Republicans approved the treaty, but with fifteen lethal "reservations." Warren G. Harding's 1920 landslide heralded a new Republican era, and the United States returned to isolationism and neutrality.

As another European war loomed in the late 1930s, Congress passed a series of laws known as the Neutrality Acts. They were designed to prevent a recurrence of the World War I pattern, when America slipped further and further into war because of favoritism toward one side. These laws prohibited

Americans from selling arms to belligerent powers, loaning money to them, and traveling on belligerent-owned ships.

Americans didn't want to get tangled up in another war—but they also didn't want to see Britain and France swallowed by the Nazi war machine. By this point, the United States had coexisted peacefully with these fellow democracies for four decades and had fought alongside them in the Great War. There was little sense that the global British or French empires threatened American safety. Nazi Germany, on the other hand, clearly did. With Hitler controlling all Europe, the United States would have stood truly isolated and alone, facing a dangerous and uncertain future.

Again, American leaders balanced between helping the Allies while still trying to keep the country out of war. President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared neutrality on September 3, 1939, two days after Germany invaded Poland. Congress quickly passed the Neutrality Act of 1939, however, introducing an important loophole: any belligerent power could buy U.S. arms on a "cash-and-carry" basis. (This meant they could pay upfront and ship them from American ports themselves.) In effect, the law helped Britain and France, because those powers controlled the sea lanes. As the Allied cause went downhill and France was conquered, Congress passed "Lend-Lease" in 1941, enabling the president to simply give arms to any government he deemed vital to U.S. interests. Roosevelt and his Republican opponent, Wendell Willkie, both pledged to keep the United States out of war during the 1940 election campaign. By the fall of 1941, the American "neutrality patrol" was helping Britain transport materials across the Atlantic. Still, opinion polls showed 75 to 80 percent of the American people continuing to oppose direct U.S. involvement. Once again, German submarines began attacking American ships; in September, Roosevelt announced that U.S. forces would shoot them on sight. In November, Congress amended the Neutrality Acts to allow armed American merchant ships to enter the war zones.

Meanwhile, Japanese aggression in Asia continued. Roosevelt placed a total embargo on all trade with Japan, demanding a reverse to the imperial conquests. Now the only way Japan could get its much-needed oil was either to retreat home or to conquer the oilfields of Southeast Asia—and this probably meant war with America. It chose the latter and decided to strike first. On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes devastated the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. American neutrality ended, perhaps forever.

At the end of World War II, America was a superpower with military bases ringing the globe. As the Soviet threat became apparent, the lessons of Munich and Pearl Harbor defined foreign policy. The United States, along with its Western democratic partners, was determined not to cede far-off territory for temporary peace with a totalitarian dictator. This meant a forward defense perimeter, and the United States committed forces to Western Europe, Japan, and Korea, among other places. It also meant the end of

neutrality. For the first time since the Constitution went into effect, the United States entered a peacetime military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NEUTRALITY AND THE SMALL COUP-FREE STATES

It is in the small, weak, minor states of the coup-free zone that we find the greatest zeal for neutrality. For the Swiss, Swedes, and pre–World War II Dutch and Belgians, we might even call neutrality a national way of life.

These cases offer four main lessons. First, the causal arrow appears to point in both directions. Stability facilitates neutrality, but neutrality also reinforces stability. Second, neutrality is generally rational, in that it promotes the well-being of a small state's population, and states also appear to learn from their experiences. Third, small coup-free neutrals can effectively promote peace, republican government, and perhaps even long-term stability in neighboring states. Fourth, even when coup-free states adopt officially neutral postures, they frequently lean toward other coup-free states, often in subtle or covert ways.

The Causal Arrow: Stability ↔ Neutrality

So far, we have emphasized that stability enables neutrality. Foreign meddling becomes impossible in a coup-free state, so leaders and parties are never beholden to a foreign power. As small republics that are unlikely to determine the outcome of great power conflicts anyway, these states can rationally avoid war.

But neutrality also bolsters stability. A neutral posture serves as a compromise between factions, parties, ethnolinguistic groups, and any other solidarity units that might otherwise band together and, possibly drawing on foreign assistance, perpetuate the violence of foreign conflicts within their own state. Neutrality predated stability in Venice and Switzerland, whereas they emerged in tandem in Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland, Finland, and Austria.

Switzerland

For centuries, Switzerland has been the überneutral.[45] Switzerland was actually a loose confederation of separate "cantons"—tiny republican states, many of them highly democratic—until the mid-nineteenth century, when it adopted a centralized constitution. Neutrality with respect to the great powers began as a sporadic policy in late-medieval times, partly inspired by religious figures like Brother Klaus, a fifteenth-century hermit. The cause of neutrality—within the cantons and across the confederation as a whole—gained

momentum in the early sixteenth century, was frequently violated during the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and won increasing acceptance in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Switzerland was conquered by revolutionary France, but after 1815, drawing on its long traditions, the Swiss Confederation declared itself permanently neutral.

The cantons had not yet formed a single state, however, and they had not seen the last of their coups. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a civil war in Basle, coups d'état in Neuchâtel, Ticino, Lausanne, and Geneva, and a coup attempt in Lucerne.[46] There was a brief confederation-wide civil war in 1847 between liberal Protestant and conservative Catholic cantons, in which about one hundred people died. When the Catholic cantons were defeated, Switzerland adopted a more centralized, federal constitution, leaving the cantons roughly equivalent to American states.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Switzerland has remained calm, stable, and thoroughly neutral. Just as neutrality (when possible) calmed Catholic-Protestant tensions during an earlier age, it helped French-, German-, and Italian-speaking citizens get along amidst the twentieth-century world wars.

Sweden

Swedish stability emerged after a final coup d'état in 1809, which led to a constitutional monarchy. Sweden has remained neutral and at peace since 1815—but this was not planned in advance, as though Swedes knew after Waterloo that they were done fighting wars. Choices between neutrality and war presented themselves on many occasions and were hotly deliberated. Sweden declared neutrality in 1834, 1853, 1878, 1885, and 1912, but alliances were strongly considered in 1848, 1854, 1864, 1905, and 1914. From the late nineteenth century, Swedes increasingly embraced neutrality as a permanent strategy.[47]

The Netherlands

The Dutch began practicing permanent neutrality—and achieved lasting stability—when their country was drastically downsized.[48] From 1815 to 1830, the autocratic Kingdom of the Netherlands included Belgium and Luxembourg and was a second-tier European power. After Belgian independence in 1839, the Dutch monarchy became increasingly constitutional, and the Netherlands has not experienced a coup or coup attempt since 1848.[49] At the same time, the Dutch practiced careful and assiduous neutrality, advocating peaceful dispute resolution and establishing a Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague. Dutch historians note that from 1839 until the Nazi conquest of 1940, "non-alignment, non-participation in international politics, and strict political neutrality became obsessions"[50] and that "small power and isola-

tionist policy was developed by the Dutch to a point little short of perfection."[51]

Belgium

Belgium, like Sweden and the Netherlands, became a stable neutral in the mid-nineteenth century. Belgium was part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands until a secessionist rebellion in 1830 led to a decadelong independence struggle. The 1839 Treaty of London (engineered by Britain) recognized the Kingdom of Belgium as an independent and neutral state. From 1839 until German occupation in 1914, Belgium remained politically stable and officially neutral. After World War I, Belgium allied itself with France, but as international tensions rose in the 1930s, Belgian leaders attempted to reassert neutrality. Again, Germany scoffed and invaded anyway.[52]

Ireland

Ireland gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1922 but immediately experienced a civil war in 1922–1923. Afterward, however, the Irish achieved democratic stability; they declared neutrality during World War II (but secretly cooperated with the Allies) and have maintained an officially neutral posture ever since.[53]

Finland

Finnish fascists attempted a coup d'état in 1932, but this was Finland's last overt coup attempt.[54] Finns defended their country against Soviet attack during the "Winter War" of 1940–1941, and after World War II, with Soviet armies stationed throughout Eastern Europe, Finns were deeply apprehensive of Soviet meddling and the prospect that Finland might follow the path of Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia. In 1948, there were allegations of coup plotting within the Finnish Communist Party, and Parliament forced the Communist interior minister to resign. Finland declared neutrality but also assuaged the Soviet Union with an "Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance"; Finns also censored themselves to avoid provoking the giant next door, inspiring the term "Finlandization." Still, Finland has remained stable and officially neutral since World War II.

Austria

After World War II, Austria was divided and occupied by British, French, American, and Soviet armies. As in other Central and Eastern European nations, the Red Army was not inclined to leave. Permanent neutrality was the compromise struck in 1955, and since then, democratic Austria has remained stable and neutral.

Conclusions

Neutrality is by no means exclusive to the coup-free zone; nor is it the case that every coup-free state adopted a neutral posture. Still, there is a strong correlation between stability and neutrality. (Denmark, Norway, and Luxembourg also experienced decades of stability and neutrality before being engulfed by Germany during World War II. They did not pass the fifty-year mark, however, until the mid-1990s.)

Over the past couple decades, unstable states including Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Panama have declared themselves neutral. However, the states that have established clear, well-recognized, long-term, and systemic commitments to neutrality have been small coup-free states. Conceivably, neutrality could ultimately promote stability in nations like Turkmenistan or Ukraine—but it seems more likely that instability and foreign meddling will derail neutrality there.

Rational Porcupines

Neutrality is collectively optimal for small states, and for this reason, small republics have long embraced neutrality. Small coup-free republics enjoy additional advantages: they can credibly declare their neutrality permanent and convince foreign powers that nothing will happen—such as a foreign-backed coup—to alter or disturb it. In effect, small coup-free states say to the world, Unless you invade us, we will never harm you, so you should just leave us alone. If you invade us, we will fight you with our defensive forces, and while you may prevail, the victory will drain your limited military resources. Thus, small coup-free states are the porcupines of international politics.

Switzerland perfectly embodies the porcupine principle. The great powers knew the Swiss would be difficult to conquer and subdue, especially with their mountains and strong local militias. And the Swiss government's consistent, systematic, and conscientious neutrality after 1848 rendered its policy credible. In other words, foreign governments had strong reasons to believe that Switzerland would remain neutral in the event of war. As Swiss leaders saw it, this credibility was essential for Swiss security: if the great powers were convinced that Switzerland would not add her military resources to any alliance—unless she were invaded first—they would leave her alone.[55]

Sometimes, however, the porcupine strategy fails. It failed in Venice in 1797, when the French conquered the republic and ended Venetian independence forever. It also failed in Belgium and Luxembourg, in 1914 and again in 1940, and also in the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark in 1940. But even in these cases, the populations probably did not suffer any more than they would have, had their states been overtly allied with other states. In fact,

they might just as easily have been overrun and endured greater depredations in the process.

And in many cases, neutrality obviously pays. Switzerland, Sweden, and the Netherlands escaped the horrors of World War I; Switzerland and Sweden repeated the trick during the next war, even though they found themselves alone and surrounded by Germans. In 1945, Europe lay in ruins, but the Swiss prospered, and Swedish industries boomed.

At the same time, we also observe a learning process among coup-free neutrals. Switzerland and Sweden emerged from the world wars more dedicated to neutrality than ever, but nations that experienced Nazi occupation—Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark—became founding members of NATO.

Promoting Peace, Republicanism, and Stability

Republics have a long history of promoting republicanism. Athens and Sparta fostered democratic and oligarchic regimes, respectively, throughout the Greek world. Britain encouraged liberal constitutionalism during the nineteenth century, and the United States has been extolling the virtues of democracy, sometimes quite forcefully, during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Surprisingly, small, coup-free, neutral republics can also exert pressure on neighboring states to republicanize, stabilize, and live in peace. They do so, moreover, not in spite of their own neutrality but by virtue of it. This is because coup-free neutrals are insulated from the endemic factional strife and meddling within and between unstable states and can thereby propose rational compromises.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, Central America was plunging toward war, with various states sponsoring rebel insurgencies in each other. In 1987, neutral Costa Rica brokered the agreement that ultimately brought peace and democracy to the region.

Despite the presence of leftist movements, parties, and guerrillas, no Central American government was pro-Soviet until the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979. That year, a broad coalition of groups—led by the Sandinista rebels—toppled dictator Anastasio Somoza. Once in power, the Sandinistas went back on their democratic promises; disillusioned corevolutionaries formed the Contras and mounted an insurgency.

At that point, meddling exploded across Central America. Soviet Bloc aid, including Cuban advisers and Russian arms, flowed into Nicaragua.[56] Sandinista victory buoyed the leftist guerrillas of El Salvador; their new slogan was "If Nicaragua has triumphed, then El Salvador will triumph." Fidel Castro helped unite the Salvadoran guerrillas, and the Sandinistas soon began funneling resources to them. Left-wing guerrillas also operated in

Guatemala and Honduras. On the other side, the United States increased aid to friendly governments—Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica—and backed the Nicaraguan Contras.

Costa Rica found itself caught in the middle of Cold War hostilities. The United States viewed Costa Rica as too leftist, in part because the Costa Rican government had apparently trafficked Cuban arms to the Sandinistas and to the Salvadoran guerrillas during the early 1980s. At the same time, Costa Rica resisted Soviet interference, expelled Soviet diplomats, and broke off consular relations with Cuba.

Under President Luis Alberto Monge, elected in 1982, Costa Rican policy tilted toward the United States. President Ronald Reagan was happy to pay for a stronger relationship; U.S. aid to Costa Rica increased by a multiple of thirteen during his first term. President Monge proclaimed his nation's neutrality in 1983, at least partly to dispel criticism of its U.S. alignment.

Costa Rican neutrality soon became more than a facade. Monge's successor, Óscar Arias Sánchez, was elected president in 1986 after campaigning on genuine neutrality. President Arias learned of a secret Contra airstrip in northern Costa Rica and shut it down, despite being warned by Colonel Oliver North that Costa Rica could lose $80 million in U.S. aid.[57]

Next, President Arias developed a regional peace plan. This plan called for an end to all foreign support for rebel groups, with free and fair elections in each country. Because the plan accepted the Sandinista regime—even though it required the Sandinistas to hold elections—the Reagan administration declared it "fatally flawed."

In August 1987, the presidents of Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Costa Rica met for peace negotiations in a Guatemala City hotel. At 4 a.m., President Arias emerged with a signed agreement; three months later, he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Over the next few years, the meddling came to an end, and each state transitioned to multiparty democracy. In 1990, the Sandinistas lost the election in Nicaragua and went into opposition.

It is no coincidence that Costa Rica—the lone coup-free state—was able to assume neutrality and broker a peace deal. Had President Arias faced a local insurgency, backed by the Soviets, Cubans, and Nicaraguans, he would have viewed the Sandinista regime as a mortal threat. It is unlikely he would have authored a deal keeping them in power as long as they won elections, which are always unpredictable and often manipulable. In addition, he probably would have sought extensive U.S. military support and cooperated actively with the Contras, like his counterparts in Honduras and El Salvador. Furthermore, even if Arias had offered a peace deal to Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega, it probably would not have been accepted. Arias and Ortega would have been locked in a zero-sum game, where any advantage to one would have seemed a detriment to the other. Negotiations succeeded, howev-

er, because each side believed it could benefit. Ortega agreed to elections—with close international monitoring—because he thought himself quite popular at home.

The Central American violence failed to infect Costa Rica. Instead, Costa Rica helped pacify and democratize the region. Central America is not necessarily poised to become a land of coup-free states, as demonstrated by the 2009 coup in Honduras. But such an outcome is far more plausible now than it was in the 1980s.

Leaning Toward the Coup-Free Zone

As we have seen, neutrality comes in many shades. Sometimes, neutrality is thoroughly genuine, in the sense of not even having a preference for one side or another. More often, however, leaders and nations do have preferences, especially when one side appears more threatening. Even as they announce, articulate, and maintain officially neutral policies, they frequently undermine that neutrality by cooperating with their preferred partners in open or secretive ways.

We have already observed this tendency, for example, in the American slide into war alongside Britain in both World War I and World War II. But the United States in the early twentieth century was a rising industrial giant, and it made the difference in both conflicts. Both times, the USA emerged as a greater military power, with stronger allies. Because America could and did determine the outcomes, ending neutrality made sense.

What about the small coup-free neutrals? Do they exhibit similar preferences? As we will see, many such states have collaborated, usually in secret or unofficial ways, with the coup-free great powers. (In the next chapter, we see why coup-free states exhibit such a decided and consistent preference for each other.) We should understand coup-free states as guided by two fully rational imperatives, sometimes operating in tension: (1) to adopt a neutral posture and avoid war, especially when small and weak; and (2) to cooperate with other coup-free states, especially during crises. States and leaders have struck this balance in different and creative ways. Usually, neutrality is official policy, while cooperation with fellow coup-free states remains covert and unspoken.

During the nineteenth century, Britain actively promoted and sponsored neutrality for small states like Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands. In other words, from the British perspective, neutrality itself was a form of helpful collaboration.[58] British leaders assumed responsibility for defending Belgium and the Netherlands. As war between France and Prussia loomed in 1870, Prime Minister William Gladstone made treaties with both powers, pledging that if either nation attacked Belgium, Britain would join forces with the other. Germany's assault on Belgium triggered war with Britain in

1914. Clearly, Dutch and Belgian "neutrality" exhibited a tacit but pronounced British tilt.[59]

Nineteenth-century Sweden adopted a more genuinely neutral posture but still preferred the British Empire. Sweden maintained neutrality during the Crimean War of 1853 to 1856 but allowed British and French ships to use Swedish ports. During the Schleswig-Holstein crisis of 1863–1864, Swedish leaders decided they might join Britain and France in a possible coalition against Prussia. As Britain neared war with Russia in 1878, Swedish neutrality again adopted a pro-British tilt.[60]

The rise of Germany to great industrial and military power shifted Swedish security calculations. As Germany and Russia militarily overshadowed the Baltic Sea region, Swedish policy saw a German tilt—although Swedes remained wary of German intentions. Swedish nobles and conservatives tended to admire Germany, while liberals and Social Democrats tended to favor neutrality. (Nobles and conservatives still predominated in Swedish politics, moreover, because Sweden remained an elitist oligarchy until democratic reforms were passed in 1918.) Sweden remained neutral in World War I. Afterward, with revolution in imperial Germany, Sweden peacefully transitioned to full democracy, and the Social Democratic Party began its long dominance.

With the Social Democrats building a welfare state, Sweden returned to a neutralist position with a Western-liberal preference. It could still be intimidated, of course, especially by Nazi Germany when it controlled virtually all of Western Europe. During World War II, Sweden violated strict neutrality by allowing some German troop movements through its territory, but this was done under extreme duress. The Swedish government was merely trying to hold off a full-blown Nazi invasion, not expressing Aryan solidarity. As the military situation changed in 1943, Sweden grew bolder, diminished its exports to Germany, assisted Norwegian and Danish resistance fighters, and sheltered Danish Jews. Allied victory delivered Sweden from the Nazi threat.

In certain circumstances, the imperative for rational self-preservation militates in favor of cooperation with coup-prone great powers. This tendency is illustrated in Sweden's pro-German conduct before World War I and during World War II and in Finland's malleable stance toward the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Still, these cases are exceptional, and in each case, the tilt was partly or wholly induced by fear.

During the Cold War, Social Democratic leaders positioned Sweden as a buffer between East and West and as a "middle way" between capitalism and communism. The government-funded Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) espoused Marxist analyses of capitalism and the Third World. Swedish assistance flowed to leftist revolutionary movements and regimes. In Sweden, radical chic was official policy.

This rhetorical straddling of the Cold War chasm, however, did not reflect Sweden's true position. Sweden was basically a Western democracy, and only the Soviet Union posed a direct threat. Swedish leaders recognized this and secretly cooperated with NATO on military and intelligence matters. In the event of war, American forces would be able to use Swedish air bases. If Sweden were attacked, the United States unilaterally committed itself to defending it. Archives in Moscow show that Soviet leaders knew about Sweden's unofficial Western alignment.[61]

By embracing far left views, though, Swedish leaders like Prime Minister Olof Palme scored several points. First, he and his country became "cool" with the turtleneck set. Second, in the event of war, Sweden might at least have avoided direct nuclear attack. Third, Palme could criticize domestic opponents for undermining his global balancing act and thereby endangering Swedish security.[62]

Overall, the small coup-free neutrals have played something of a double game. On one hand, they are best served if they can convince potential aggressors that they are true porcupines: unless attacked, they will never join an unfriendly alliance, and they will never harm that potential aggressor's interests, so it is best to leave them alone. But on the other hand, if they are attacked, they would like other powers to rescue them. So they combine official neutrality with secret cooperation. This crafty, layered approach is exactly what we should expect from rational foreign policy makers.

