

# International Interactions and War

## POSC 1020 – Introduction to International Relations

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## Goal for Today

*Distinguish the predictions of the author's strategic perspective from neorealism.*

# A Motivating Puzzle: NATO and Serbia



Why would NATO bomb Serbia? Why would Serbia provoke NATO?

## A Motivating Puzzle: NATO and Serbia

Notwithstanding metaphors and history, Serbia was no threat to Europe.

- However, leaders in Europe felt the *domestic* costs of doing nothing was worse than attacking Serbia.

Milosevic was no match for NATO, but was *highly* motivated.

- The issue was sufficiently important.
- Milosevic believed (with reason) that NATO resolve was negligible.

Domestic and foreign *strategic* factors explain this conflict, not the balance of power.

## This Lecture

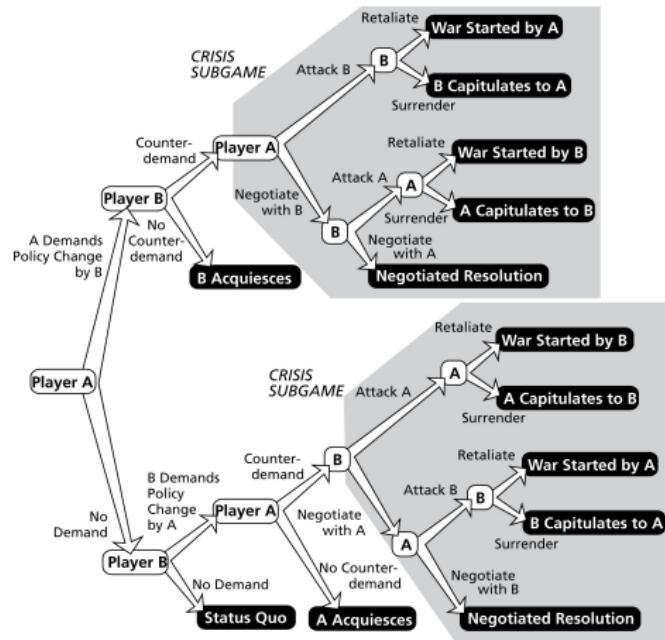
We will contrast the assumptions and predictions of neorealism with the author's strategic perspective.

- Neorealism: states maximize security in response to balance of power.
- Strategic: leaders choose foreign policies as a function of domestic and international constraints.

What follows is a more general understanding of uncertainty, war, and state leader type (i.e. hawks and doves).

# The International Interaction Game

FIGURE 5.1 International Interaction Game



The international interaction game offers a scaffolding from which to investigate international interactions. The game identifies eight generic outcomes of international interactions and emphasizes both international and domestic factors that influence the course of international events.

## Possible Outcomes of the Game

1. The status quo
2. A negotiated settlement
3. A (or B) acquiesces.
  - i.e. one side concedes the issue without being attacked.
4. A (or B) capitulates.
  - i.e. one side concedes the issue *after* a preliminary attack.
5. A (or B) retaliates to an attack.
  - i.e. both sides fight a war.

## Assumptions of the Game

1. Decision-makers are rational and strategic.
2.  $p=1$  or  $p=0$  **only** for acquiescence, capitulation, or status quo.
  - i.e. the utility of all other outcomes is weighted by probability.
3. The utility of negotiation or war is a lottery
  - $p_A, p_B$  = probability of "winning" the lottery
  - $1 - p_A, 1 - p_B$  = probability of "losing" the lottery.
  - Do note these are not identical variables.
4. Each state leader prefers negotiation over war.
  - This is also common knowledge.

## Assumptions of the Game

5. Violence involves costs *not* associated with negotiations.
  - Capitulation: the capitulating state eats the costs of the attack.
    - ▶ This also implies a first-strike advantage.
  - Any attack: the attacking state incurs costs associated with failed diplomacy.
6. Both A and B prefer any policy change to the status quo, but:  
 $SQ_i > ACQ_i$ .
7. Foreign policies follow domestic political considerations.
  - These may or may not include consideration of international constraints.