Coup-free states are perennially drawn to neutrality. Small coup-free states have adopted firmly neutral postures, but even the coup-free great powers like Venice, Britain, and the United States have practiced neutrality, usually before or after their period of maximum strength.

At the same time, official neutrality frequently leans toward a tacit alliance with other coup-free states. This is especially apparent in the Anglo-American "special relationship," in the Low Countries' dependence on Britain before World War I, and in Sweden's covert Western alignment during the Cold War.

In chapter 11, we find out why coup-free states, despite their inclination to neutrality, make such good friends.

Chapter Eleven

Best Friends

So why do coup-free states get along?

In this chapter, we see why today's coup-free zone is a realm of internal peace. Many coup-free states work in close cooperation, by sharing intelligence, coordinating their foreign policies, and fighting together as allies. Some of the small coup-free states, like Switzerland, Sweden, and Ireland, are neutral, but as we saw earlier, their neutrality tends to lean toward fellow coup-free states. Sometimes, of course, leaders of coup-free states have awkward relationships or differences of opinion on international affairs. But even during such episodes, contemporary coup-free states do not go to war against each other or even remotely threaten to use military force to resolve their disputes.

This pattern is similar, and closely related, to the observation that democracies generally avoid fighting each other. (This is a strong empirical finding but, to date, lacks a convincing explanation.) Thus, we have two phenomena to consider: the "democratic peace" and the "coup-free peace." Many coup-free states are democratic, and some democracies are coup-free states, so these categories overlap. This chapter presents a single theory to explain both phenomena and shows why the most peaceful and cooperative international relationships in history are between coup-free democracies.

As we will discover, the best explanation for the democratic peace is the unique transparency and predictability of democratic states. In assembly debates and election campaigns, democracies cannot help but reveal the fundamental fears and security concerns that are driving their basic foreign policy orientations. This abundant flow of information lets other states know, with great confidence, just who the democracy considers a threat and the general circumstances that might provoke the democracy into war. This enables two democracies to enter mutually reinforcing cycles of rising trust, as each state

comes to see the other as nonthreatening. This trust does not necessarily arise right away, and some young democracies have gone to war—but in the long run, democracies consistently find their way toward cooperation and trust. Thus, the element of time is essential to building the democratic peace.

Coup-free democracies, of course, are permanent democracies—providing an abundance of time for the "democratic peace process" to set in. Moreover, coup-free democracies are substantially more transparent and predictable than their unstable cousins, making it all the easier for two coup-free democracies to reach mutual concord. Because there is no threat to democracy in either state, there is no threat to the peace between them. As we will see, the strongest form of the democratic peace is between coup-free democracies of long duration.

In this chapter, we first address the peace between democracies, and then we turn to the peace between coup-free states. Next, we put the two data streams together and observe the remarkable, consistent, and durable peace between coup-free democracies. As we proceed, we will be exploring the dynamics of transparency, predictability, and mutual trust that lie behind these cooperative tendencies.

The very nature of these propositions—that is, that there is a peace between democracies or between coup-free states—means that we must address all counterexamples. Therefore, much of the following discussion will revolve around exceptions to the rules: instances when democracies or coup-free states went to war, mounted small-scale violent attacks against each other, or experienced crises that nearly led to war between them. Our method will be to get our hands around every such exception that has arisen, from the ancient world through the final editing of this book. This way, any conclusions we draw will be fully consistent with, and cognizant of, the deviations from general patterns. But while this method is essential for obtaining careful and accurate generalizations, it should not obscure the primary patterns of cooperation and harmony between democratic and coup-free states. Readers should remember to keep those general tendencies in mind, even as we lavish attention on the exceptions.

After learning why the coup-free zone is an oasis of peace, we conclude with a brief recap of world history.

THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE

Even before the "democratic peace" became an established notion in political science and international relations, American leaders knew that fellow democracies were friendly. As U.S. troops occupied West Germany, Italy, and Japan after World War II, for example, the strict logic of realpolitik might have called for new dictatorships, vetted and installed by the Allies. These

were nations, after all, that had recently rallied against us, poured onto battlefields to shoot us, and only surrendered in the face of overwhelming force. Weren't their "national interests" going to remain contrary to ours? Weren't they likely to vote for anti-American politicians, wrest themselves free from our tutelage, and endanger our security again? Shouldn't we install handpicked tyrants to keep them in line? Instead, of course, we turned those nations into democracies, and they have been our friends ever since.

In fact, the vast majority of U.S. interventions abroad have been prodemocratic.[1] The handful of "antidemocratic" exceptions took place during the Cold War, when American leaders were concerned about Communist takeovers in unstable states. (There was reasonable ground for concern, as events in Czechoslovakia, China, and Cuba had demonstrated.) Thus, the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration backed coups against elected Iranian, Guatemalan, and Congolese governments, the Lyndon Johnson administration supported a coup in Brazil, and Richard Nixon backed the 1973 coup in Chile.

The United States has behaved as though democratic states were its natural allies, and experience has amply confirmed the expectation. Take Russian-Western relations, for example. Western powers allied with the liberal "Whites" who governed briefly in 1917 and sent troops to help them against the "Reds." Unsurprisingly, relations turned bad when Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks won. In the face of Nazi peril, Western democracies formed an alliance of convenience with Joseph Stalin, but trusting him proved difficult. Almost as soon as the fascist threat disappeared, the Cold War began. Under Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union made dramatic reforms at home, and relations with the West thawed. Democratic Russia became a friendly ally in the early 1990s, but Vladimir Putin's creeping dictatorship or Kremlin oligarchy has soured relations once again.

The observation that democracies do not fight each other has found strong confirmation in quantitative studies. Since the late 1970s, scholars have asked whether democracies are less likely to go to war—either in general or against each other—than dictatorships. Most have used data sets, coded for "war" and "democracy," and looked for any significant statistical relationships.[2] The literature has proliferated as scholars pose variants on the hypothesis and control for different variables. Almost all have focused entirely on the past two centuries. Altogether, their findings are surprisingly robust. Many scholars—but not all—agree that the "absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations."[3]

But this is a finding, not an explanation. Many researchers agree that democracies do not fight each other, at least very often, but disagree on the causal mechanisms. To date, nothing has emerged as a clear and persuasive explanation. To help us determine why democracies coexist in peace, we turn

to the work of Spencer Weart, who has helpfully reviewed the entire history of war, peace, and republican government.

Spencer Weart's Theory: Peace, Conflict, and Regime Type

Spencer Weart, a physicist turned historian and political scientist, has made a vital contribution to democratic peace theory. As a young man, Weart taught at Cal Tech and researched the solar atmosphere. In his fifties, Weart entered a new field, writing *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another*.

After studying all the wars, conflicts, and relations between republics in world history, Weart reaches a startling conclusion. Republics, he concludes, have only rarely, if ever, fought republics of the same basic type.

What does this mean? Weart's definition of "republic"—"a regime where political decisions are made through public contestation by a body of citizens who hold equal rights"—closely parallels the definition used in this book: a regime where leadership positions rotate in accordance with constitutional rules, officials exercise limited powers, and a class of people holds the right to participate in decision making.

Weart splits republics into two basic types: democracies and oligarchies. Democracies, in his view, are republics in which at least two-thirds of adult males hold political rights. In oligarchies, fewer than one-third do, and ruling elites must always suppress a substantial domestic "enemy" group. In theory, a gray area exists between one-third and two-thirds, but Weart finds borderline cases rare in practice.[4] (In this book, we consider states where one-half of adult males hold political rights to be "democracies." Wherever one draws the line, there is a long continuum from narrow oligarchies like Sparta or the Soviet Union, through elitist constitutional systems like eighteenth-century Britain, to today's open democracies where nearly all adults can vote.)

Weart introduces further definitions. Republics are only "well-established," he argues, when "toleration of dissent has persisted for three years."[5] Weart defines "war" as "violence organized by political units against one another across their boundaries" that causes at least two hundred deaths in organized combat.[6]

Surveying the entire history of republican governments, from ancient Greece through independent medieval cities to the contemporary world, Weart reaches the following conclusions. Well-established oligarchic republics have "scarcely ever" fought wars against each other, and well-established democracies have "never" fought a war.[7]

Weart's analysis is often cogent but sometimes forced. Scholars take issue with his distinctions and requirements—including the three-year waiting period to become "well-established" and the two-hundred-death threshold for "war"—as methods of avoiding contradictory cases.[8]

We can reach firmer and more secure conclusions by removing Weart's requirement that republics be "well-established" for three years and by observing all instances of serious interstate violence between democratic states. By doing so, we find a number of additional exceptions beyond those already acknowledged by Weart.

Weart's claim for an "oligarchic peace" is undermined in light of the three titanic wars between ancient Rome and Carthage, up to twelve wars between Italian city-oligarchies from 1100 to 1400, a Venetian-Genoese war in 1379, a Venetian-Florentine war in 1494, the Anglo-Dutch War of 1652, wars between Swiss cantons Lucerne and Bern in 1656 and 1712, the War of 1812, and the 1879 War of the Pacific between Chile and Peru. (These exceptions appear within Weart's book.) Finally, Weart's case for a "democratic peace" in the ancient Greek world appears flimsy, especially given the Athens-Syracuse clash from 415 to 413 BC, Megara's participation in the Peloponnesian War against Athens, and the bloody struggle for supremacy between Athens and Thebes in 369 BC.[9]

We come to the most critical exceptions to the modern "democratic peace." Since 1800, there have only been two "wars" between democracies: the brief clash between the newly minted French and Roman democracies in 1849 and the high-altitude Kargil War between India and Pakistan in the spring and summer of 1999, each resulting in about five thousand deaths. Additionally, there have been several instances of small-scale violence (i.e., fewer than two hundred combat deaths) between arguably democratic states since 1800:

- The 1847 Sonderbund War between largely oligarchic and Catholic Swiss cantons versus the more democratic, Protestant cantons
- The nearly bloodless 1923 French occupation of the Ruhr region in Germany
- Small British raids on Finland in 1941
- British support for Arab armies against Israel in 1948
- U.S. support for coups against democratically elected governments in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Congo in 1960, Brazil in 1964, and Chile in 1973
- Turkish air raids on Greek Cypriot positions in 1964
- Border confrontations between Peru and Ecuador in 1981
- Chronic low-level violence between India and Pakistan, sometimes escalating to near-war crisis, during periods when both nations have been democratic

As noted above, quantitative studies have confirmed a statistically significant democratic peace in the modern era. (But students of the democratic peace also agree that the argument gains substantial strength for the period after

1900.[10]) Putting Weart's evidence together with these findings, we arrive at a particularly safe, conservative conclusion: there is something about twentieth and twenty-first century democracies that enables them, in general, to peacefully coexist.

Even if we reject aggressive claims about "no wars" or "very few wars" between similar republics, moreover, we must admit that the level of bloodshed between modern oligarchies and between modern democracies is low. Since 1800, only four small wars have erupted between republics of the same type:

- The War of 1812 between oligarchic Britain and the United States
- The 1849 war between democratic France and Rome
- The 1879 War of the Pacific between oligarchic Chile and Peru
- The 1999 Kargil War between democratic India and Pakistan.

All together, about twenty-five thousand people died in these conflicts, but this figure must be placed in context. Republicanism has flourished since 1800, and as of 2000, there were one hundred democracies worldwide. Industrial nation-states can project force in far-flung locations, such that geographic distance no longer guarantees peace. In all this time, amidst colonial conquests, regional wars, and horrific world conflagrations, similar republics fought the four small wars listed above. Their twenty-five thousand total deaths are less than the number of British and French deaths on the first day of the Battle of the Somme during World War I.

Monarchies, Oligarchies, and Democracies: Structural Antipathies

A primary strength of Weart's work is to illuminate the endemic sources of friction between monarchies, oligarchies, and democracies. Each form of government constitutes a mortal threat to the others, thereby driving international tensions.

To a monarch, republicanism is a dangerous concept. Simply by showcasing a vibrant public life, open debate, and individual freedoms, republics incite a tyrant's subjects to revolt. By dismantling the republic—through direct conquest or by meddling and helping a client seize control—a tyrant can calm down the neighborhood and enlarge his domain.

Republics and tyrants have long recognized this mutual incompatibility. Demosthenes, for example, warned fellow Athenians about Philip of Macedon. Overthrowing the Athenian constitution, he argued, was Philip's primary goal. "For he knows very well that even if he becomes master of all the rest of the world, he can retain nothing securely, so long as you are a democracy." For their part, the Athenians stand ready to trouble those "ambitious of dominion" and to "lead all men forth into liberty."[11] As a fourteenth-century

Florentine chronicler wrote, tyrants always want more. "Not content in their perverse iniquity with possession of their own city," tyrants inevitably attack their neighbors, "and above all the peoples who live in liberty."[12] Rejecting an alliance with the Duke of Milan, the Florence council declared, "Free peoples and tyrants do not go well together."[13]

Similarly, oligarchies and democracies find themselves in an existential clash. This conflict can be observed from classical Athens and Sparta all the way up to the Cold War between the highly oligarchic Soviet Union and the Western democracies. Because oligarchs comprise a minority, and sometimes a tiny one, they frequently face disenfranchised dissidents, who naturally look to foreign democracies for inspiration. Meanwhile, democracies may be threatened by internal groups—perhaps the noble and well-born, perhaps a Marxist vanguard—who might betray their state to a foreign power. The democratic public perceives a nefarious plot, and national resolve hardens against the foreign-domestic nexus. (This happens even when oligarchic revolution appears unlikely, as in the McCarthy-era United States.)

When Sparta experienced a long rebellion of Helot slaves following the earthquake of 464 BC, for example, the regime invited troops from erstwhile allies, including Athens. But the Spartans began worrying that Athenian troops would sympathize with the rebels, so they asked the Athenians to leave. The indignity compounded regional tensions, which ultimately led to the Peloponnesian War. When the Spartans ultimately prevailed in that twenty-seven-year confrontation, they helped wealthy Athenians assume control and establish an oligarchy. According to Demosthenes, oligarchs could never leave democracies in peace: "[O]f course they want to destroy the source from which they are expecting ruin to themselves."[14]

As we discuss more fully in the next section, the United States and other developed democracies had difficult (but fundamentally nonviolent) relationships with two coup-free oligarchies during the twentieth century: Mexico and South Africa. As of 2013, the only major nations with oligarchic systems are China, Vietnam, and Iran. Obviously, relations between these oligarchic states and the Western democracies have been fraught with difficulties, including two major wars (in Korea and Vietnam) and ongoing tensions and hostilities (with Iran).

Weart's Causal Explanation for the Democratic Peace

So what explains the tendency toward peace, cooperation, and military alliance among democracies, at least over the past century, if not longer? What is the magnetic attraction binding them together?

Along with other scholars, Weart offers a values-based explanation. Republics instill norms of conciliation, compromise, and harmony, he argues, so republican leaders pursue similar methods of diplomacy abroad.[15] (But

this conciliatory approach does not apply across the democratic-oligarchic divide.)

This values-based explanation is odd, however. For one thing, it does not match the data very well. The primary democratic peace finding is not that "democracies don't fight" but that "democracies don't fight each other," and the two claims are vastly different. Some scholars have investigated whether democracies exhibit less warlike tendencies in general than dictatorships. Generally, they have produced weak findings, showing that democracies exhibit somewhat more accommodating postures.[16] These studies hardly indicate that democracies "play nice," and in fact, democratic Britain, France, and the United States have practiced global imperialism. Under a norm-based theory, however, we would expect democratic leaders to systematically reject violent methods and seek peaceful coexistence with everyone—including tyrants and oligarchs.

Weart addresses the issue, but in an unsatisfying manner. The "republican practice of accommodation," he argues, "applies only where the leaders of a state regard their foreign rivals as people who merit equal treatment."[17] In Weart's view, humans divide into "in-groups" and "out-groups," and these always correspond to regime type. Oligarchic leaders place democrats and tyrants into an "out-group," and democrats do the same with oligarchs and tyrants. Thus, republican leaders only regard foreigners as worthy negotiation partners when they represent similar regimes.

But this is far too simplistic. Humans divide between "in-groups" and "out-groups" in dizzyingly complex ways. Sometimes, religion fuses people together. At other times, nation, ethnicity, language, or ideology becomes the crucial bonding force. Under apartheid, for example, South Africa's white oligarchs did not disdain American leaders as "democratic rabble"; nor did they embrace Nikita Khrushchev or Leonid Brezhnev as fellow elites. Instead, they acted as though "whites," "Protestants," "Westerners," and "capitalists" should all stick together.

Another problem with any values-based theory is that it asks us to believe that democratic leaders systematically forgo opportunities to boost their nation's power, wealth, and security, no matter how popular such moves might be. They refrain from coercing or intimidating fellow democracies, the argument goes, because of egalitarian values and ingrained norms. "Experiments in social psychology," Weart claims, show that "we cling to our ways of thinking."[18] Maybe so—but even when chances for dramatic personal gain present themselves? If social experiments, experience, numerous thinkers, and economic findings tell us anything, it is that humans are exceptionally good at spotting strategic opportunities. It is not credible that leaders who have climbed to the top of democratic systems—by arguing how they will maximize national interests—behave nicely in the international arena because they cannot imagine the alternatives.

In fact, democratic leaders know that political rivals are always waiting for any sign of weakness or failure to press national interests. President John F. Kennedy, for example, went to the nuclear brink during the Cuban Missile Crisis partly because he feared the political repercussions of caving to the Soviets.[19] One could cite countless examples of democratic leaders pursuing warlike policies with a domestic political calculus in mind. How could they not consider political consequences? They're politicians!

Does some magical firewall prevent democratic leaders from considering coercive methods against fellow democracies? Not really. During the Cold War, as we saw, U.S. administrations backed coups d'état against five elected democratic leaders when they perceived threats to American security.

We still do not have a convincing model for why modern democracies get along. Before developing such a model, however, we turn to the peace within the coup-free zone.

THE COUP-FREE PEACE

As we observed in the last chapter, coup-free states—despite their traditional neutrality—routinely gravitate toward cooperation and alliance with each other. Once in place, moreover, the peace between stable states appears permanent. Today, the prospects for war between any two coup-free states, or even any serious ruptures in their alliances or habits of cooperation, appear remote.

This secure peace is not universally present between fellow democracies, we might note. As of this writing in mid-2013, for example, Pakistan, Iraq, and Libya are formally democratic. As many observers realize, depending on circumstances and the course of events, any of these nations might find themselves at war with a fellow democracy, such as India, Israel, or the United States.

Our inquiry will necessarily encompass both the general trend (peace between coup-free states) and all the exceptions. Before going into historical depth on the rise of cooperative relations between coup-free states, we might as well get the exceptions out in front, so we have all the counterexamples at our fingertips. We can begin by charting all the negative interactions between coup-free states on a map.

Figure 11.1 illustrates all the wars, small-scale violence, and near-war tensions that have erupted between coup-free states ever since Venice and Britain coexisted during the late eighteenth century. The solid lines represent war (i.e., at least two hundred battle deaths) or small-scale violence short of war. The dotted lines represent near-war crises, when coup-free states experienced tensions that might have led to war, or when other circumstances (such as a world war) nearly brought coup-free states into collision. Trivial inci-

dents and pseudobelligerence, in which all participants know that war is not a genuine possibility, are not depicted. (Such incidents include the Codfish Wars between British and Icelandic ships during the 1950s and 1970s.)

The map includes any episodes occurring after the final coup events in both states, that is, not just those events taking place after both states have passed the fifty-year point. It does not include independence struggles, such as the American Revolution or the fight for a Jewish state of Israel, in which one coup-free state emerged from another coup-free state's imperial reach.

As shown, Britain and the United States went to war in 1812, twenty-nine years after Americans won independence. Eight years after the last Finnish coup attempt, Britain launched tiny raids against Finland in 1941 because Finland had requested Nazi assistance against Soviet aggression. After Israel became independent, Britain continued to arm, equip, and assist the Arab armies fighting the brand-new state for several months afterward. Aside from these events, circumstances and tensions nearly brought coup-free states into direct confrontation on a few occasions. We address these episodes more fully in the discussion below.

The map encapsulates some important events, but it misses the main story. Coup-free states are not necessarily best friends from the beginning—as shown by the War of 1812—but in the long run, they have always settled into amicable relations.

We turn to the historical relations between coup-free states. As always, our method means that we must focus on the counterexamples—the occasions when relations deteriorated into war, small-scale violence, or war scares. Still, the overall direction toward peace will be evident. The story of relations between coup-free states is the story of groping toward, consolidating, and strengthening relations of amity and cooperation.