## Additional Restrictions of the Game

These assumptions imply the following preference restrictions.

- $SQ >$  Acquiescence or capitulation by A (or B).
- Acquiescence (by the opponent) is most preferred outcome.
- Acquiescence by  $i >$  Capitulation by  $i$ .
- Negotiation  $>$  Acquiescence/capitulation/an initiated war by  $i$ .
- Capitulation by  $i >$  Initiated war from  $j$
- War started by  $i >$  War started by  $j$
- Capitulation by  $i >$  zero in negotiations
- War started by  $j >$  zero in negotiations.

## Major Difference with a Neorealist Model

Importantly,  $U(Capitulation_j)$  can be greater than  $U(Negotiation_j)$

- where  $j$  refers to the opponent (i.e. B for A and A for B).

In neorealism, this is not a possible assumption.

- States prefer to *survive*, not obtain maximum power.
- Thus, demands from states should be tailored to maintain system stability.

This is why previous versions of bargaining we discussed aimed for indifference between negotiation and war.

## Outcomes of the Game

War is the complete and perfect information equilibrium *iff* (sic):

1. A prefers to initiate war > acquiescence to B's demands.
2. A prefer to capitulate, but B has a first-strike advantage.
3. B prefers to fight a war started by A rather than acquiesce to A's demands.
4. B prefers to force A to capitulate rather than negotiate.
  - We call this a "hawk" in this game.
  - A "dove" prefers negotiations over a first-strike.

## Outcomes of the Game

Under uncertainty, this no longer holds.

- However, *uncertainty doesn't automatically lead to higher probability of war*, per neorealism.

Assume A mistakes that B is a dove (when, in fact, B is a hawk) and B mistakenly believes A would retaliate, if attacked.

- A offers negotiation to B.
- B responds with negotiation to A.

Uncertainty about preferences can avert a war that would have occurred with complete and perfect information.

# Uncertainty and Predictions of War

TABLE 5.2

## Predictions about the Risk of War: The Domestic International Interaction Game and Neorealism

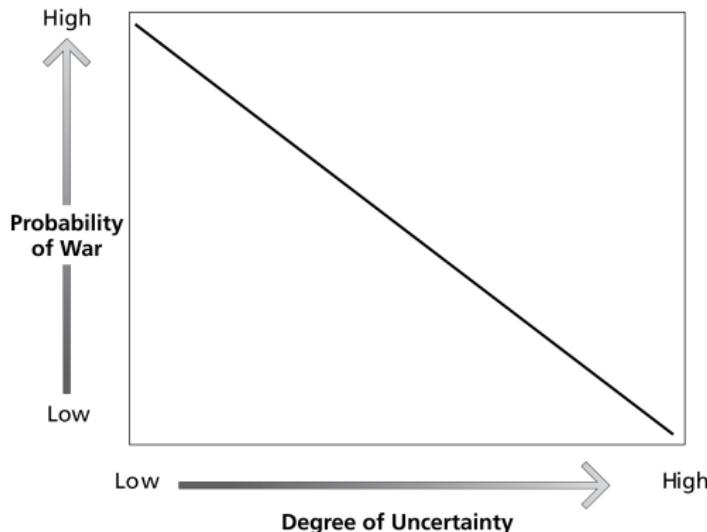
Domestic IIG preference conditions	War preferences satisfied	Information condition	
		No uncertainty	Uncertainty
		Circumstance 1	Circumstance 2
	IIG: $p_{\text{war}} = 1$	IIG: $p_{\text{war}} < 1$	
	NR: $p_{\text{war}} = 0$	NR: $p_{\text{war}} \leq 1$	
	War preferences not satisfied	Circumstance 3	Circumstance 4
	IIG: $p_{\text{war}} = 0$	IIG: $0 \leq p_{\text{war}} \leq 1$	
	NR: $p_{\text{war}} = 0$	NR: $p_{\text{war}} \leq 1$	

Notes: The first probability in each box is the domestic IIG prediction; the second is the neorealism prediction. IIG, international interaction game; NR neorealism;  $p_{\text{war}}$ , probability of war.

# Uncertainty and Predictions of War

FIGURE 5.2

War, IIG Conditions Met, and Uncertainty

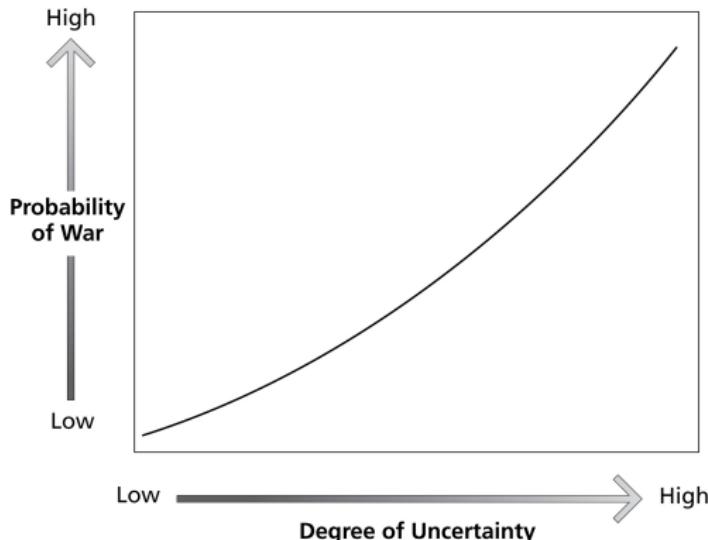


When the IIG's necessary and sufficient preference conditions for war are met, but there is uncertainty about the preferences of rivals, then war is less likely to occur than in the case where there is no uncertainty. This result contradicts the predictions of liberal and neorealist theory, which contend that increases in uncertainty always increase the risk of instability. The IIG accounts for cases not explained by structural theories.

# Uncertainty and Predictions of War

FIGURE 5.3

War, IIG Conditions Not Met, and Uncertainty



When the IIG's necessary and sufficient preference conditions for war are not met, but there is uncertainty about the preferences of rivals, then war is more likely than in the case where there is no uncertainty. This result also supports the predictions of liberal and neorealist theory, which contend that increases in uncertainty always increase the risk of instability. The IIG accounts for cases also explained by structural theories.

# Resurrection and Pacific Doves

Realists believe power invariably increases belligerence.

- After all, relative power increases the probability of winning a war.

However, there are several reasons why *weak* states/groups are the aggressor.

1. The Resurrection Hypothesis
2. The Pacific Dove Hypothesis

# The Resurrection Hypothesis

When leaders face defeat in war (and removal from office), they gamble.

- **Resurrection hypothesis:** leaders facing certain defeat lose nothing by fighting harder.

Common examples:

- Battle of the Bulge (Hitler, 1944)
- Tet Offensive (Ho Chi Minh, 1968)
- Iraq War (Saddam Hussein, 2002-3)

# The Pacific Dove Hypothesis

**Pacific Dove Hypothesis:** Weak states/groups have incentives to initiate disputes/war even if they ultimately prefer negotiations. Explanations:

- Strong states have initial advantage in negotiation.
- Choosing to negotiate means forgoing whatever first-strike advantage the weak state has.

Thus, the pacific dove plays a low-probability lottery that the stronger state is not motivated to fight back.

- This could make the dove's demands in negotiation more credible.
- However, it makes negotiations that much more unlikely.

# Conclusion

The IIG bears out the predictions of the author's strategic perspective over neorealism.

- War can be a complete and perfect information equilibrium.
- Uncertainty does not automatically increase the probability of war.
- States/groups facing defeat can be more likely to take initiative.
- Pacific doves are more likely to initiate conflict than gain nothing in negotiations.

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