Venice-Britain

Traditionally, England and Venice had friendly relations, but they were severely strained by the Jacobite challenge to the Hanoverian regime in Britain. When King James II was toppled from the English throne in 1688, England and Venice broke off diplomatic relations for nine years. From their base in Rome, the Stuarts tried for decades to reclaim the throne; they found supporters and sympathizers in Catholic Venice. Anglo-Venetian goodwill returned in the 1760s, when the Jacobite cause was moribund. The Venetian Republic came to an end on May 12, 1797, when it surrendered to General Napoleon Bonaparte.[20]

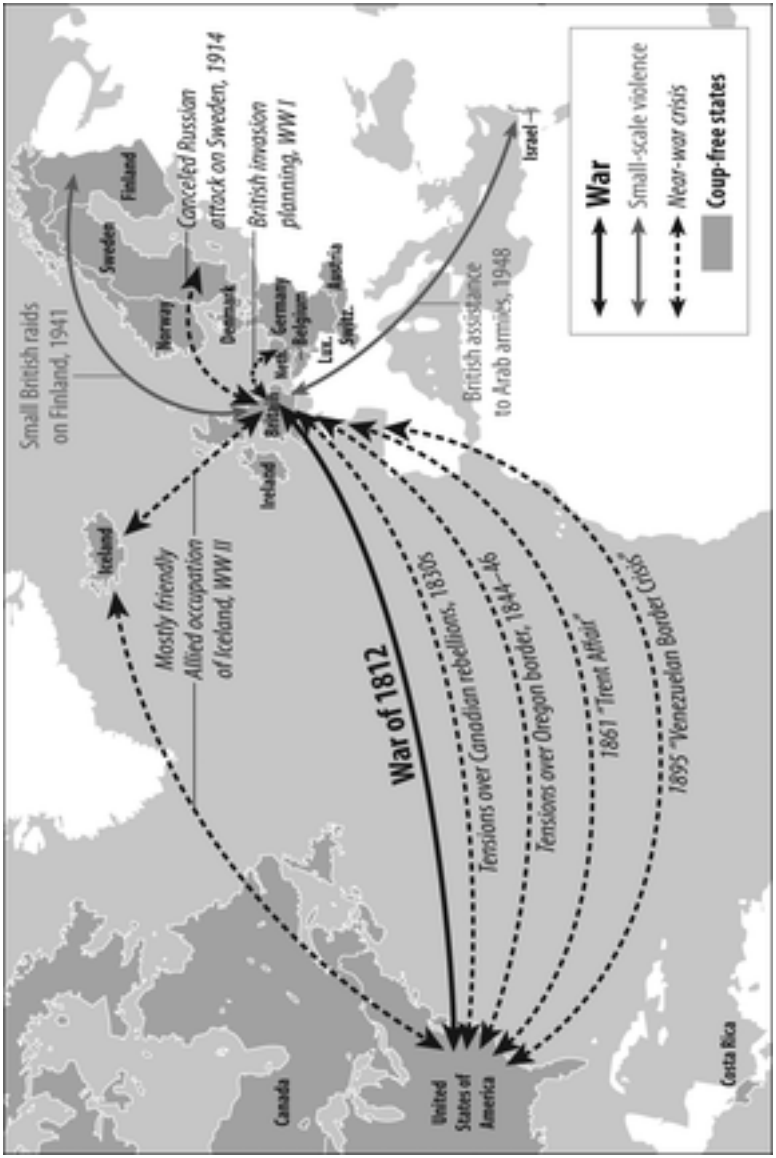


Figure 11.1. Wars, violence, and near-war crises within the coup-free zone

Britain-USA

By the time the Venetian Republic disappeared, the United States of America had detached itself and was on its way to replicating British stability (although this was not particularly apparent during the 1790s, amidst conspiracy rumors and partisan panic).

Early British-American relations, as we saw in chapter 5, were complicated. Hamiltonian Federalists leaned toward Britain, while Jefferson and the Republicans favored France. During the Napoleonic Wars, as Britain struggled for survival and attempted to shut down trade with the French-dominated Continent, the British navy harassed and intercepted neutral American ships, leading to the War of 1812. Many Americans, especially Federalists, opposed the war from the beginning; for President James Madison and the Republicans, the war was disastrous. British troops chased Madison out of Washington and burned down the White House. America won no concessions; Napoleon's final defeat in 1815 simply rendered the shipping issue moot.

Since the War of 1812, Britain and America have resolved their differences peacefully.[21] Occasional tensions and crises erupted throughout the nineteenth century but never turned into war. Canadian independence struggles flared in the late 1830s and early 1840s, but President Martin van Buren appeased Britain by curtailing American involvement. Relations entered a low period in 1844, when presidential candidate James Polk declared an intention to annex the entire Oregon Territory, under the slogan "54-40 or fight." Two years later, though, President Polk settled on the forty-ninth parallel—ceding all of today's British Columbia. After that compromise, America stopped coveting the North, and Britain stopped impeding America's westward drive, thereby resolving a major source of Anglo-American friction.

The U.S. Civil War brought renewed tensions. British hopes of containing American expansion revived, and some British politicians favored an alliance with the Confederacy in order to secure Southern cotton for Britain's textile industry.

In the fall of 1861, an incident nearly sparked war between Britain and the Union. Two Confederate politicians boarded a British steamship, the *Trent*, en route to an official mission in Paris. A Union warship, the USS *San Jacinto*, forced the *Trent* to stop and disgorge the two Southerners. When the news reached London, war frenzy erupted. Foreign Secretary John Russell drafted a harsh ultimatum to Washington: release the two men within a week, and apologize immediately. Historians speculate that this document would have triggered war. Fortunately, a dying Prince Albert—Queen Victoria's husband—appealed for peace, the letter was softened, and the furor died down.

Even after the *Trent* Affair was resolved, tensions persisted. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, however, any pro-Confederate moves were clearly tantamount to supporting slavery (which many Britons abhorred), and the British government increasingly tilted toward the Union.

Even after the war, deep Northern grievances remained. Many centered on several British-built Confederate warships, including the CSS *Alabama*, which had destroyed about sixty Northern vessels. The *Alabama* dispute was eventually resolved in court, when a panel of five arbitrators in Geneva awarded $15.5 million in damages to the United States. To some observers, this event heralded the end of war and the beginning of international arbitration. At least between Britain and America, this was true. Over the next few decades, the two nations developed a preeminent record of litigating their differences.

Many late-nineteenth-century Americans continued to view the British Empire as a geostrategic constraint and potential threat. London opposed U.S. plans for a Central American canal and encouraged Hawaiians to remain independent. Britain's Caribbean and Pacific naval bases, along with the transcontinental Canadian railroad, seemed to form an iron ring around America. In 1895, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge described British bases in the West Indies as "a standing menace to our Atlantic seaboard."[22]

At the same time, the two industrial economies grew deeply intertwined. In 1890, Britain was the main destination for American exports, purchasing $448 million in American goods. Germany, in second place, spent $86 million on American products. At the same time, British exports and capital flowed primarily to the United States.

Other factors also contributed to the burgeoning Anglo-American concord. Both countries spoke English; Bismarck reportedly called this "the supreme fact of the nineteenth century."[23] High society crossed the Atlantic with ease, and prominent English politicians—including Lord Randolph Churchill, father of Winston—married American women.

In December 1895, the last Anglo-American war scare erupted. The issue involved an obscure boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana. President Grover Cleveland, angered by his perception of British bullying, requested that Congress fund an impartial American boundary commission. His message to Congress concluded bombastically: if Britain continued to hold any lands determined to belong to Venezuela, the United States would have a duty to resist this "willful aggression" by "every means in its power."[24] Congress unanimously approved the commission; a couple of days of patriotic flag waving followed in the press.

Then, however, panic swept through Wall Street. The New York Stock Exchange plummeted. Business leaders castigated the president, and the press soured on his aggressive stance. In both Britain and the United States, an outpouring of letters, petitions, and public meetings expressed a horror of

"fratricidal" war. Both governments adopted a more conciliatory tone, and in July 1896, negotiations yielded a face-saving solution for both sides.

The Venezuelan Border Crisis and its friendly denouement led directly to the "special relationship." Arguably, President Cleveland's irascible temper, rather than an obvious conflict of national interests, had spawned the dispute in the first place. The crisis produced an economic downturn following eighteen months of expansion and revealed strong currents of public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic that a British-American war would be foolish and highly unnecessary.

Businesses, universities, newspapers, churches, and peace societies supported an arbitration treaty requiring all Anglo-American disputes to be settled in court. Both countries signed the treaty in January 1897, but the U.S. Senate fell three votes short of the required two-thirds majority for ratification.

As it turned out, the arbitration treaty was unnecessary; the two nations achieved geostrategic harmony anyway. As noted by the *London Times*, the final settlement of the Venezuelan crisis amounted to a British recognition of U.S. dominance in Latin America. By ceding Caribbean and Pacific hegemony to America, the British Empire secured a friendly Western Hemisphere. In the last years of the century, London encouraged Washington to annex Hawaii and the Philippines, as British and American troops fought together against a German-backed chief in Samoa. Now working in tandem, Anglo-American military power spanned the globe.

Senator Lodge turned positively Anglophile. In early 1900, he wrote to Theodore Roosevelt that "the downfall of the British Empire is something which no rational American could regard as anything but a misfortune to the United States."[25]

Officially, of course, both countries remained neutral. When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, Britain declared neutrality, even as British officials and newspapers expressed pro-American sentiments. The following year, America returned the favor, declaring neutrality in the Boer War and refusing to join the chorus of anti-British criticism.

During these years, talk of an Anglo-American alliance hung in the air. Foreign observers and diplomats speculated about a secret compact. The whole idea, however, aroused great domestic resistance in both nations; it violated the cherished American tradition of neutrality, as well as Britain's isolationist inclination. Irish-Americans and German-Americans were particularly outraged by the idea. An 1899 election campaign in Ohio saw Democrats denouncing the "secret and vicious alliance" between "England and the Republican Administration." Secretary of State John Hay remarked to one diplomat, "The fact is a treaty of alliance is impossible. It would never get through the Senate."[26]

Anglo-American friendship remained tacit; it was the alliance that dare not speak its name. Still, the "special relationship" ultimately brought the United States into both world wars, on Britain's side, and then formed the basis for NATO.

Britain-USA-Sweden-Switzerland-Netherlands-Belgium

By 1900, there were six coup-free states, and they all got along. Sweden, the USA, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Belgium had all established strong neutral traditions—and yet they had also grown close to imperial Britannia. Their relations with each other were also peaceful—but this is not surprising, since noncontiguous minor powers rarely pick fights anyway. The Netherlands and Belgium did share a border and fought a war over Belgian independence in the 1830s. Still, even they developed friendly relations immediately following the Treaty of London in 1839.[27]

Just as the Jacobite cause drove a wedge between Britain and Venice, it also created the conditions for a possible Anglo-Swedish war. After the bloody Jacobite uprising of 1715, the British government believed that Swedish king Charles XII had sponsored the rebellion. A British fleet was sent into the Baltic to demand "satisfaction" and, if this was denied, to join a planned Russo-Danish invasion of Sweden. The invasion was called off, but British leaders suspected Sweden of plotting a new Jacobite invasion three years later and sent a British fleet back into the Baltic.[28] The death of Charles XII that same year led to Anglo-Swedish reconciliation.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Sweden was stable, oligarchic, and coup-free following the coup of 1809 and combined neutrality with a habitual tilt toward Britain. As Germany overshadowed the Baltic region in the late nineteenth century, and with Britain retreating into "splendid isolation," Sweden began tilting toward Germany as a hedge against Russia.

As World War I broke out in August 1914, events nearly conspired to bring Britain and Sweden into opposing camps. Despite Swedish declarations of neutrality on August 3 and 8, Russia feared Sweden would join the Central Powers and nearly brought this about with a preemptive attack. On August 9, the Russian Baltic fleet sailed out from Helsinki to attack the Swedish fleet but was recalled at the halfway point.[29]

Had the assault gone forward, Sweden might easily have entered the war on Germany's side and thereby come into direct conflict with Britain (and later with the United States). Peace between coup-free states, therefore, is merely a strong tendency, not an inexorable law of nature. Since 1920, democratic Sweden has not remotely approached war with another coup-free state.

Like Sweden, nineteenth-century Switzerland enjoyed strong ties with London. British leaders had long seen a neutral and independent Switzerland as a critical buffer between France and Austria-Hungary—both of which

might have been tempted to annex their small neighbor, thereby sparking a Continental war and harming British trade. At mid-century, British prime minister Lord Palmerston consistently rose to Switzerland's defense, reminding the powers of their obligations to respect Swiss neutrality. Switzerland was an avowed neutral but also signed treaties of friendship with Britain and the United States during this time. Since then, there have only been minor diplomatic kerfuffles. During the Boer War (1899–1902), for example, many Swiss sympathized with the Afrikaaners, and the Swiss government offered to mediate, but a testy British response curtailed the initiative.[30]

As discussed earlier, both Belgium and the Netherlands remained officially neutral but effectively pro-British through the nineteenth century. Anglo-Dutch relations grew strained during the Boer War because of Dutch sympathy for the Afrikaaners, who were descendants of Dutch immigrants to southern Africa. Even then, Britain and the Netherlands remained geostrategic allies. And even though Dutch-Belgian relations began with a decade of secessionist bloodshed, harmony between them blossomed after 1839.[31]

Germany invaded Belgium in August 1914 but left the Netherlands alone. In the ensuing conflagration, both German and British military planners considered a strategic invasion of Holland—again demonstrating that unwelcome military action between coup-free states is possible in certain situations.[32] After World War II, the United States replaced Britain as the principal guarantor of Dutch and Belgian security.

The Post–World War II Coup-Free Zone

After collaborating against fascist dictators, Britain and the United States formed the core of the Western alliance against the Soviet Union. Of course, this relationship, like any other, has seen occasional spats. The worst was when Britain, France, and Israel collaborated on a surprise military offensive against Egypt, after Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser seized the Suez Canal in 1956. President Eisenhower decided the United States could not support Britain's colonial adventure. This would drive the entire Middle East, and many other nations besides, into Soviet arms. As he asked the National Security Council, "[H]ow can we possibly support Britain and France if in doing so we lose the whole Arab world?"[33] Using financial pressure, Eisenhower forced British prime minister Anthony Eden to accept a humiliating cease-fire.

Even during this frosty episode, there was no chance of Anglo-American war. "Of course no one in the whole world really expected us to break off our long alliance with Great Britain and France," said Eisenhower, and there would certainly be no military confrontation. "Such a course of action is simply unthinkable, and no one can possibly believe that we will do so." As he wrote in a letter, "Britain not only has been, but must be, our best friend in

the world."[34] In the end, the Suez crisis was a mere blip in Anglo-American rapport.[35]

Relations between other coup-free states have been similarly placid. Sweden led a "neutral" crusade for peace and social justice during the Cold War but secretly aligned itself with the West. Having invaded Finland during the 1930s, the Soviet Union cowed Finland into adopting a submissive tone, but Finns managed to maintain their democracy and avoid being swept into the Warsaw Pact. Germany (West Germany), Norway, Iceland, and the Benelux countries became core members of the NATO alliance. The "Nazi gold" controversy of the 1990s embroiled Switzerland in controversy, but this was hardly an occasion for belligerence. Austria was similarly neutral and Western oriented. Israel has been a strong Western and American ally in the Middle East, although its treatment of Palestinians has aroused ire among many in the West. Since 1945, Japan's basic pro-American stance has never seriously come into question. The U.S.-Mexican relationship has slowly mended since the United States seized half of Mexico during the 1840s. Serious issues remain, but war is not on the table. Costa Rica's neutral and evenhanded approach to Central American issues briefly irritated the Reagan administration, but on the whole, Costa Rica exerts a calming and helpful influence in a troubled region. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have remained firm U.S. allies. Despite South Africa's alliance with the United States against Communist incursions in Africa, the United States and other Western countries eventually imposed crippling economic sanctions on the apartheid state; the stunning transformation to multiracial democracy in 1994 removed the need for sanctions. France, which passed the fifty-year mark in 2011, remains a solid ally and NATO partner (even though the Iraq War momentarily damaged relations).

Only two oligarchies—Mexico and South Africa—were among the nineteen coup-free states that emerged from 1920 to 2010. Mexico was an oligarchy of Party of Institutional Revolution (PRI) members until the late 1990s; South Africa was a white racial oligarchy until 1994. Intriguingly, the most vexing relations between coup-free states since 1920 have involved these two regimes, and it was arguably their oligarchic natures that generated most or all of the friction.

In Mexico, the PRI maintained a grip on power and a left-leaning, neutralist, "Third World" orientation throughout the Cold War. To defend the principle of nonintervention, to protect Mexican autonomy, and probably to show they had not forgotten their radical roots, Mexican leaders condemned the anti-Castro Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 and voiced support for anti-Yankee revolutionaries like the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and El Salvador's FMLN. But such moves were carefully moderated in order to preserve Mexico's live-and-let-live relationship with the United States. Mexico never became an ally of the Soviet Union or Fidel Castro, but Mexican autonomy

annoyed U.S. administrations. The end of the Cold War removed such irritants, and U.S.-Mexican cooperation has deepened since the PRI relinquished its monopoly of political power during the 1990s.[36]

Despite South Africa's pro-Western alignment during the Cold War, the racist apartheid policies invited controversy, censure, and finally disinvestment and devastating sanctions. "Once the taps of international capital investment and loans had been turned off," said F. W. de Klerk's brother Willem, "apartheid began to stare the spectre of bankruptcy in the face."[37] The apartheid issue resolved with the negotiated transition to multiracial elections and Nelson Mandela's landslide victory in April 1994.

All in all, relations within the coup-free zone—and especially between the democracies—approach an ideal of rational, temperate negotiation for mutual benefit. Sometimes this means cooperative neutrality, and sometimes it means active military alliance. Either way, once concord has been established, something appears to prevent coup-free states from sliding back into war or even into a state of distrust, animosity, or high tension. But what is that "something"?

PUTTING THE PEACES TOGETHER

As we have seen in our exploration of exceptions, the "democratic peace" is not perfect in that there have been two wars between modern democracies (in 1849 and in 1999), as well as other instances of violence. Likewise, the "coup-free peace" has been marred by the War of 1812 and a few near-war episodes. But when we put the "peaces" together—that is, when we observe the relations between coup-free democracies—we find a robust and durable peace.

The "democratic peace" awaits a persuasive explanatory theory, and until now, no one has identified the "coup-free peace" as a phenomenon at all. Is there a persuasive causal model that is consistent with all of our data and explains both phenomena simultaneously? We might begin with some first principles.

The Waste of War

So far, this book has traced the evolutionary reasons why humans pursue power, social status, and material well-being. It has employed self-interest to explain the rise of political stability, as well as many foreign policy patterns, including the neutralist orientation of small coup-free states. Here, we continue applying this logic and examine basic issues of war and peace through a utilitarian and economistic lens.

War, as many have noticed, is a colossal waste. It kills and maims people. It destroys buildings, crops, animals, ships, and much else, while producing

little to enhance welfare. If humanity could simply abolish war, the species would surely benefit.

The problem is the "security dilemma"—the endemic anarchy and insecurity of international life and the deep-seated fear and mistrust that arises between people in separate political units. The possibility that a neighboring tribe or state might attack leads to military preparations, which causes mounting anxiety within the neighboring entity, and so on, in an endless zero-sum spiral of mutual fear.

War can be advantageous—it can diminish a feared rival and enhance the winning side's resources—but there are always terrible risks. Battles turn on countless unforeseeable factors, including how weapons, tactics, training, terrain, weather, and leadership choices all mesh together. From Plataea to Agincourt to Antietam, outnumbered and outgunned forces have overcome great odds. Even in cases of overwhelming disparity—when the Roman Empire attacked a Germanic tribe or when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003—the drain on resources can prove unexpectedly high. Victories may be pyrrhic, and combatants cannot know the outcome in advance.

Moreover, the net result of war is always negative. In other words, losers lose more than winners win. Consider the entire spectrum of outcomes. If one side simply annihilates the other, at no cost to itself, it gains security by eliminating one potential enemy. But the other side is dead, and it loses everything. If winners raze a city to the ground and cart its people into slavery, they acquire some cheap laborers. But the losers have to spend the rest of their lives in abject humiliation. In economic terms, the winners' incremental utility gains are overwhelmed by the suffering they inflict. Overall, humanity loses.

Arthur Schopenhauer, a nineteenth-century German philosopher, stated the idea in colorful terms. "A quick test of the assertion that enjoyment outweighs pain in the world, or that they are at any rate balanced," he said, "would be to compare the feelings of an animal engaged in eating another with those of the animal being eaten."[38]

As we move from crushing victories toward the opposite pole—mutual impasse—the case grows stronger and stronger. In an impasse, both sides rain death and destruction upon each other, for little or no gain. World War I is the paradigmatic example. Both sides endured unspeakable agonies in the trenches; 8.5 million men died, and millions of others were maimed. And for what? The front moved back and forth, with progress measured in yards.

During the Cold War, both superpowers threatened to annihilate each other. Nuclear war cannot produce winners, just radioactive ruins. There is no clearer example of net loss: both sides lose everything.

Since losses overwhelm gains, we know that the average state experiences a dramatic loss in war. States should therefore approach any war with trepidation—especially since war is inherently unpredictable.

This does not mean, however, that every decision for war is irrational. States do pose threats to one another, and clear-eyed analysis can identify opportune moments to strike. Many wars are preemptive: by attacking now, a state can diminish ongoing and future threats. Violence may be risky but still rational. In retrospect, accommodation was clearly a mistake at Munich because it allowed Hitler to strengthen his hand. Still, if war can be avoided without serious prejudice to national security, it probably pays to steer clear.

Republican Rationality

A contributing factor to both the democratic peace and the coup-free peace may be that democracies and coup-free states are always republics—in other words, not monarchies. In the late 1700s, Immanuel Kant argued that absolute monarchs were more likely to push for war than citizens of a republic. Why? A tyrant does not experience the pain, tragedy, or economic hardships of war. He "goes on enjoying the delights of his table or sport, or of his pleasure palaces and gala days." As a result, he can "decide on war for the most trifling reasons, as if it were a kind of pleasure party." Republican citizens, on the other hand, "would think long before beginning such a terrible game" since they would "call down on themselves all the horrors of war" and must "pay the cost of war out of their own pocket."[39]

Kant's argument is logically sound. Voters in a republic generally internalize war costs much more than a tyrant does. A tyrant may even benefit as his nation suffers. Many subjects may die, while he expands his domain. (But as we have seen, many autocrats have lost their crowns by losing wars.)

A brief review of twentieth-century history suggests that democratic war decisions reflect the genuine material and strategic interests of the nation more accurately than tyrannical war decisions. Democracies have gotten mired in Third World quagmires like Vietnam, but they have never started wars against large industrial powers, as did Germany, Japan, and Argentina. Still, republics are not reliably "dovish," and as noted above, quantitative analyses find democracies only marginally less warlike than autocracies. We must look to other factors to explain the democratic and coup-free peaces.

Democratic Transparency

Why do democracies get along? As we saw, the idealist explanation—that democratic leaders carry the spirit of compromise into foreign policy—is unpersuasive. Given the security dilemma, in which states pose existential threats to one another, why do democracies almost always find harmony?

From a strict realpolitik vantage point, all other states are threatening, so it is rational to prepare for war against them. But what if we loosen the condition that all other states are equally threatening? What if certain states

appear relatively unlikely to invade? If that is the case, the rationality of preemptively attacking them erodes sharply. Any confrontation between two states, after all, exposes both to dangers from every other direction. In a world filled with potential foes, it makes no sense to hazard war against the least threatening states.

What might enable democracies to appear relatively unthreatening to one another? By their very nature, democracies broadcast reams of information about the public attitudes, fears, interests, and concerns ultimately guiding and constraining foreign policy. Democratic assemblies debate the big questions regarding alliances, tensions, war, and peace. Electoral campaigns bring all of a state's anxieties and security concerns into sharp relief, especially when candidates pander to voters' fears and try to present themselves as tough-minded and plausible commanders in chief. In this way, democracies make it clear whom they perceive to be a threat and whom they do not.

Dictatorships, unlike democracies, are opaque. The most critical information about the long-term posture and intentions of an autocracy remains hidden inside the tyrant's head. Two months after forming a pact with Stalin, for example, Hitler surprised his army chiefs. Poland, he told them, would serve as an "assembly area for future German operations."[40] Soon afterward, Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Oligarchies can be similarly impenetrable, especially when they are relatively small. Witness the USSR before and after Stalin's dictatorship and the largely futile attempts by Western "Kremlinologists" to decipher factional alignments and policy debates within the Central Committee of the Communist Party. This is why there is certainly no "autocratic peace,"[41] and why there is probably no "oligarchic peace" as well.

Transparency makes democracies uniquely trustworthy partners. Democracies have difficulty feigning alliance, in the manner of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, because they cannot hide their fears, misgivings, and security concerns.

But openness only yields a peace dividend when both states are democratic. Tyrants and oligarchs learn about a democracy's foreign policy debate, but there is no reason to think this promotes amity. First, the information flow is unidirectional. The democracy has no way of gauging the true intentions of a tyrant or oligarchy. Democratic citizens, politicians, and leaders will express their fears and uncertainties openly, thereby inflaming tensions. Second, as we have seen, there is a built-in animosity between democracies and their tyrannical and oligarchic neighbors.

Democratic transparency was augmented substantially during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the rise of instantaneous communications technology, mass media, and multiple sources of thorough, relatively objective news reporting. In this environment, political leaders, journalists, commentators, and ordinary citizens are inundated with thorough, real-time,

reliable information on the full range of opinions, concerns, and worldviews within other democracies.

With this type of transparency in place, two democracies can readily perceive that, within both states, there are powerful constituencies opposing a war. The reason for this boils down to rationality: any war between the democracies would harm the interests of most citizens, while benefiting few if any. Cost-benefit calculations push both populations toward compromise. More importantly, both states understand that rational considerations are also urging the other side back from the precipice. War appears avoidable, reducing any temptation for preemptive attack.

In this manner, a "democratic peace process" begins. By avoiding war and establishing a pattern of negotiation and compromise, each democracy becomes increasingly confident that it will not find itself at war with the other. This is a self-reinforcing cycle of mutual trust and cooperation. As one example among many, this cycle got under way between Britain and the United States during the final years of the nineteenth century, and it has continued and deepened ever since.

A few theorists have proposed that "transparency" helps produce the democratic peace, but through an entirely different mechanism. In their view, democratic leaders have to face the voters, so they cannot afford to make foreign policy commitments without being ready to back them up with force. (We might recall, for example, President George H. W. Bush's 1990 pronouncement that he was drawing a "line in the sand" against Iraq. After this utterance, President Bush could not retreat without paying a heavy political price.) In this analysis, democratic states send clearer, more credible signals about their "resolve" during international crises. While some scholars conclude that this credibility prevents miscommunication, thereby facilitating peace between democracies, others point out that democracies might paint themselves into a corner, making war inevitable.[42] But the whole debate misses the point. Other states cannot tell what a democratic leader is going to do in the midst of a crisis. No one has access to this kind of information—not even the leaders themselves—because their decisions evolve on a moment-to-moment, day-to-day basis, in reaction to unfolding events. Instead, the effect is far more long-term: democracies generate a plenitude of reliable information about basic attitudes toward other states within the public and the political establishment. It is this latter "broad-band" transparency that enables multiple democracies to enter spirals of deepening trust and over time make war appear absurd.

This transparency-based explanation depends upon the flow of accurate and reliable information. While ancient Greek democracies were necessarily more transparent than their oligarchic or tyrannical neighbors, the information flow was far more meager, delayed, and untrustworthy than it is between modern democracies. To be sure, accounts of assembly deliberations were

sometimes transmitted by letter and word-of-mouth. (We know this because some accounts of debates in far-flung republics ultimately found their way into the writings of Greek historians like Thucydides.) But this form of transmission was necessarily sporadic, personal, and, in many cases, tainted by inaccuracy or bias: politicians who relayed foreign debates to their own assemblies would almost certainly "spin" the information. Thucydides, for example, remarks that it was difficult to discern the truth of many events surrounding the Peloponnesian War, as "different eye-witnesses gave different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories."[43] He also describes how, in Syracuse, the democratic assembly debated whether they could believe reports that the Athenian assembly had voted to attack their city.[44] There was no neutral, careful, immediate, and relatively objective source of news, such as the *New York Times*, to provide a shared foundation of basic facts. In this environment, many reports were discounted, distrusted, and dismissed as mere rumor or rhetoric.

While there may have been some initial tendencies toward a democratic peace in ancient Greece, the evidence is inconclusive. Only in the modern age, and particularly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with the advent of real-time reporting via telegraph, telephone, radio, television, and the Internet, and a wide variety of media sources checking and verifying each other's work, do we find a clear democratic peace.[45]

Coup-Free Transparency

Coup-free democracies are even more transparent, comprehensible, and predictable than unstable democracies. By definition, after all, they are permanent democracies, with no overnight conversions to other forms of government. During the Cold War, states like Czechoslovakia, China, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Ethiopia flipped into the Soviet camp when Marxists seized power. Today, potential coups render political systems such as Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, Ukraine, Pakistan, and Venezuela wildly unpredictable. Future events are unforeseeable, leaving open basic questions about what kinds of people will rule, within what kinds of political systems.

Another reason for the greater transparency of coup-free democracies is that the decisions, actions, and internal politics of rule-of-law states are vastly more legible and comprehensible to the outside world. When a state's upper echelons are riddled with corruption, as appears to be the case in Russia, Belarus, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, among others, it is a matter of sheer guesswork to understand the true interests, knowledge, constraints, and activities of its leaders. Corrupt officials always hide their criminal activities and may keep political superiors in the dark. Under these circumstances, it is

impossible to determine just what the state is doing and who within the state knows about it.

For example, since 2001, American leaders have been confounded by Pakistan's mysterious and duplicitous role vis-à-vis Afghanistan, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda. As presidential candidate Barack Obama learned from the director of national intelligence in September 2008, the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency either cannot or will not control its own people. When Osama bin Laden was discovered in Pakistan, right next to Pakistan's version of West Point, it sparked an international uproar over whether Pakistani military commanders knew, how far up the knowledge went, and why Pakistani officials would be sheltering him. The questions remain unanswered.[46]

India, similarly, has been mystified by Pakistani behavior, even during periods when Pakistan has been formally democratic. "Mr. Prime Minister, what is happening?" asked Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of his democratically elected Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, in May 1999.[47] India had just discovered Pakistani incursions in the Kargil district of Kashmir, in clear violation of the understanding that Vajpayee had just reached with Sharif a few months earlier. This Pakistani incursion led to a three-month war over three-mile-high mountain ridges. Remarkably, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif later disclosed that his telephone call from Vajpayee was the first time he learned of his own military's invasion of India. The man who kept the invasion secret for several months, according to Sharif, was none other than General Pervez Musharraf—who, of course, also kept his coup plans secret until he suddenly seized power on September 12, 1999.

It is clear that elements within the Pakistani ISI have a long history of involvement in poppy cultivation and heroin processing and have continued providing clandestine support for the Taliban and for Kashmiri militants, long after 2001.[48] What is far less clear is exactly what Pakistani leaders have known about the ISI-Taliban-opium nexus and who within Pakistan's military, bureaucratic, and political establishments personally benefits from the drug trade and other illicit activities. As South Asia expert Bruce Riedel comments, Pakistan is deeply confusing to all observers—including U.S. presidents, who obviously enjoy all the advantages of American intelligence.[49]

In a rule-of-law state with relatively minor corruption, on the other hand, the interests and constraints facing political leaders are far more self-evident. While Presidents Bush and Obama could not know whether Pakistani leaders actually wanted to curtail support for the Taliban, whether they feared an ISI coup for doing so, or whether their own officials would secretly hinder their efforts, the American administrations were relatively open books. Both presidents sought total victory over the Taliban, a pro-American democratic regime in Kabul, and an exit for American forces; these imperatives clearly

guided U.S. actions. It was possible that individual American officials or service members might be tempted by drug money, but such instances of corruption could not substantially undermine U.S. policy. In sum, where Pakistan is opaque, complex, and duplicitous, the United States is relatively clear, simple, and straightforward.

Ultimately, the relationships of authority, responsibility, and accountability within a rule-of-law state are precisely delineated in legal codes, and by definition, those legal provisions are operative and binding. Even in the realm of intelligence and covert military operations, laws regulate spending and conduct, while other governmental entities (such as elected legislatures and the chief executive) perform oversight. The more criminal and corrupt a state, the more secretive its activities, and the more its official foreign policy positions may be subverted by rogue officials and factions.

The Peace between Coup-Free Democracies

As we will shortly see, the most secure and unquestioned relationships of peace, probably in human history, are between coup-free democracies.

Neither the democratic peace nor the coup-free peace is perfect, as our analysis of exceptions has revealed. Both are marred by wars, small-scale violence, and near-war crises. Interestingly, many "flaws," or counterexamples, in the democratic peace can be traced to coups, revolutionary instability, and the absence of rule-of-law accountability. When these problems are solved—that is, when a democracy stabilizes under the rule of law—the democratic peace can finally emerge in its complete form.

Let us examine both major exceptions to the democratic peace. The only outright "wars" (defined as over two hundred combat deaths) between modern democracies broke out between France and Rome in 1849 and between India and Pakistan in 1999. Both confrontations were closely related to revolutionary instability.

In France, a lengthy course of revolutionary events erupted from February through December 1848, when Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte was elected president, largely by the peasantry. (Bonaparte, who had attempted several previous coups, would assume a dictatorship in 1851.) Meanwhile in Rome, the pope, who was also the temporal ruler of the Papal States, fled a street revolution in November 1848. As radical Roman democrats under the leadership of Giuseppe Mazzini assumed control, the pope called on Catholic countries for support. Bonaparte, under pressure from French Catholics and facing his own radical democrats (who drew inspiration from Rome and Mazzini), sent French troops to restore the pope. The French army prevailed over the defiant Roman radicals.[50]

Even during the periods of democratic rule in Pakistan, serious tensions and small-scale hostilities with neighboring India have persisted, and they

led to open war in 1999. While it is impossible to determine exactly who within Pakistan bears responsibility for these events, many operations—including the 1999 Kargil incursion—appear to be rogue. Pakistan had only been democratic since 1988, and a few months after the Kargil War, General Musharraf seized power in a coup.

Other hostilities appear similarly intertwined with coups. France occupied Germany's industrial Ruhr region in 1923, with little bloodshed, in part because French leaders witnessed multiple coup attempts in Berlin, perceived the Weimar Republic as fragile, and feared a resurgent Germany.[51] The United States backed five antidemocratic coups during the Cold War because American leaders feared Communist takeovers in Iran, Guatemala, Congo, Brazil, and Chile.

The onset of rule-of-law stability, thus, removes major potential flashpoints in the relations between states. Like the democratic peace, the peace between coup-free democracies is not instantaneous. It takes time for tensions to calm and for both states to perceive the essentially cooperative stance of the other. Still, because coup-free democracies are permanent, there is plenty of time for the democratic peace to take hold.

Figure 11.2 illustrates the sliding scale of democratic peace. At the far left pole, we have any situation involving a tyranny; to date, no tyrannies have established lasting stability. No democratic peace is evident here.

Next in line, we observe two improbable versions of the democratic peace (or, possibly, "republican peace"). First, there are relations involving at least one coup-prone oligarchy, such as a pair of unstable oligarchies or an unstable oligarchy and a democracy. Second, there are pairs of ancient democracies. Within these categories, we find up to thirty-five wars. Additional research is required to determine if such pairings participate in the "democratic peace" in any way, but with so many wars, we should probably remain skeptical.

Next, we find the tenuous beginnings of the democratic peace. There are four categories: (1) pairs of modern coup-prone democracies, (2) coup-free oligarchic pairs, (3) a coup-free democracy versus a coup-prone democracy, and (4) a coup-free oligarchy versus a coup-free democracy. These are obviously imperfect forms of the democratic peace because we find genuine wars, or at least near-war crises, support for coups, and potential violence within each category.

After that, we find a clear form of the democratic peace: between coup-free democracies, at any time following their final coup events. We still find four episodes of small-scale violence not amounting to "war," contemplated attack, or potential violence. All instances of actual fighting came early. The tiny British raids on Finland occurred just eight years after the last Finnish coup attempt. Israel gained independence in 1948, and Britain continued to arm and assist Arab forces for several months afterward. The other two

instances were merely hypothetical: a contemplated British invasion of the neutral Netherlands in World War I and the controversial but essentially friendly Allied occupation of neutral Iceland during World War II.

Next, we find a strong form of democratic peace: between coup-free democracies after each state has passed fifty years of stability (but not fifty years of democracy). The only instance of near-war crisis was the Venezuelan Border Crisis between Britain and the United States in 1895.

Finally, we observe the democratic peace in its most perfect and mature form: between coup-free democracies after both have remained stable and democratic for fifty years. There are no wars, no instances of interstate violence, no near-war crises, and no contemplated attacks. Today, the prospects for any such events are truly remote.

Coup-free democracies are not necessarily best friends from day one—but they always settle into cooperative relations. When Britain and the United States shared a stable, democratic structure, they entered the "special relationship." Throughout the tumultuous twentieth century, the enemies of 1776 remained steadfast allies. Have any other great powers enjoyed such a long, firm, and continuous partnership?

The Anglo-American bond suggests a ratchet effect: once coup-free democracies begin cooperating, there is no returning to hostility or even indifference. Why? Cooperation is rational; it makes each state more prosperous and secure. In an otherwise insecure world, each state would pay a heavy price for unnecessarily antagonizing a friendly nation.

Specifically, there is a good reason why no American presidents threatened military action against Britain during the Cold War: it would have destroyed NATO and multiplied Soviet power. In both countries, a broad consensus had emerged that the other simply did not pose a threat.

Just as we traced causal relationships ensuring stability within coup-free states down to the level of why people in responsible positions cannot say certain things, we can develop the same analysis here. No high-ranking political figure in America or Britain can suggest that the other nation constitutes a danger without being relegated to the lunatic fringe. (Only Lyndon LaRouche—cult leader, convicted felon, and perennial presidential candidate—has said anything close, having repeatedly accused Queen Elizabeth II of being an international drug baron.) This dynamic has survived World War I, World War II, and the Cold War and continues to make an Anglo-American war seem about as farfetched as a coup d'état in either state.

This basic consensus operates throughout the coup-free zone. The sheer fact that coup-free democracies persist over long periods allows them to find, establish, and consolidate mutually beneficial relations. Once they do, there is no going back. Citizens of coup-free states simply do not see their counterparts in other coup-free states as remotely threatening.

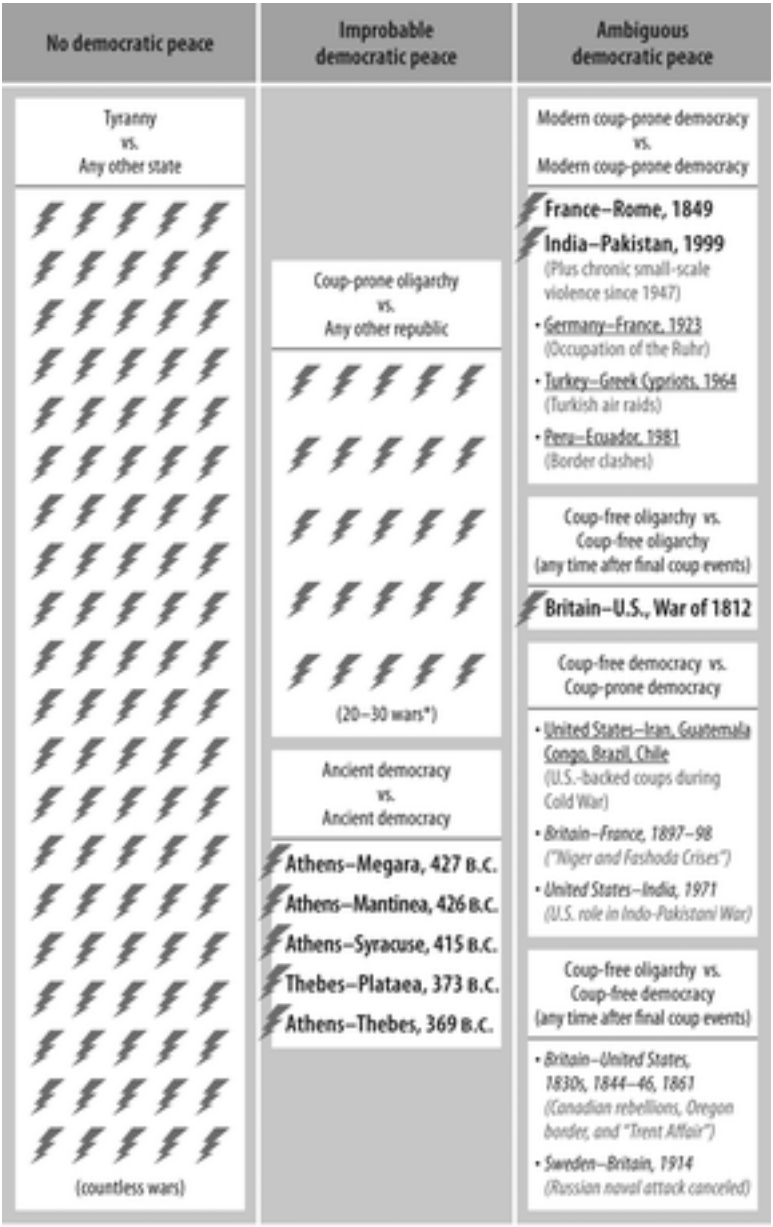


Figure 11.2. The democratic peace: a sliding scale

Figure 11.2. ***Continued.***

Even before reading this book, people already understood that coups and revolutions won't be toppling governments in London or Washington, D.C., anytime soon—or in Berlin, Jerusalem, or Tokyo, for that matter. Because of this, the mutual trust is undimmed by fears of future events. No one worries that instability will allow weapons to "fall into the wrong hands," as they do with nations like Pakistan. There is no real threat to democracy in the coup-free zone, and as a result, the faith in peace is adamantine.

A BRIEF RECAP

It may be helpful to briefly review everything we have learned in this book. Darwinian evolution provides our first principles. As we saw in chapter 6, human beings—especially men—evolved to pursue social dominance through physical force. At the same time, people also need friends and allies and readily coalesce against outsiders. Collectively, we have labeled these traits our "simian will to power."

People also have "economic" instincts. For obvious evolutionary reasons, human beings—like other animals—want and need material things like food, water, shelter, warmth, and physical security. Our goals are frequently in conflict, and we must choose between them, as other animals do. When a young male chimpanzee vies for alpha rank, for example, he necessarily sacrifices his comfort and safety. People strike different balances between all these goals, and no one is perfectly rational, but en masse, people still behave in predictably self-interested ways.

But as economists also point out, resources are scarce. The result: human beings compete for political power, social status, and material wealth all at the same time. People have known this for a long time, of course, but now we can trace the evolutionary roots of emotions like pride, envy, hatred, fear, and ambition.

Our simian will to power and our cliquish tendencies explain the maps at the beginning of the book. People don't just go to war against "foreigners"; they also form alliances to dominate local rivals. Whatever the nature of prehistoric politics, history is a sanguinary saga of intrigue and coups d'état.

In historical times, monarchy or one-man rule has been the norm. But monarchs never came to power or ruled alone. They ruled by working in tandem with family members, friends, and clients. Still, that never ruled out betrayal. At any time, and especially when the monarch died, these collaborators could—and often did—gather supporters in their own bids for power. In many cases, the main contenders were the king's sons and other royals. Women participated in these machinations, and sometimes a woman claimed the top job.

But occasionally, as we have seen, people contemplated and designed new systems for managing their collective affairs. "Wait," they said in effect, "what if we created a system of rules, made decisions in a council or assembly, and chose leaders to serve temporary terms?" We can only guess at how this happened, but one way or another, it did. It happened in a number of places, separated by millennia of time, probably in Sumeria and certainly in classical Greece and Rome. The republican concept was born.

Some republics died quickly; others took longer. Countless coup leaders—from Pisistratus to Napoleon to Hitler to Pinochet—have demonstrated how republics end. With armed lackeys, one person or a small junta takes control.

But some republics sustained themselves over surprisingly long periods. The Spartan "equals," for example, retained a collective grip over the Peloponnese for several centuries, punctuated by only one known and definite coup attempt. Rome and Athens also saw periods of constitutional order, where people apparently played by republican rules for years and decades on end.

For several centuries, the Venetians practiced republicanism as many others have: intermittently, with violent episodes and monarchical interludes. But after the republican revolution of 1032, as time went on, the republic acquired tensile strength. To win prominence, noblemen found they had to sit quietly through council and committee meetings and wait for opportune moments to make eloquent arguments. They had to show mastery of the law, and as judges, they had to enforce it with evenhanded rigor. Still, men like Bajamonte Tiepolo and Marin Faliero were dissatisfied and aimed at supreme power.

But after their abject failures, people stopped trying to overthrow the system. As argued here, they didn't stop because of any change in basic human instincts or motives. Virtue is far too sporadic, unpredictable, and evanescent to constitute a plausible explanation for centuries of stability. Instead, a well-developed legal system, providing reliably impersonal justice, discouraged and dissolved family-based factions. As a result, people no longer trusted their fellows and comrades enough to organize a subversive plot. The Venetian Republic astounded the world with its order, decorum, and continuity.

In time, other states followed. England built a similarly impartial legal order over many centuries, but a thoroughly impersonal system required the crown to be severely diminished in its powers. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, England gained a strictly constitutional monarchy and settled into stability. But the Scots, who joined with England in the 1707 Act of Union, remained clannish and turbulent. They rebelled in 1715 and then again in 1745 under Bonnie Prince Charlie. After the Forty-Five, though, Great Britain emerged as the world's second coup-free state.

The coup-free zone gained momentum in the nineteenth century, picking up the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The twentieth century world wars dealt a slight reverse, as Germany took out the Low Countries and delayed the entrance of Denmark and Norway, but since then the coup-free zone has exploded. There are now twenty-three coup-free states and more on the immediate horizon. France joined in 2011; in all likelihood Singapore will enter the coup-free zone in 2015, and Botswana will arrive in 2016.

But that's only half the story. Inside these coup-free republics, people debate and decide matters of pressing collective concern, without all the drama, intrigue, and fratricidal bloodshed of coup-prone states. This is not to suggest that policy making in coup-free states takes place on some rarefied intellectual plane, devoid of fearmongering, appeals to prejudice, or gritty politics. But coup-free states are inoculated against the specific pathologies afflicting coup-prone states. Foreign powers are not allowed to determine their leaders and thereby warp decision making. All the bungling inherent in a coup-prone environment—leaders using war to forestall revolution, tyrannical megalomania, and organizational disarray—are absent. In coup-free republics, people cannot force their way into power but must credibly advertise themselves, their points of view, and their strategies as reflecting the best interests of electors. However imperfectly, this system tethers the policy debate to collective interests, and coup-free states behave with relative rationality.

This is why coup-free republics gravitate toward neutrality. The coup-free powers, Britain and the United States, stayed out of many foreign conflicts, but sometimes—as in World War I, World War II, and the Cold War—they felt compelled to take sides. Arguably, those war decisions were fully rational, because the control of European industry by Germany or the Soviet Union would have jeopardized both nations, and because both nations were pivotal to the outcomes.

But when coup-free states are small and weak, the logic of neutrality is stronger. In a great power war, they simply can't determine the outcome. Even if they choose the right side, what will they gain? They will simply help the eventual winner prevail, perhaps slightly more quickly and at potentially ruinous cost. And if they support the ultimate loser, the consequences will be worse. Far better to retract into a shell, declare neutrality, and hope for the best! Switzerland, the Scandinavian nations, and the Low Countries were in this very position at the beginning of both world wars.

Even so, we see a competing inclination between fellow coup-free states: cooperation and alliance with one another. While the early coup-free states were oligarchies (Venice, the United States until the Jacksonian era, Britain until the late nineteenth century, and Sweden until 1918), since 1920 the coup-free zone has been overwhelmingly democratic. The existence of the

"democratic peace" has been amply confirmed, at least since 1900. The best explanation for the democratic peace can be found in the extraordinary transparency of modern democracies, operating in an international environment with reliable, real-time information flows. This transparency enables fellow democracies to overcome the "security dilemma" by entering virtuous circles of mutual confidence. The peace between coup-free democratic states is even stronger, because stability ensures that allies will not suddenly "flip" into an enemy camp, and because rule-of-law states are inherently more transparent and legible to the outside world.

In one sense, the coup-free peace is simply an extension of the tranquility within coup-free states. Inside coup-free states, an impartial rule of law dissolves traditional loyalty clusters, such as families, tribes, and factions linked by patronage. Our police, military, and civilian officials are constrained by law, and they face criminal sanctions for abusing their power. Unless people join a street gang or mafia syndicate, they have no real "enemies." The coup-free peace brings that same lack of enmity to the international level. Americans, Britons, Germans, Japanese, Israelis, Mexicans, South Africans, and so forth, do not mobilize for war against each other, and their leaders negotiate everything.

A band of thoroughly civilized political life spans the globe, and it is growing rapidly. The coup-free zone may experience more setbacks, as it did in the early twentieth century. But if we avoid nuclear wars, biological terrors, slow cooking by carbon dioxide, and large asteroids, there is no reason we can't have a coup-free world by 2200.

As Rodney King asked, "Can't we all just get along?"

The answer seems to be yes.

Epilogue

What can we do about corruption?

It is, after all, the root of many ills. It derails justice and the ability to hold officials accountable, leaving them free to extract resources for themselves and their cronies. It is invidious, endlessly frustrating, and enraging. It is culpable for much of the grinding poverty around the globe, and of course, it blocks the emergence of coup-free states.

Certainly, the interests of the United States and its allies are well served by helping other nations reduce corruption. Lower corruption means stronger rule-of-law institutions, which helps expand the coup-free zone and create a safer, more peaceful, and more prosperous world.

It is also in our interests to be seen to be doing something about corruption. For billions of ordinary citizens in developing nations, corruption is a daily obstacle and a ball and chain on their life aspirations. We should not forget that it was outrage against systemic corruption that ignited the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt.

Unfortunately, many people, especially in the Islamic world, associate the United States with highly corrupt regimes. After all, the United States backed corrupt dictatorships in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen for decades, supports the corrupt Palestinian Fatah party, and installed regimes overseeing vast corruption in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many radical Islamist parties, on the other hand, make honesty, probity, and efficiency a centerpiece of their appeal. If we want to earn the favor of ordinary citizens, we must help them solve their endemic corruption, and we must do so in ways that are readily visible and salient in their lives.

Also, of course, helping people fight corruption happens to be the right thing to do.

But it is not as though we haven't been trying. In fact, the United States and other nations have spent billions of dollars on rule-of-law promotion programs, but as many have pointed out, the results have been dismal. It is difficult to name a single state where such programs have produced a genuine rule of law.

Rule-of-law promotion projects generally focus on infrastructure (such as courtrooms, law libraries, and technology), modernizing legal codes, or training programs for judges or police officers. Often these programs are narrow in scope and are implemented in "cookie-cutter" ways. While such isolated efforts are certainly well-intentioned and often target problematic aspects of a state's legal system, they appear doomed to fail.

Simply training people to observe "professional" norms, without changing systemic pressures and incentives, does not work. A case in point is what happened in Haiti following the 1994 U.S.-led intervention. Reform of Haiti's notoriously brutal and corrupt security forces became a top priority for international and Haitian leaders. A major effort was launched to create and train a new police organization, the Haitian National Police. Over five thousand new officers were recruited, trained, and deployed. Selection standards were high, and recruits went through an intensive four-month training course conducted by American, Canadian, and French instructors. Initially, things appeared to be working. Officers who committed abuses were investigated and punished—a radical departure from the past. But continuing corruption in the courts and the political system ultimately brought widespread demoralization; many officers quit, and others, seeing bribery practiced with impunity by judges and politicians, went on the take.[1] Today, no one would argue that the "rule of law" prevails in Haiti.

So what does work? While efforts to transmit rule-of-law practices from "First World" to "Third World" show poor results, this does not mean that Third World states are incapable of building rule-of-law systems on their own. The past fifty years have witnessed several successes in this regard, including Costa Rica, Botswana, and Singapore.

Constitutionally and politically, these states are distinctive. They have one thing in common, however. During critical periods, each was led by a magnetic politician who persistently prioritized the fight against corruption and inexorably punished friends and political allies who were implicated in corrupt activities. In short, each benefited from "virtue charisma."

Lee Kuan Yew led Singapore for over three decades. In the process, he transformed Singapore from a sweltering, poor, Third World city with serious ethnic tensions, Communist activity, and an active criminal underworld into an immaculate, green, wealthy, technologically advanced, harmonious, multicultural state. Lee and his associates in the People's Action Party (PAP) won genuine popularity by governing in a rigorously ethical manner.

Lee and his associates guided Singapore toward an export-oriented high-tech economy, nationalized land, built vast housing complexes, provided free schooling, instituted a social security system, and created public transportation. They also cracked down on littering, spitting, gum chewing, graffiti, long hair, and hippies. One can legitimately question, of course, the PAP's oligarchical grip on Singapore's ostensibly democratic system through "soft authoritarian" methods, including costly defamation lawsuits against political opponents. Still, these methods are themselves based entirely in law, and there is no doubt that Singapore is an efficient rule-of-law state.

Lee led Singapore into the "First World" by practicing an aggressive and unyielding virtue. He continually worked to build Singapore's future and expected the same stoic discipline from others. When associates and old friends strayed from rectitude, Lee destroyed their careers and let the law take its course.[2] In Lee's view, honest government was the force propelling Singapore out of the Third World: "The important factor in development is the integrity of the country. Three-quarters of the problems with these countries is because they lack it. They begin to take grease, and then the whole thing becomes unpredictable."[3]

It is not necessary, however, to mimic the persona of Lee Kuan Yew in order to show comparable results. Seretse Khama, the first president of independent Botswana, was admired for his serene warmth, humility, and humor. José Figueres Ferrer, who educated himself at the Boston Public Library and went on to overhaul Costa Rica's constitutional system in the 1940s and 1950s, was also not cast in the same mold. But the political accomplishments of Lee, Khama, and Figueres are surprisingly parallel: they punished corruption, built strong rule-of-law institutions (relative to neighboring states, certainly), and led their nations to much better days.

So if we are bad at teaching people to observe rule-of-law norms, but people are eminently capable of building rule-of-law systems on their own, what role can we play? How can we help people fight corruption and build rule-of-law systems?

I propose two main strategies, which can be pursued simultaneously. First, we should maximize the chances that future Lees, Khamas, and Figuereses (Figuerii?) will come to power. Second, we should use new technologies to enable ordinary citizens to illuminate, trace, and target patterns of corruption within their own nations. At present, these remain general proposals, and I invite people to help formulate them with greater specificity and to generate additional ideas.

Regarding the first strategy, one might assume that we are powerless to create virtuous leaders or to ensure that they rise to positions of responsibility. Doesn't this depend on sheer luck? But in fact, there are things we can do. People everywhere, including those who might become leaders of the Lee/Khama/Figueres type, are susceptible to incentives. If people perceive

two distinctly different ways to engage in politics—a traditional path of back-scratching and cronyism and a path of stringent "rule-of-law" advocacy—they will often choose the former if it seems more personally efficacious. Our task is to put a thumb on the right side of the scales.

We might begin with a fellowship program. This fellowship could be awarded to high-ranking politicians, civil servants, and judges from developing nations who strenuously battled corruption during their tenures in office, who applied the same rules to political allies and foes alike, and who opened their own finances to exhaustive scrutiny by the selection committee. The goal of the fellowship would be to influence the personal calculations of governmental leaders around the world, such that they would see vigorous anticorruption efforts as an avenue to personal enrichment, prestige, and opportunity.

This fellowship might last for one year, for example, and pay perhaps $1 million to each recipient. Each year, dozens or eventually hundreds of new fellows could be named. Fellows would attend various conferences (such as the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland), network, and share their expertise within the rule-of-law policy community. Following their terms, fellows might conceivably return to governmental service in their home nations—and would be eligible to be named as fellows again. Essentially, the program would internationalize the career path of public service in developing nations and would incentivize honesty and transparency, as well as stern, implacable, and evenhanded anticorruption enforcement.

With fifty fellows named per year, the program might cost about $60 million per year. Compared to total expenditures for existing rule-of-law promotion programs, the cost would be small. Yet, by providing dramatic personal incentives, such a program could reap far greater rule-of-law dividends.

As just one benefit, the program would help politicians and civil servants resist pleas for favoritism from kin, tribesmen, and people from their hometowns. "I'm sorry," they could say, "I'd like to help you, but I'm trying to get a rule-of-law fellowship!" (Without that understandable goal, refusing such requests often seems peevish and unkind.) As an added benefit, those who received the fellowship would suddenly be flush with cash and could assuage kinsmen and associates in ways that are entirely legal and aboveboard. (There would be no rule against sharing the funds, after all, which would be private property.)

Ultimately, we should not imagine "virtue" as some kind of pristine quality that has trouble coexisting with more practical, careerist, and monetary objectives. "Virtue performances" have been essential to building rule-of-law systems, from ancient Rome through George Washington to leaders like Lee Kuan Yew.

The second type of strategy is about bringing the constant, everyday occurrences of small-scale graft—which currently go under the radar—into the light of day. If we develop ways of illuminating and specifying patterns of corruption, activists and ordinary citizens in many developing nations will be able to mobilize effective opposition.

How might we do this? Especially with new technologies like mobile phones and social media, which are already having dramatic political impacts in the developing world, the methods are limited only by our creativity.

One possibility would be for the U.S. State Department—or perhaps the United Nations—to sponsor a mobile phone application that would enable phone users to press a simple button on their screen. In effect, this button would register, "I just experienced corruption." The signal—with GPS information—would be routed to a State Department, UN, or other website and could be plotted on the map of a country or city, possibly in real time.

To encourage people to use it without fear of retaliation, it would have to be made clear that the signal carried no information about the user's identity. To preserve anonymity, the data might also be delayed, for a few days, weeks, or months, so that corrupt officials would have no way of linking blips to particular people. The system could be designed in any number of ways, with greater, lesser, or no specificity about what type of corruption had occurred.

Obviously, the system could be abused. Some people might press the corruption button out of sheer pique, not because anything untoward had happened. (One way to prevent people from creating large quantities of false data, however, would be to limit the number of times per month a signal might be registered from a particular phone.) No prosecutors could mount a specific corruption case on the basis of "blip" evidence.

But at an aggregate level, a system of this general type could suddenly bring the endemic but hidden patterns of official corruption into broad daylight. It could illuminate just how much corruption is going on, where it is occurring, at what times, and with what frequencies. It would reveal mountains of comparative data, enabling people to gauge relative frequencies of corruption within their neighborhoods, cities, and nations. Most importantly, it could mobilize political opposition and give citizens and activists specific targets for focusing their energies. "Look," they might say to politicians and prosecutors, "there seems to be a lot of corruption happening in this neighborhood, and even in this building! You need to fix it!"

This particular plan might work, or it might not. But I am certain that, no matter what, we can devise ingenious systems for bringing corruption to light, mobilizing public energies and participation against official graft, and doing so in ways that build partnerships among advanced democratic governments, international organizations, and populations in developing nations. As Egyptians, Pakistanis, Russians, Bolivians, Malawians, and many others use

digital technologies of this sort, they cannot help but see that the U.S. government and other entities are "on their side" against the pernicious corruption they suffer every day.

Devising specific digital-media tools and applications is not my forte. (I am better, I think, at writing books about politics and history.) But there are plenty of highly creative people around the world who excel at this task.

Mark Zuckerberg? Sergey Brin? Others?

Would you like to create simple tools that can help reform governance around the world, create humane conditions for billions of people, and ultimately generate the conditions for lasting world peace?

If so, please see what you can do.

Coups in World History

An Online Resource

A compilation of coup events in world history is available online at https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442222717. I have listed coups where the evidence clearly indicates an internal struggle for control of the central government. I did not include events that, due to incomplete descriptions or knowledge, might have been predominantly international wars or purely secessionist rebellions.

The states are arranged in five sections: Middle East and precolonial North Africa; Europe; Africa; the Americas; and Asia and Pacific Islands. In order to collect the entire history of a civilization in one place—for example, the coups of Persia/Iran from the Achaemenid Empire to contemporary Iran—I have placed all such coups together, under the state's contemporary name (e.g., Iran).

Notes

1. THE COUP-FREE ZONE

1. Anthony Summers with Robbyn Swan, *The Arrogance of Power: The Secret World of Richard Nixon* (New York: Viking, 2000), 463–81.

2. James Schlesinger, quoted in Summers, *Arrogance of Power*, 480.

3. Summers, *Arrogance of Power*, 472. See also Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon*, Vol. 3: *Ruin and Recovery, 1973–1990* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 347–463, for a detailed account of Nixon's activities during the summer of 1974.

4. For example, Manuel Eisner has demonstrated a dramatic decline in "political murder" and regicide from the early middle ages to the modern period in Europe. Manuel Eisner, "Killing Kings: Patterns of Regicide in Europe, AD 600–1800," *British Journal of Criminology* 51 (2011): 556–77. As we see in this book, others have noticed the transition from chronic political bloodshed to long-term domestic tranquility, but have frequently described this process as "mysterious." E.g., J. L. Payne, *A History of Force: Exploring the Worldwide Movement against Habits of Coercion, Bloodshed, and Mayhem* (Sandpoint, ID: Lytton, 2004), 29.

5. Eric M. Uslaner, *Corruption, Inequality, and the Rule of Law: The Bulging Pocket Makes the Easy Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 49–50; Johan Graf Lambsdorff, "What Nurtures Corrupt Deals? On the Role of Confidence and Transaction Costs," in *Corrupt Exchanges: Empirical Themes in the Politics and Political Economy of Corruption*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Susan Rose-Ackerman (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos, 2002), 20–36.

6. On the central role of family, clan, factional, and ethnic links in recruitment to coup conspiracies, see Edward Luttwak, *Coup d'État: A Practical Handbook* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 74–75; Bruce W. Farcau, *The Coup: Tactics in the Seizure of Power* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 38; Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Motivations and Constraints*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 6, 280–88.

7. *Mexico:* David F. Ronfeldt, "The Mexican Army and Political Order since 1940," in *The Modern Mexican Military: A Reassessment*, ed. David Ronfeldt (La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1984), 66. *Costa Rica:* Robert Rinehart, "Historical Setting," in *Costa Rica: A Country Study*, ed. Harold D. Nelson (Washington, DC: American University, 1983), 63. *South Africa:* Robert M. Price, *The Apartheid State in Crisis: Political Transformation in South Africa, 1975–1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 8–10; R. W. Johnson and Lawrence Schlemmer, eds., *Launching Democracy in South Africa: The First Open Election, April 1994* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 7–12; James Roherty, *State Secur-*

ity in South Africa: Civil-Military Relations under PW Botha (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 156n51.

8. These may not be the only states poised to enter the coup-free zone. Notably, it is unclear whether Cuba has experienced a coup attempt since the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. While Cuba may have gone fifty years without a coup event by 2011, we cannot describe it as a "coup-free state" with any confidence because of the secretive and ambiguous circumstances surrounding the July 2006 assumption of power by Fidel Castro's brother, Raúl Castro, the leader of Cuba's armed forces. If it turns out that the transition was entirely legal, voluntary, and unmarred by the threat of force, Cuba would be anomalous as a stable dictatorship. Also, cases may be made for Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, Brazil, and Taiwan in 2014, because the most recent coup events in each country may have taken place in 1964. However, Saudi stability appears particularly problematic, especially in light of the rumors and possible coup attempt by Prince Bandar bin Sultan in 2010. Even if Saudi Arabia and Bhutan pass the fifty-year mark in 2014, I would not expect their stability to extend too much farther into the future. Democratic Brazil and Taiwan, on the other hand, may well be on their way to lasting constitutional order. Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, Brazil, and Taiwan all exhibit low to medium levels of corruption, which helps explain their surprisingly stable governance. (See chapter 4.)

9. "Out with the Old: Coups and Attempted Coups Are Going Out of Fashion," *The Economist*, December 3, 2008, http://www.economist.com/node/12713881; Human Security Report Project, *Human Security Brief 2007* (Vancouver, BC: School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, 2007), http://www.hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2007/overview.aspx.

10. Jean-Louis de Lolme, *The Constitution of England* (Dublin: P. Byrne, 1793), 273, 293, 308.

2. THE MOST SERENE REPUBLIC

1. Many historians describe the general stability of Venice from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries; the following historians draw especially clear conclusions regarding the complete absence of violence in the Venetian political succession throughout this period: Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 287–88; Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 271; W. Carew Hazlitt, *The Venetian Republic: Its Rise, Its Growth, and Its Fall: A.D. 409–1797* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1915), 2:479–80; William Roscoe Thayer, *A Short History of Venice* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905), ix–x.

2. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:530–53; Horatio F. Brown, *Studies in the History of Venice* (London: John Murray, 1907), 1:75–76.

3. William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 59–60.

4. On the story of this conspiracy by Doge Marin Faliero, see Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:623–38; Brown, *Studies,* 1:80–100.

5. Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 271; Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice*, 281.

6. On the general Venetian reputation for stability by the fifteenth century, see John Martin and Dennis Romano, "Reconsidering Venice," in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797*, ed. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2; Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 63; John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 282–83. Despite the coup attempts of 1300 and 1310 and the conspiracy of 1355, the notion that Venice was exceptionally stable had already developed in the fourteenth century. Felix Gilbert, "The Venetian Constitution in Florentine Political Thought," in *Florentine Studies: Politics and Society in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Nicolai Rubinstein (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 467. By the 1360s, Petrarch was describing Venice as a calm and politically tranquil city. He called it "the one remaining home of liberty, peace and justice," the

"one refuge left to good men," a city "founded on marble yet set on a more solid foundation of civil peace." Quoted in Edward Hutton, *The Pageant of Venice* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1927), 67–68.

7. Philippe de Commynes, quoted in Philip Longworth, *The Rise and Fall of Venice* (London: Constable, 1974), 175.

8. Jean Bodin, cited in Marion Leathers Kuntz, "The Myth of Venice in the Thought of Guillaume Postel," in *Venice, Myth and Utopian Thought in the Sixteenth Century: Bodin, Postel and the Virgin of Venice*, ed. Marion Leathers Kuntz (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 507.

9. James Howell, quoted in William J. Bouwsma, "Venice and the Political Education of Europe," in *Renaissance Venice*, ed. J. R. Hale (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1973), 454.

10. Pieter de la Court, quoted in Eco O. G. Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Gerard T. Moran (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcom, 1980), 151.

11. Bouwsma, "Venice and the Political Education," 455.

12. Gasparo Contarini, quoted in Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 146.

13. Young Venetian ambassador, quoted in Alberto Tenenti, "The Sense of Space and Time in the Venetian World of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in Hale, *Renaissance Venice*, 34.

14. Giovanni Botero, quoted in Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 160–61.

15. Guillaume Postel, quoted in Kuntz, "Myth of Venice," 510–11.

16. Niccolò Piccinino, quoted in Michael Mallett, "Venice and Its Condottieri, 1404–54," in Hale, *Renaissance Venice*, 127–28.

17. Marc'Antonio Sabellico, quoted in Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 90.

18. Marin Sanuto, quoted in Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 63.

19. Bartolommeo Moro, quoted in Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 197.

20. James Howell, quoted in Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 53. Howell went on to argue that England should emulate Venetian institutions, because if it were possible to establish "a Society and Succession of people under the same Species of Government as long as the World lasts," the Venetian Republic provided the best model for imitation. Quoted in John Eglin, *Venice Transfigured: The Myth of Venice in British Culture, 1660–1797* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 15–16.

21. Francesco Guicciardini, quoted in Gilbert, "Venetian Constitution," 487.

22. Marin Sanudo, quoted in Patricia H. Labalme and Laura Sanguineti White, eds., *Venice, Città Escelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo*, trans. Linda L. Carroll (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 84.

23. Saint-Didier, quoted in Bouwsma, "Venice and the Political Education," 458.

24. Sir Dudley Carleton, quoted in Garry Wills, *Venice: Lion City* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 73.

25. Quoted in Norwich, *History of Venice*, 459–60.

26. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:670–71.

27. Norwich, *History of Venice*, 241, 268; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:681–83, 797–803.

28. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:818–19.

29. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:966–86; H. R. Trevor-Roper, "The Doge Francesco Foscari," in *Renaissance Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 1–12.

30. Norwich, *History of Venice*, 389; Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 236; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:572.

31. Richard Mackenney, "A Plot Discover'd? Myth, Legend, and the 'Spanish' Conspiracy against Venice in 1618," in Martin and Romano, *Venice Reconsidered*, 194–209; Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 399–400; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:171–75; Norwich, *History of Venice*, 524.

32. Alethea Wiel, *Venice*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894), 407–10; Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 404–5; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:462–69, 473–76; Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 284.

33. Based largely upon one historical source, Wiel notes that Pisani did conspire against the government. Wiel, *Venice*, 441–42. See also Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 284.

34. On the history of the Venetian constitution presented here, see Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 90–114; Norwich, *History of Venice*, 9–25, 109–14, 182–84, 403–4; Gerhard Rösch, "The Serrata of the Great Council and Venetian Society, 1286–1323," in Martin and Romano, *Venice Reconsidered*, 67–88; Stanley Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment, and the Trecento Venetian State," in *Violence and Civil Disorderin Italian Cities, 1200–1500,* ed. Lauro Martines (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 190–91; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:553–56; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:471–72.

35. Norwich, *History of Venice*, 150–51; Wiel, *Venice*, 123, 156.

36. On the workings of the Venetian constitution presented here, including the restrictions on the doge, see Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 95–97, 254–62; Brown, *Studies*, 1:59–60, 87–88, 298–313; Norwich, *History of Venice*, 166–67, 282–83; Wiel, *Venice*, 156–66; Wills, *Lion City*, 98–99, 113; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:676–78, 821–22, 906–7; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:413, 427, 454–55, 471.

37. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:577.

38. On the Venetian "rule of law" presented here and the generally low level of corruption in Venice, see Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 95–100, 256–73, 405; Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 126, 151; William H. McNeill, *Venice: The Hinge of Europe, 1081–1797* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 225; Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment," 196, 221–27; Gaetano Cozzi, "Authority and the Law in Renaissance Venice," in Hale, *Renaissance Venice*, 307–9; Labalme and White, *Città Escelentissima*, 115–19, 148–51; Haitsma Mulier, *Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought*, 152–56; Wills, *Lion City*, 113; Norwich, *History of Venice*, 275–82, 499; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:309–12, 593; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:455–71, 491–93, 611–14, 821–22; Brown, *Studies*, 1:309–12; Thayer, *Short History of Venice*, 219–22; Wiel, *Venice*, 189–92.

39. Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment," 223–27.

40. Marin Sanudo, in Labalme and White, *Città Escelentissima*, 116.

41. Thayer, *Short History of Venice*, 219.

42. Marin Sanudo, quoted in Cozzi, "Authority and the Law," 308–9.

43. Donato Giannotti, cited in Gilbert, "Venetian Constitution," 494.

44. James Everett and Donald E. Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics in Early Renaissance Venice," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 14 (1993), 16; Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 151, 169–75; Wills, *Lion City*, 144; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:209, 461–69.

45. Girolamo Priuli, quoted in Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 169.

46. McNeill, *Hinge of Europe*, 225; Wills, *Lion City*, 124; Norwich, *History of Venice*, 499; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:480–81, 519–20.

47. Quoted in Catherine Drinker Bowen, *The Lion and the Throne: The Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1956), 428.

48. Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 151.

49. A burgeoning economic literature describes the economic benefits of the rule of law. Kimberly Ann Elliott, ed., *Corruption and the Global Economy* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997); Michael Johnston, *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); "Order in the Jungle," *The Economist*, March 15, 2008, 83–85.

50. Norwich, *History of Venice*, 155.

51. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:923–24.

52. Pietro Casola, quoted in Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 173.

53. Gasparo Contarini, quoted in Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice*, 31.

54. Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 1–2; Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 88.

55. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 93.

56. Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment," 187; Bouwsma, "Venice and the Political Education," 448–49; Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 147–49.

57. Bouwsma, "Venice and the Political Education," 455; Labalme and White, *Città Escelentissima*, 115.

58. Jean Bodin, quoted in Bouwsma, "Venice and the Political Education," 455.

59. Sir John Smythe, quoted in J. R. Hale, "Editor's Preface," in Hale, *Renaissance Venice*, 13–14.

60. On Venetian corruption generally, see Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment," 196; Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 15–20; Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 151–75; Wills, *Lion City*, 114; Cozzi, "Authority and the Law in Renaissance Venice," 307; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:593, 2:209, 461–69; Brown, *Studies*, 1:313. On the bookkeeping methods employed to limit corruption, see McNeill, *Hinge of Europe*, 225; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 2:488. On the convoluted electoral rules, see Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 258–60.

61. On the Tiepolo Rebellion not being a popular rising, see Rösch, "Serrata," 81.

62. Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 194–95; Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment," 187; Wills, *Lion City*, 50. In the sixteenth century, Venetian writer and politician Gasparo Contarini praised the government for feeding the masses, controlling contagious diseases, and supporting the sick and aged. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 150.

63. On wealth and the exclusion of churchmen: James Howell, cited in Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 261–62. On the professional bureaucracy: McNeill, *Hinge of Europe*, 225. On the Byzantine legacy: Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 109.

64. Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 88–89; Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 20; Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 150.

65. On the sense of shared danger: Wills, *Lion City*, 156. On the dense thicket of family relationships within the noble class: Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 18. On specific laws undercutting the clout of families: Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 106–17, 271. On the spatial restriction within the lagoon: Norwich, *History of Venice*, 155.

66. Dialogue by Francesco Guicciardini, in David Chambers and Brian Pullan, eds., with Jennifer Fletcher, *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450–1630* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 62.

67. On bending patricians toward compromise: Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice*, 140. On treating all peers as potential allies: Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 20. On the difficulty of building a power base: Wills, *Lion City*, 111. See also Norwich, *History of Venice*, 282–83; Stanley Chojnacki, "In Search of the Venetian Patriciate: Families and Factions in the Fourteenth Century," in Hale, *Renaissance Venice*, 70.

3. THE LAST BRITISH REVOLUTIONARY

1. The *absence* of revolution in Britain has not received much sustained scholarly attention, but there are a few exceptions. Malcolm I. Thomis and Peter Holt note that the period 1789 to 1848 was the period when Britain came closest to revolution in modern times but find that no revolutionary movements or plans came close to success, even during this relatively difficult period. *Threats of Revolution in Britain, 1789–1848* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 117–33. Similarly, Sir David Lindsey Keir notes that after the Forty-Five, political conspiracy became "unknown" during the eighteenth century. *The Constitutional History of Modern Britain since 1485*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), 308. See also Geoffrey Holmes and Daniel Szechi, *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-industrial Britain, 1722–1783* (London: Longman, 1993); Ian Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution: Governance and Violence in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Pimlico, 1992); Robert Harvey, *Clive: The Life and Death of a British Emperor* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1998), 13.

2. J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675–1725* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 1.

3. On the story of the Forty-Five, the subsequent escape and travels of Bonnie Prince Charlie, and the final Jacobite coup plots, see the following sources: Carolly Erickson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (New York: William Morrow, 1989); Hugh Douglas, *Jacobite Spy Wars: Moles, Rogues and Treachery* (Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton Publishing, 1999); Murray G. H. Pittock, *Jacobitism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Margaret Forster, *The Rash Adven-*

turer: The Rise and Fall of Charles Edward Stuart (New York: Stein and Day, 1973); Eric Linklater, *The Prince in the Heather* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965); Frank McLynn, *The Jacobites* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); Allan T. Macinnes, "The Aftermath of the '45," in *1745: Charles Edward Stuart and the Jacobites*, ed. Robert C. Woosnam-Savage (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1995); Bruce P. Lenman and John S. Gibson, *The Jacobite Threat—England, Scotland, Ireland, France: A Source Book* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1990); Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 91, 252–67; Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 288.

4. Erickson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, 68.

5. Erickson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, 116–17.

6. Erickson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*.

7. Douglas, *Jacobite Spy Wars*, 230.

8. Forster, *Rash Adventurer*, 114–15; Erickson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, 190–91; Douglas, *Jacobite Spy Wars*, 88–93.

9. Pittock, *Jacobitism*, 103–4.

10. McLynn, *Jacobites*, 113.

11. Linklater, *Prince in the Heather*, 51.

12. Douglas, *Jacobite Spy Wars*, 199–205.

13. Quoted in Bryan Bevan, *King Richard II* (London: Rubicon, 1990), 158.

14. See "Coups in World History: An Online Resource," athttps://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442222717.

15. George Macaulay Trevelyan, *A Shortened History of England* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1959), 381; Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 116.

16. Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 7–8, 446; Charles Tilly, *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 138.

17. Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 5–6, 41, 98; Keir, *Constitutional History*, 289–90.

18. Horace Walpole, quoted in Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 267.

19. Quoted in Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 1.

20. On the absence of serious revolutionary attempts during the late eighteenth century: Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 322, 364–84, 402–43; W. R. Cornish and G. de N. Clark, *Law and Society in England, 1750–1950* (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1989), 13; Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783–1870* (London: Longman, 1993), 68–72; Thomis and Holt, *Threats of Revolution*, 1–2, 28; Ann Lyon, *Constitutional History of the United Kingdom* (London: Cavendish, 2003), 309; Spencer R. Weart, *Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 270–74; R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 2:56. On the absence of serious revolutionary attempts during the 1810s: Thomis and Holt, *Threats of Revolution*, 46–49; Lyon, *Constitutional History of the United Kingdom*, 316–17; Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 182–85. On the absence of serious revolutionary attempts during the 1830s and 1840s: Thomis and Holt, *Threats of Revolution*, 1–2, 82–117; Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 208–61.

21. Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 212.

22. John Sweetman, "Introduction: Civil-Military Relations in Britain," in *Sword and Mace: Twentieth-Century Civil-Military Relations in Britain*, ed. John Sweetman (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1986), xi; Frederick S. Allen, *The Supreme Command in England, 1640–1780* (New York: American Press, 1966), 150–65; Robert Blake, "Great Britain: The Crimean War to the First World War," in *Soldiers and Governments: Nine Studies in Civil-Military Relations*, ed. Michael Howard (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1957), 27; John Sabine, "Civil-Military Relations," in *British Defence Policy in a Changing World*, ed. John Baylis (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 230; Adam Roberts, "The British Armed Forces and Politics: A Historical Perspective," *Armed Forces and Society* 3, no. 4 (1977): 531.

23. Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 445–46.

24. Blake, "Great Britain," 25–50; Diddy R. M. Hitchins and William A. Jacobs, "United Kingdom," in *The Political Role of the Military: An International Handbook*, ed. Constantine P. Danopoulos and Cynthia Watson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 410–11.

25. Roberts, "British Armed Forces and Politics," 548.

26. Bowen, *Lion and the Throne*, 13–44; Keir, *Constitutional History*, 142–49; Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 233–37, 276–77.

27. Quoted in Bowen, *Lion and the Throne*, 251.

28. Michael B. Young, *Charles I* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1997), 1–16, 127–32, 173–80.

29. Keir, *Constitutional History*, 209, 230.

30. Erickson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, 337–38.

31. Erickson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, 344.

32. Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 352; John Phillip Reid, *Rule of Law: The Jurisprudence of Liberty in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 69; A. V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, 10th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1959), 420–29.

33. Anthony Babington, *The Rule of Law in Britain from the Roman Occupation to the Present Day: The Only Liberty*, 3rd ed. (Chichester, UK: Barry Rose, 1995), 185–86; Dicey, *Introduction*, 434–38.

34. Geoffrey S. Holmes, *The Making of a Great Power: Late Stuart and Early Georgian Britain, 1660–1722* (London: Longman, 1993), 334–35.

35. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability*, 157–61.

36. Keir, *Constitutional History*, 289–90.

37. E.g., Keir, *Constitutional History*, 292; Plumb, *Political Stability*, xviii, 189; Holmes, *Making of a Great Power*, 384–98; Babington, *Rule of Law in Britain*, 176; Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 380–84.

38. Holmes, *Making of a Great Power*, 322–33, 397–98. See also H. T. Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy* (London: English Universities Press, 1973), 68–79; Jeremy Black, *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Education, 1990), 35.

39. Black, *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics*, 33–34; Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 23, 81; Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy*, 73–78.

40. On Walpole's brutal investigations into Jacobite conspiracies, see Paul S. Fritz, *The English Ministers and Jacobitism between the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 80–107, 126.

41. Keir, *Constitutional History*, 297.

42. David Lemmings, "Introduction," in *The British and Their Laws in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. David Lemmings (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2005), 1–2; Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, *The Squire and His Relations* (London: Cassell, 1956), 92, 121.

43. Quoted in Babington, *Rule of Law in Britain*, 179.

44. Quoted in André Maurois, *The Miracle of France*, trans. by Henry L. Binsse (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 211.

45. Frederick George Marcham, *A Constitutional History of Modern England, 1485 to the Present* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 247–48; Cornish and Clark, *Law and Society*, 23; Keir, *Constitutional History*, 294–95.

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48. Richard W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order: England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 364; Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 30.

49. Pierre Goubert, *The Ancien Régime: French Society, 1600–1750*, trans. Steve Cox (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 162–67.

50. F. W. Maitland, *The Constitutional History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 115–20; R. C. van Caenegem, *The Birth of the English Common Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 62–67; J. H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 2nd ed. (London: Butterworths, 1979), 5.

51. Baker, *Introduction*, 201.

52. Thomas A. Green, "A Retrospective on the Criminal Trial Jury, 1200–1800," in *Twelve Good Men and True: The Criminal Trial Jury in England, 1200–1800*, ed. J. S. Cockburn and Thomas A. Green (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 359, 374; van Caenegem, *Birth of English Common Law*, 71–80; Baker, *Introduction*, 63–64; John P. Dawson, *A History of Lay Judges* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 118–29.

53. J. B. Post, "Jury Lists and Juries in the Late Fourteenth Century," in Cockburn and Green, *Twelve Good Men and True*, 72.

54. Sir John Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Anglie*, edited and translated by S. B. Chrimes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), 47–49.

55. James Heath, *Torture and English Law: An Administrative and Legal History from the Plantagenets to the Stuarts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), xvii, 105; Maitland, *Constitutional History of England*, 221; Marcham, *Constitutional History of Modern England*, 32–33; Keir, *Constitutional History*, 99; Bowen, *Lion and the Throne*, 92–93.

56. Brian Z. Tamanaha, *On the Rule of Law: History, Politics, Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26.

57. Baker, *Introduction*, 126–28.

58. Richard H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000–1500* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1996), 216.

59. Baker, *Introduction*, 133–49; Bowen, *Lion and the Throne*, 58–75, 278; van Caenegem, *Birth of English Common Law*, 88–89.

60. David Lloyd, quoted in Bowen, *Lion and the Throne*, 68.

61. On the institution of the Justices of the Peace generally, see J. R. Lander, *English Justices of the Peace, 1461–1509* (Gloucester, UK: Alan Sutton, 1989); Norma Landau, *The Justices of the Peace, 1679–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); T. A. Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales, 900–1966* (London: Constable, 1967); Douglas Hay, "Legislation, Magistrates, and Judges: High Law and Low Law in England and the Empire," in Lemmings, *The British and Their Laws*, 59–79; Dawson, *History of Lay Judges*, 139–41; Keir, *Constitutional History*, 30–35, 126–27, 234, 312–15; Marcham, *Constitutional History of Modern England*, 247–49; Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, 168–71; Cornish and Clark, *Law and Society*, 20, 33; Babington, *Rule of Law in Britain*, 188–93.

62. Landau, *Justices of the Peace*, 291; Babington, *Rule of Law in Britain*, 192–93; Lander, *English Justices of the Peace*, 98–99; Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 183.

63. Quoted in Babington, *Rule of Law in Britain*, 191. On JPs facing dangerous gangs and mobs, see also Landau, *Justices of the Peace*, 291.

64. Christopher Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution: A Social and Economic History of Britain, 1530–1780* (New York: Random House, 1967), 110–11; Landau, *Justices of the Peace*, 15, 332–37; Dawson, *History of Lay Judges*, 145; Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 159.

65. "English reserve" is traceable at least to the late seventeenth century. J. B. Priestley, *The English* (London: William Heineman, 1973), 24–31; Richard Faber, *French and English* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 54.

66. On the legal and political history giving rise to judicial independence in the eighteenth century, see Baker, *Introduction*, 143–78; Keir, *Constitutional History*, 263–67; Marcham, *Constitutional History of Modern England*, 121–23, 238–39; Maitland, *Constitutional History of England*, 312–13; Babington, *Rule of Law in Britain*, 123, 147–48, 156–59, 175, 201; Cornish and Clark, *Law and Society*, 8; Lyon, *Constitutional History of the United Kingdom*, 263; Daniel M. Klerman and Paul G. Mahoney, "The Value of Judicial Independence: Evidence from Eighteenth Century England," *American Law and Economics Review* 7, no. 1 (2005): 8.

67. Lyon, *Constitutional History of the United Kingdom*, 263.

68. Keir, *Constitutional History*, 294; Marcham, *Constitutional History of Modern England*, 238–39; Lyon, *Constitutional History of the United Kingdom*, 263; Maitland, *Constitutional History of England*, 312–13; William Blackstone, quoted in E. Neville Williams, ed., *The Eighteenth-Century Constitution, 1688–1815: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 384; Reid, *Rule of Law*, 6. Of course, a few caveats can be made about lingering forms of political influence on judges during the eighteenth century. The Crown continued to name judges to the bench and to promote judges to higher positions. Judicial salaries were sometimes in arrears. The Crown had discretion over granting judges' pensions until 1799 and could also reward judges with peerages, extra allowances, or good jobs for friends and family. David Lemmings, "The Independence of the Judiciary in Eighteenth-Century England," in *The Life of the Law: Proceedings of the Tenth British Legal History Conference, Oxford 1991*, ed. Peter Birks (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 126–29.

69. Lord Mansfield, quoted in Marcham, *Constitutional History of Modern England*, 238–39.

70. Tamanaha, *On the Rule of Law*, 114; Joseph Raz, "The Rule of Law and Its Virtue," in *Liberty and the Rule of Law*, ed. Robert L. Cunningham (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1979), 5; Jeremy Waldron, *The Law* (London: Routledge, 1990), 52. On the realization of the principle in eighteenth-century Britain, see Keir, *Constitutional History*, 294; Baker, *Introduction*, 123–24; Tamanaha, *On the Rule of Law*, 47, 56.

71. Quoted in Baker, *Introduction*, 123.

72. Dicey, *Introduction*, 193–94.

73. On the development of an impersonal, businesslike, and meritocratic bureaucracy, see Holmes, *Making of a Great Power*, 157–58, 229–31; Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 325–26; Keir, *Constitutional History*, 373.

74. Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 12.

75. A burgeoning economic literature describes the economic benefits of the rule of law. Elliott, *Corruption and the Global Economy*; Johnston, *Syndromes of Corruption*; "Order in the Jungle," *The Economist*, March 15, 2008, 83–85. On the relative wealth of eighteenth-century Britain, even when compared with contemporary developing nations, see Holmes, *Making of a Great Power*, 36, 52, 356; Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 133–43; Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 103–4.

76. Cardinal du Perron, quoted in Maurois, *The Miracle of France*, 152.

77. Holmes, *Making of a Great Power*, 257–61; Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: England before the Industrial Age* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 113.

78. Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. Thomas Nugent (New York: Hafner Publishing, 1949 [1748]), 68, 151–52.

79. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 151.

80. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 231–32.

81. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 309.

82. Montesquieu, letter to William Domville, quoted in C. P. Courtney, "Montesquieu and English Liberty," in *Montesquieu's Science of Politics: Essays on The Spirit of Laws*, ed. David W. Carrithers, Michael A. Mosher, and Paul A. Rahe (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 286.

83. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 305.

84. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 271.

85. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 305.

86. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 137.

87. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 274–75; ibid., "Advertisement," viii.

88. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 273, 293.

89. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 70.

90. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 70.

91. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 308.

92. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 264–65.

93. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 265.

94. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 288–89.

95. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 288–89.

96. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 294–95.
97. "Advertisement" in de Lolme, *Constitution of England*, xii–xiii.
98. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 297.
99. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 310.
100. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 310.
101. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 308.
102. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 308.
103. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 285.
104. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 273.
105. Dicey, *Introduction*, 420–52.
106. Dicey, *Introduction*, 445–46.
107. Dicey, *Introduction*, 451.
108. Peter Karsten, "The Coup d'État and Civilian Control of the Military in Competitive Democracies," in *To Sheathe the Sword: Civil-Military Relations in the Quest for Democracy*, ed. John P. Lovell and David E. Albright (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 155.
109. Cornish and Clark, *Law and Society*, 10.
110. Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, 7–8.

4. THE COUP-FREE STATE

1. "No military force in the United States has ever risen up to . . . challenge constitutional procedures or the Constitution itself, nor has any political leader, so far as is known, ever attempted to use military force against the Constitution." Richard H. Kohn, "The Constitution and National Security: The Intent of the Framers," in *The United States Military under the Constitution of the United States, 1789–1989*, ed. Richard H. Kohn (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 87. Kohn also describes the 1783 Newburgh incident as the "only known instance of an attempted coup in American history." "The Inside History of the Newburgh Conspiracy: America and the Coup d'Etat," *William and Mary Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1970): 189.

2. On Swedish stability since the early nineteenth century, see Franklin D. Scott, *Sweden: The Nation's History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 393–431, 477–84; J. A. Lauwerys, ed., *Scandinavian Democracy: Development of Democratic Thought and Institutions in Denmark, Norway and Sweden* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute, 1958); Douglas V. Verney, *Parliamentary Reform in Sweden, 1866–1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); Neil Elder, Alastair H. Thomas, and David Arter, *The Consensual Democracies? The Government and Politics of the Scandinavian States* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982); Johs. Andenaes, "The Development of Political Democracy in Scandinavia," in Lauwerys, *Scandinavian Democracy*, 95–96; Stewart Oakley, *A Short History of Sweden* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966).

3. On Swiss stability since the mid-nineteenth century, see William Bross Lloyd Jr., *Waging Peace: The Swiss Experience* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); Charles Gilliard, *A History of Switzerland*, trans. D. L. B. Hartley (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 95, 108; Robert Brooks, *Government and Politics of Switzerland* (New York: World Book Company, 1918), 45; Georg Thürer, *Free and Swiss: The Story of Switzerland*, trans. R. P. Heller and E. Long (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), 161; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Switzerland."

4. Els Witte, Jan Craeybeckx, and Alain Meynen, *Political History of Belgium from 1830 Onwards*, trans. Raf Casert (Antwerp: Standaard Uitgeverij, 2000), 26; Stephen B. Wickman, ed., *Belgium: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: American University, 1984); E. H. Kossman, *The Low Countries, 1780–1940* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

5. "Since 1848, Holland has not experienced any civil wars, rebellions, or attempts to upset the government by violent means." Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 72. See

also Gerald Newton, *The Netherlands: An Historical and Cultural Survey, 1795–1977* (London: Ernest Benn, 1978), 97–98; Kossman, *Low Countries*, 559–60.

6. James Newcomer, *The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg: The Evolution of Nationhood, 963 AD to 1983* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984); Harry C. Barteau, *Historical Dictionary of Luxembourg* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1990).

7. Harry Eckstein, *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 15–16; Lauwerys, *Scandinavian Democracy*; Elder, Thomas, and Arter, *Consensual Democracies?*

8. John Fitzmaurice, *Politics in Denmark* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981); W. Glyn Jones, *Denmark: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Elder, Thomas, and Arter, *Consensual Democracies?* 11–15.

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21. On the absence of coups and coup attempts (despite revolutionary agitation) in South Africa since independence in the 1930s, see Price, *The Apartheid State in Crisis*, 9–10; Johnson and Schlemmer, *Launching Democracy*, 7–8, 12; Roherty, *State Security in South Africa*, 156n51.

22. As the original research conducted for this book demonstrates, a total of ninety-six states maintained their independence from 1961 through 2010 (see figure 4.3 in the text, and table 4.1 in note 94 of this chapter, for a complete list). Information on coups within each of the seventy-four non-coup-free states, as well as additional information on stability in the twenty-two coup-free states, can be found in the following sources: (1) *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed.; (2) Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, "Country Studies," available at http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html; (3) State Department Background Notes, available at http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn; (4) Luttwak, *Coup d'État*, appendix C; (5) *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2004*; (6) *Time Almanac 2003*; (7) On the 1970 coup attempt in Italy: Franco Ferraresi, *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy after the War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 117–20; Frederic Spotts and Theodor Weiser, *Italy: A Difficult Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 172; (8) On the 1975 executive coup by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in India: Bipan Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy: JP Movement and the Emergency* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003); P. N. Dhar, *Indira Gandhi, the "Emergency," and Indian Democracy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000); Katherine Frank, *Indira: The Life of Indira Nehru Gandhi* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 373–410; (9) On the 1996 coup attempt in North Korea: "Echoes from the Hermit Kingdom," *The Economist*, May 22, 1999, http://www.economist.com/node/321926; C. Kenneth Quinones, "The 2nd US–North Korea Nuclear Crisis—Negotiations or War?" (seminar, Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry, Tokyo, Japan, July 2, 2003), http://www.rieti.go.jp/en/events/bbl/03070201.html; (10) On the 1987–1988 executive coup in Malaysia: Robert Stephen Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir* (London: Routledge, 1999), 28–30; (11) On the ambiguous coup attempt in Taiwan in 1964: Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-Kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 270; (12) On the ambiguous threat to the North Vietnamese regime posed by rebellions between 1977 and 1983: Douglas Pike, *PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986), 77–83.

23. Louis Smith, *American Democracy and Military Power: A Study of Civil Control of the Military Power in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 263.

24. Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 74–84.

25. S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 20–26, 79.

26. Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977), 13.

27. Karsten, "Coup d'État," 155.

28. Farcau, *The Coup*, 88–89.

29. Karsten, "Coup d'État," 155.

30. Plato, *Republic*, 37–38.

31. "[A]mbitious, vindictive, and rapacious": Alexander Hamilton, "The Federalist No. 6," in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1987), 104. "If men were angels" / "defect of better motives" / "opposite and rival interests": James Madison, "The Federalist No. 51," in Kramnick, *Federalist Papers*, 319–20.

32. Many works in anthropology, history, sociology, and political science support and contribute to this analysis. Richard Sandbrook, for example, has written that "[w]here a society's impersonal, legal guarantees of physical security, status, and wealth are relatively weak or nonexistent, individuals often seek personal substitutes by attaching themselves to 'big men' capable of providing protection and even advancement." "Patrons, Clients and Factions: New Dimensions of Conflict Analysis in Africa," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 5, no. 1 (1972): 109. In the view of anthropologists Allen W. Johnson and Timothy Earle, state formation during the later medieval period involved "the replacement of ties of loyalty based on kinship and personal allegiance by legal, impersonal ties enforced by courts and police." *The*

Evolution of Human Societies: From Foraging Group to Agrarian State (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 255. Ken Jowitt contrasts the "corporate," family-centered nature of traditional societies with the "individuated" quality of modernity. *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Robert D. Putnam documents how impersonal "civic" traditions have persisted for centuries in northern Italy, even while life in Sicily and Naples continues to revolve around kinship and patron-client ties. With Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

33. On the inverse relationship between the rule-of-law principle and corruption: Raz, "Rule of Law," 12; Thomas Carothers, "The Rule-of-Law Revival," in *Promoting the Rule of Law Abroad: In Search of Knowledge*, ed. Thomas Carothers (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 4; Dicey, *Introduction*, 193. On the link between corruption and personal loyalty: Uslaner, *Corruption, Inequality, and the Rule of Law*, 49–50; Lambsdorff, "What Nurtures Corrupt Deals? 20–36.

34. See, for example, Daniel Jordan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 65; Robert M. Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 56–82.

35. Norwich, *History of Venice*, 1–106.

36. Regarding Venetian laws specifically designed to weaken familial solidarity, as well as the Venetian preference for doges without children, see Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 109; Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 4–5; Wiel, *Venice*, 156, 221; Norwich, *History of Venice*, 97, 182n1; Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:676–77; Brown, *Studies*, 1:59–60; Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice*, 161; Wills, *Lion City*, 98–99.

37. On the rigorous rules surrounding elections for office, see Zera Silver Fink, *The Classical Republicans: An Essay in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth Century England* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1945), 32–33; Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 106–11, 259–60; Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 4, 17; Stanley Chojnacki, "Identity and Ideology in Renaissance Venice," in Martin and Romano, *Venice Reconsidered*, 263–64; Chojnacki, "Crime, Punishment," 196–97 and n. 29; Norwich, *History of Venice*, 165–67; Wiel, *Venice*, 165–66; Brown, *Studies*, 1:304–5.

38. Anonymous, "Maxims of the Government of Venice" (1707), quoted in Fink, *Classical Republicans*, 180–81.

39. "Another myth which, when fully formed, contributed to the solidarity of the state was a belief that Venice was free of factions, that all worked together for the glory of their city." Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 88. "According to the 'myth' of Venetian republicanism, the Serenissima's treasured political stability and sobriety was assured by the absence of faction." Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 1–2. See also Fink, *Classical Republicans*, 181–82, quoting eighteenth-century writers on the absence of factions in Venice.

40. Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 114.

41. Lorenzo de' Monaci, quoted in Tenenti, "Sense of Space and Time," 34.

42. Girolamo Priuli, quoted in Tenenti, "Sense of Space and Time," 33.

43. Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 5–16.

44. Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 16.

45. Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 18.

46. Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 3; Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, 66–67; Chojnacki, "In Search of the Venetian Patriciate," 62; Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 265.

47. On the "unique spirit of cohesion and cooperation" and the "mutual trust of a kind that in other cities seldom extended far outside the family circle," see Norwich, *History of Venice*, 155; on "comparative solidarity," see Longworth, *Rise and Fall*, 150; on "mutual dependence," see Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 20; see also Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 117. On shifting coalitions and settling disputes in court, see Chojnacki, "In Search of the Venetian Patriciate," 70; Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 265–71.

48. Everett and Queller, "Family, Faction, and Politics," 20.

49. Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 271.

50. Maitland, *Constitutional History of England*, 4.

51. On lordship undercutting kinship bonds, see Jack Goody, *The European Family: An Historico-Anthropological Essay* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 48; Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 22. In addition, anthropologists have compared feudal societies to tribal "chiefdoms," noting that while feudalism is more legalistic and less kinship based, many local lords operated in a chief-like manner. Johnson and Earle, *Evolution of Human Societies*, 249–56. Regarding the strengthening of feudal bonds following the Norman Conquest, see Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 1:272; C. Warren Hollister, "1066: The 'Feudal Revolution,'" in *The Impact of the Norman Conquest*, ed. C. Warren Hollister (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969), 109–19. On primogeniture, see Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 130; Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischoff et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 2:1137; Judith J. Hurwich, "Lineage and Kin in the Sixteenth Century Aristocracy: Some Comparative Evidence on England and Germany," in *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*, ed. A. L. Beier, David Cannadine, and James M. Rosenbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 33–64.

52. K. B. McFarlane, "Parliament and 'Bastard Feudalism,'" in McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London: Hambledon Press, 1981), 17–18. For similar analyses, see J. M. W. Bean, *From Lord to Patron: Lordship in Late Medieval England* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1989), 235–37; Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 1:296–307.

53. J. R. Maddicott, "Law and Lordship: Royal Justices as Retainers in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England," *Past and Present Supplement* 4 (1978): 46–48, 60–81; Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, 206.

54. On livery and maintenance and central government efforts to rein them in, see K. B. McFarlane, "Bastard Feudalism," in McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 42–43; G. L. Harriss, "Introduction," in McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ix–xxvii; Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, 63–67, 119–23, 201–21; Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 194–97; Maddicott, "Law and Lordship," 3; Bowen, *Lion and the Throne*, 107–8; Dawson, *History of Lay Judges*, 172–73; Thomas G. Barnes, "The Making of English Criminal Law: Star Chamber and the Sophistication of the Criminal Law," *Criminal Law Review* (1977): 324–25.

55. Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution*, 19–21; Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1979), 118–21; Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 227; Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 12.

56. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 373. See also Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 267–324; Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 22.

57. Northern England, Cornwall, Wales, and Scotland during the late medieval and early modern periods have long been understood as far more clannish and violent than southeastern England. See R. L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1966), 8, 106; John A. F. Thomson, *The Transformation of Medieval England, 1370–1529* (London: Longman, 1983), 78–81; Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, 82–83; Alan Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 71; Charles Ross, *Edward IV* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 407–8; Ralph A. Griffiths, "Local Rivalries and National Politics: The Percies, the Nevilles, and the Duke of Exeter, 1452–55," *Speculum* 43, no. 4 (1968): 589, 589; Trevelyan, *Shortened History of England*, 391; Anderson, *Lineages*, 136–42; Holmes, *Making of a Great Power*, 8; Holmes and Szechi, *Age of Oligarchy*, 218.

58. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics*, 6–7, 63–64.

59. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics*, 64, 101.

60. On the strategic behavior of military officers, David Hebditch and Ken Connor explain the failure of the 1961 French coup attempt by arguing that the "natural reaction" of any officer asked by commanding officers to take part in a coup "is to say 'yes' and hope the problem will go away." *How to Stage a Military Coup: From Planning to Execution* (Yorkshire, UK: Frontline Books, 2008), 71.

61. On the 1973 Chilean coup, see Mary Ellen Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land: The Pinochet Regime in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile under Pinochet* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).
62. Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land*, 37.
63. Phil Gunson, "Gustavo Leigh," *The Guardian*, October 2, 1999, http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/1999/oct/02/guardianobituaries1.
64. Constable and Valenzuela, *Nation of Enemies*, 52.
65. Constable and Valenzuela, *Nation of Enemies*, 326n26.
66. Quoted in Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land*, 38.
67. Spooner, *Soldiers in a Narrow Land*, 270n24.
68. Luttwak, *Coup d'État*, 74–75.
69. Farcau, *Coup*, 38.
70. Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule*, 6, 11.
71. Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule*, 6–7.
72. Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule*, 7–8, 288.
73. Price, *Society and Bureaucracy*, 79.
74. Price, *Society and Bureaucracy*, 56–82.
75. Smith, *Culture of Corruption*, 65.
76. On the purchasing of officials and judges generally, see, for example, Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Leen, *Kings of Cocaine: Inside the Medellín Cartel* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 243–53; Enrique Desmond Arias, *Drugs and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro: Trafficking, Social Networks, and Public Security* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1–2. On corruption creating networks of insiders, see Desmond Arias, *Drugs and Democracy*, 44, 185; Paul Chevigny, *The Edge of the Knife: Police Violence in the Americas* (New York: New Press, 1995), 233–36; Stanley Pimentel, "The Nexus of Organized Crime and Politics in Mexico," in *Organized Crime and Democratic Governability: Mexico and the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands*, ed. John Bailey and Roy Godson (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 33, 41–42; Uslaner, *Corruption, Inequality, and the Rule of Law*, 49–50; Lambsdorff, "What Nurtures Corrupt Deals?" 20–36.
77. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:541–42.
78. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:632–34.
79. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:681–82.
80. Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:818–19.
81. Mackenney, "Plot Discover'd?" 194; Lane, *Maritime Republic*, 399–400.
82. McLynn, *Jacobites*, 185–86; Douglas, *Jacobite Spy Wars*, 216–26.
83. Gilmour, *Riot, Risings, and Revolution*, 402, 428; Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 184–85.
84. Marianne Elliott, "The 'Despard Conspiracy' Reconsidered," *Past and Present* 75, no. 1 (1977): 46–61.
85. Thomis and Holt, *Threats of Revolution*, 46–50; Evans, *Forging of the Modern State*, 184–85; Lyon, *Constitutional History of the United Kingdom*, 317.
86. Quoted in David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 2313.
87. Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
88. Stephen W. Sears, *George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1999), 326–27; T. Harry Williams, "The Macs and the Ikes: America's Two Military Traditions," *American Mercury* 75, no. 346 (1952): 37.
89. Quoted in Edwin Lieuwen, *Arms and Politics in Latin America* (London: Praeger, 1961), 134.
90. D. E. H. Russell, *Rebellion, Revolution, and Armed Force* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

91. Transparency International (TI), "Corruption Perceptions Index 2008," TI, http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2008. TI's corruption ranking was performed separately and independently from my determinations regarding coups and coup attempts.

92. *Mexico:* Cothran, *Political Stability*, 34–48. *Israel:* Avner Yaniv, "An Imperfect Democracy?" in Yaniv, *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, 229–30. *Costa Rica:* Mauceri, "Nine Cases," 205–7.

93. *Mexico:* David F. Ronfeldt, "The Mexican Army," 63, 73n14. *Costa Rica:* Rinehart, "Historical Setting," 63. *South Africa:* Price, *Apartheid State*, 9–10; Johnson and Schlemmer, "Introduction," in Johnson and Schlemmer, eds., *Launching Democracy*, 11–12.

94. This chart shows a simple linear regression done with Microsoft Excel. Although corruption appears on the x axis and coups appear on the y axis, I am not implying that corruption is the independent variable and coups are the dependent variable. (In fact, I believe that both derive from the same source, i.e., strong ties.) The data used to create this regression chart is shown in table 4.1. This table shows all ninety-six countries that remained independent throughout the 1961–2010 period, their 2008 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scores, and the total number of coups, by my count, within each state. It should be noted that the CPI scores are rough approximations of the relative degrees of governmental corruption within each state. They are not precise measurements, and the scores are not mathematically related to actual quantities or frequencies of corruption (i.e., a CPI score of 9 does not indicate three times as much corruption as a CPI score of 3). In the actual CPI, a higher score denotes lower corruption; I flipped this around by simply subtracting the CPI score from 10. The number of coups reflects the data presented in the online resource, "Coups in World History," available at https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442222717. With respect to the number of coups, these figures are susceptible to two issues. First, not all "coup events" (which include successful coups, failed coup attempts, and executive coups) may have been known or uncovered during my research. Second, I have counted all efforts to seize control over a central government by armed force as a single "coup event," even if the effort constitutes an extended civil war over years or even decades. In the context of extended civil wars, it can be difficult to disentangle one "coup event" from another. While there is some imprecision in both the numbers representing corruption levels and the numbers representing coups (at least in those countries that experienced extended civil wars), I believe the general results and implications of the data are clear.

Table 4.1

Country (Independent 1961–2010)	*2008 CPI Score (10-CPI Score)*	*Coups: 1961–2010*
Albania	6.6	1
Argentina	7.1	16
Australia	1.3	0
Austria	1.9	0
Belgium	2.7	0
Benin	6.9	10
Bhutan	4.8	1
Bolivia	7.0	13
Brazil	6.5	2
Bulgaria	6.4	2
Burkina Faso	6.5	5
Cameroon	7.7	2
Canada	1.3	0

Country (Independent 1961–2010)	*2008 CPI Score (10-CPI Score)*	*Coups: 1961–2010*
Central African Republic	8.0	7
Chad	8.4	10
Chile	3.1	2
China	6.4	1
Colombia	6.2	1
Costa Rica	4.9	0
Cote d'Ivoire	8.0	7
Cuba	5.7	1
Cyprus	3.6	1
Democratic Republic of Congo	8.3	6
Denmark	0.7	0
Ecuador	8.0	9
Egypt	7.2	5
El Salvador	6.1	5
Ethiopia	7.4	4
Finland	1.0	0
France	3.1	1
Gabon	6.9	2
Germany	2.1	0
Ghana	6.1	8
Greece	5.3	4
Guatemala	6.9	7
Guinea	8.4	7
Haiti	8.6	9
Honduras	7.4	5
Iceland	1.1	0
India	6.6	1
Indonesia	7.4	3
Iran	7.7	2
Ireland	2.3	0
Israel	4.0	0
Italy	5.2	1
Japan	2.7	0
Jordan	4.9	1

Country (Independent 1961–2010)	*2008 CPI Score (10-CPI Score)*	*Coups: 1961–2010*
Laos	8.0	5
Liberia	7.6	6
Libya	7.4	6
Luxembourg	1.7	0
Madagascar	6.6	5
Malaysia	4.9	1
Mali	6.9	6
Mauritania	7.2	8
Mexico	6.4	0
Morocco	6.5	2
Myanmar	8.7	4
Nepal	7.3	2
Netherlands	1.1	0
New Zealand	0.7	0
Nicaragua	7.5	3
Niger	7.2	6
Nigeria	7.3	9
North Yemen/Yemen	7.7	9
Norway	2.1	0
Oman	4.5	2
Pakistan	7.5	3
Panama	6.6	5
Paraguay	7.6	3
Peru	6.4	7
Philippines	7.7	8
Portugal	3.9	6
Republic of Congo	8.1	8
Romania	6.2	1
Rwanda	7.0	4
Saudi Arabia	6.5	1
Senegal	6.6	2
Somalia	9.0	6
South Africa	5.1	0
South Korea	4.4	2
Spain	3.5	1

Country (Independent 1961–2010)	*2008 CPI Score (10-CPI Score)*	*Coups: 1961–2010*
Sri Lanka	6.8	2
Sudan	8.4	8
Sweden	0.7	0
Switzerland	1.0	0
Thailand	6.5	10
Togo	7.3	6
Tunisia	5.6	1
Turkey	5.4	4
United Kingdom	2.3	0
United States	2.7	0
Uruguay	3.1	2
USSR/Russia	7.9	3
Venezuela	8.1	7
Yugoslavia/Serbia	6.6	2

95. De Lolme, *Constitution of England*, 308.

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2. Kohn, "Inside History," 194.
3. Kohn, "Inside History," 209.
4. Kohn, "Inside History," 210.
5. Kohn, "Constitution and National Security," 87.
6. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 37.
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6. TRUE BANANA REPUBLICS

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37. Lee, "Politics, Sexual and Nonsexual," 97.

38. Knauft, "Violence and Sociality," 391–92.

39. Knauft, "Violence and Sociality," 392.

40. Knauft, "Violence and Sociality," 392.

41. Lee, "Politics, Sexual and Nonsexual," 90. Lee notes that informal !Kung San leaders tend to have seniority in a large family, own land, or be married to a landowner.

42. Knauft, "Violence and Sociality," 395.

43. Knauft, "Violence and Sociality," 395.

44. Knauft, "Violence and Sociality," 400.

45. Elizabeth Cashdan describes leveling mechanisms among the !Kung as a kind of "social insurance" against the extreme variability of the Kalahari environment. Cashdan, "Egalitarianism," 117. Leda Cosmides and John Tooby hypothesize that scarce environments trigger emotions and cognitions that make band-wide sharing seem appropriate and appealing. Cosmides and Tooby, "Cognitive Adaptations," 214–17.

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7. INTOXICATING REPUBLICAN MOMENTS

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37. Amry Vandenbosch, *Dutch Foreign Policy since 1815: A Study in Small Power Politics* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959), 46; Derek Croxton, *Peacemaking in Early Modern Europe: Cardinal Mazarin and the Congress of Westphalia, 1643–1648* (Selinsgrove, NJ: Susquehanna University Press, 1999), 63.

38. Quoted in Alexander Stilwel, ed., *The Second World War: A World in Flames* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2004), 51.

39. On the history of U.S. foreign policy and neutrality, see Nelson Manfred Blake and Oscar Theodore Barck Jr., *The United States in Its World Relations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960); Norman A. Graebner, *Foundations of American Foreign Policy: A Realist Appraisal from Franklin to McKinley* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1985); Charles S. Campbell, *The Transformation of American Foreign Relations: 1865–1900* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). On the emulation of American neutrality by other nations, see Jürg Martin Gabriel, "The Price of Political Uniqueness: Swiss Foreign Policy in a Changing World," in *Swiss Foreign Policy: 1945–2002*, ed. Jürg Martin Gabriel and Thomas Fischer (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1–22; Mikael Af Malmborg, *Neutrality and State-Building in Sweden* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave, 2001), 57–60, 88–89.

40. Quoted in Blake and Barck, *United States in Its World Relations*, 50–51.

41. Quoted in Blake and Barck, *United States in Its World Relations*, 159–60.

42. Blake and Barck, *United States in Its World Relations*, 331.

43. Quoted in Campbell, *Transformation*, 65–66.

44. Quoted in Blake and Barck, *United States in Its World Relations*, 537.

45. On Swiss foreign policy and neutrality, see James Murray Luck, *A History of Switzerland* (Palo Alto, CA: Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship, 1985), 60–167, 212–91; Joy Charnley and Malcolm Pender, eds., *Switzerland and War* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999); William E. Rappard, *The Government of Switzerland* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1936); Gabriel, "Price of Political Uniqueness," 8–10.

46. George Arthur Codding Jr., *The Federal Government of Switzerland* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 30; Lloyd, *Waging Peace*, 61–63; Gilliard, *History of Switzerland*, 88–89. There was a "coup" in Neuchâtel canton in 1856 by conservative supporters of the king of Prussia's old claim to the canton. This was easily put down by federal Swiss troops. This is not

classified as a coup attempt in the terminology used here, however, because it aimed at secession from the Swiss federation. See Gilliard, *History of Switzerland*, 96.

47. Bengt Sundelius, ed., *The Committed Neutral: Sweden's Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); Malmborg, *Neutrality and State-Building*, 2–3, 91–105.

48. Newton, *The Netherlands*, 64–73; Vandenbosch, *Dutch Foreign Policy*, 6.

49. Lijphart, *Politics of Accommodation*, 72.

50. J. C. C. Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits, and Principles: A Study of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 30–31.

51. Vandenbosch, *Dutch Foreign Policy*, 56.

52. Jonathan E. Helmreich, *Belgium and Europe: A Study in Small Power Diplomacy* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976); Wickman, *Belgium*.

53. Garvin, "Democratic Politics in Independent Ireland," 227; John Coakley, "The Foundations of Statehood," in Coakley and Gallagher, *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*; Collins and McCann, *Irish Politics Today*; Kissane, *Explaining Irish Democracy,* 218.

54. Elder, Thomas, and Arter, *Consensual Democracies?* 15.

55. Gabriel, "Price of Political Uniqueness," 7–8; Luck, *History of Switzerland*, 448.

56. The Central American crisis involved meddling by many nations into the small states of that region. Helen Schooley, *Conflict in Central America* (London: Longman, 1987); Robert S. Leiken, "Overview: Can the Cycle Be Broken?" in Robert S. Leiken, ed., *Central America: Anatomy of Conflict* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984); Morris Rothenberg, "The Soviets and Central America," in Leiken, *Central America*, 133–34; Juan Carlos Zarate, *Forging Democracy: A Comparative Study of the Effects of U.S. Foreign Policy on Central American Democratization* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994); Rolbein, *Nobel Costa Rica*, 193–207.

57. Rolbein, *Nobel Costa Rica*, 193–98.

58. Luck, *History of Switzerland*, 368–69.

59. Vandenbosch, *Dutch Foreign Policy*, 46–59; Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits, and Principles*, 33–49; Edwards, *British Foreign Policy from 1815 to 1933*, 63–64, 145–47; Helmreich, *Belgium and Europe*, 14, 144–55; Michael Brock, "Britain Enters the War," 173 and n. 106.

60. John Logue, "The Legacy of Swedish Neutrality," in Sundelius, *Committed Neutral*, 42–43; Malmborg, *Neutrality and State-Building*, 93–98.

61. Malmborg, *Neutrality and State-Building*, 149–63.

62. Malmborg, *Neutrality and State-Building*, 165–66.

11. BEST FRIENDS

1. Leurdijk, *Intervention in International Politics*, 238–58; Weart, *Never at War*, 280–81.

2. For example, see Jarrod Hayes, "The Democratic Peace and the New Evolution of an Old Idea," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 4 (2011): 767–791; Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post–Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); James Lee Ray, *Democracy and International Conflict: An Evaluation of the Democratic Peace Proposition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); Stuart A. Bremer, "Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816–1965," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36, no. 2 (1992): 309–341.

3. Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 662. See also Weart, *Never at War*, 4–5. For a contrary view, see Sebastian Rosato, "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 4 (2003): 585–602.

4. Weart, *Never at War*, 12–18, 119–24.

5. Weart, *Never at War*, 20.

6. Weart, *Never at War*, 13.

7. Weart, *Never at War*, 13–14.

8. See Stephen M. Walt, "Never Say Never: Wishful Thinking on Democracy and War," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 1 (1999): 146–51; Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Review of *Never at War: Why*

Democracies Will Not Fight One Another, by Spencer R. Weart," *Commonweal* 136, no. 6 (March 26, 1999).

9. On the weakness of the case for a democratic peace in the ancient world, as well as the many problems with Weart's notion of an "oligarchic peace," see Eric Robinson, "Reading and Misreading the Ancient Evidence for Democratic Peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 5 (2001): 593–608, and the subsequent back-and-forth between Robinson and Weart in the same issue, at pp. 609–13 and 615–17. See also Azar Gat, *Victorious and Vulnerable: Why Democracy Won in the 20th Century and How It Is Still Imperiled* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 90–97; Gat, *War in Human Civilization*, 576–80.

10. Gat, *War in Human Civilization*, 580; Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations* (New York: Norton, 2001), 111–14; Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 20.

11. Demosthenes, "On the Chersonese," Greek Texts, http://www.greektexts.com/library/Demosthenes/On_The_Chersonese/eng/56.html.

12. Quoted in Weart, *Never at War*, 108–9.

13. Quoted in Weart, *Never at War*, 108–9.

14. Quoted in Weart, *Never at War*, 109.

15. Weart, *Never at War*, 16. Many other students of the democratic peace have provided similar idealistic and normative explanations. While the following discussion targets Weart's explanation most directly, its reasoning also applies to the other "values"-based explanations of the democratic peace.

16. Weart, *Never at War*, 16.

17. Weart, *Never at War*, 17.

18. Weart, *Never at War*, 15.

19. Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 67.

20. On the long-standing tradition of amity between Venice and Britain, see Hazlitt, *Venetian Republic*, 1:xxi, 2:509–26. On the rupture of relations because of the Jacobite movement and the subsequent mending of ties, see Horn, *Great Britain and Europe*, 340–41; Eglin, *Venice Transfigured*, 90–91.

21. See Charles S. Campbell, *From Revolution to Rapprochement: The United States and Great Britain, 1783–1900* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974); Campbell, *Transformation*; Blake and Barck, *United States in Its World Relations*.

22. Quoted in Campbell, *Transformation*, 5–6.

23. Quoted in Campbell, *Transformation*, 331.

24. Quoted in Campbell, *Transformation*, 209.

25. Quoted in Campbell, *Transformation*, 335.

26. Quoted in Blake and Barck, *United States in Its World Relations*, 404–5.

27. Vandenbosch, *Dutch Foreign Policy*, 241–42.

28. Logue, "Legacy of Swedish Neutrality," 42–43; Malmborg, *Neutrality and State-Building*, 93–98; Horn, *Great Britain and Europe*, 264–65.

29. Logue, "Legacy of Swedish Neutrality," 43–44.

30. Luck, *History of Switzerland*, 368–69, 446–55.

31. Vandenbosch, *Dutch Foreign Policy*, 4, 46–59, 241–42; Helmreich, *Belgium and Europe*, 144–53; Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits, and Principles*, 29–32.

32. Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits, and Principles,* 33–34.

33. Quoted in Geoffrey Warner, "Review Article: The United States and the Suez Crisis," *International Affairs* 67, no. 2 (1991): 317.

34. Quoted in Warner, "Review Article," 315 and n. 40.

35. Winthrop W. Aldrich, "The Suez Crisis: A Footnote to History," *Foreign Affairs* 45, no. 3 (1967): 552.

36. Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Phil Gunson, "Obituary: Jose Lopez Portillo; Mexico's Most Reviled President," *The Guardian*, February 20, 2004, http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2004/feb/20/guardianobituaries.

37. Quoted in Robert Kinloch Massie, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1997), 620.

38. Quoted in Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, ed., *The Many Faces of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 308.

39. Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, trans. M. Campbell Smith (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1917), 121–23; Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Perpetual Peace*, trans. Helen O'Brien (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1927), 25–27.

40. Quoted in Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 796.

41. Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*, 114–16.

42. To date, "informational" or "transparency" arguments for the democratic peace have revolved around each side's estimation of the "resolve" of the other side during militarized conflicts. Because democratic leaders are accountable to an electorate (and want to stay in office), the argument goes, democracies are less likely to bluff and communicate their "resolve" more credibly. Because each democracy can accurately determine the "resolve" of the other, they are able to resolve their differences short of force. David Lektzian and Mark Souva, "A Comparative Theory Test of Democratic Peace Arguments, 1946–2000," *Journal of Peace Research* 46, no. 1 (2009): 17–37; Hayes, "Democratic Peace," 767–79. However, as Sebastian Rosato points out, the available evidence "suggests that democracies cannot clearly reveal their levels of resolve in a crisis" because the actual intentions of democratic leaders within the context of escalating militarized disputes remains "private information." Rosato, "Flawed Logic," 599. Also, as Lektzian and Souva note, some theorists have shown that democratic dyads may be *more* likely to escalate and become "locked in," which increases the chances of using force. Lektzian and Souva, "Comparative Theory Test," 22. In contrast to the existing transparency-based causal mechanisms, my argument is that democracies communicate much more basic, fundamental information about who they perceive to be their friends and who they believe to be their enemies or potential enemies. When each democracy perceives that the other democracy wholeheartedly perceives *itself* as "friendly," it becomes politically untenable to even suggest a use of force against the other state, because it would destroy a harmonious partnership and thereby make the world a far more dangerous place for both states.

43. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 48.

44. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 430.

45. A few theorists have raised similar arguments, without placing transparency and reliable, real-time information flows at the heart of the democratic peace. International relations scholars have rendered mutual trust in formal logic, proving that when both sides know the other prefers negotiation, coercion is avoided. "Democracies confronting one another," they hold, "are less likely to engage in violence" because "each believes the other is likely to be averse to using force." Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, *War and Reason: Domestic and International Imperatives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 104–5, 154–57. Robert Keohane places transparency at the center of his analysis of interstate cooperation. Open governments, he argues, enjoy advantages in making their commitments to international treaties credible. Governments where "decisionmaking processes are closed to the outside world," on the other hand, may be unable to persuade potential partners of their seriousness. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 93–95.

46. See Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010): 3–4, 46–47; Bruce Riedel, *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2012), xiii–xix; Declan Walsh, "Whose Side Is Pakistan's ISI Really On?" *The Guardian*, May 11, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/12/isi-bin-laden-death-pakistan-alqaida.

47. "Nawaz Blames Musharraf for Kargil," *Times of India*, May 28, 2006, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2006-05-28/pakistan/27797053_1_kargil-operation-sharif-and-bhutto-musharraf.

48. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2008); Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

49. Riedel, *Deadly Embrace*, xviii–xix.

50. Weart, *Never at War*, 156–60.
51. Weart, *Never at War*, 164–71.

EPILOGUE

1. Jane Stromseth, David Wippman, and Rosa Brooks, *Can Might Make Rights? Building the Rule of Law after Military Interventions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 214–15.
2. Alex Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Struggle for Singapore* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1976); Robert I. Rotberg, "Leadership Alters Corrupt Behavior," in *Corruption, Global Security, and World Order*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2009), 347.
3. Quoted in Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew*, 49.

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