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Virginia Page Fortna: Peace Time

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INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT making peace last in the least likely places. It is about cease-fires, why they sometimes hold and sometimes fail, and what, if anything, can be done to make them more likely to last. It is a study of how even deadly enemies can maintain peace.

In mid-July 1948, in the midst of the first Arab-Israeli war in Palestine, the United Nations Security Council ordered Israel and the Arab states to cease fire. They did so. The cease-fire lasted three months before fighting resumed with an Israeli offensive in mid-October. After a few more months of fighting, the war ended in 1949 with armistice agreements between Israel and each of its Arab neighbors. This second cease-fire fared much better but ultimately faltered, in 1956 in the Sinai, and in 1967 when Israel fought with Syria and Jordan as well as Egypt.

The Korean War also ended with an armistice agreement, in 1953. But despite the deep enmity and mistrust on the Korean peninsula, there has been no “Second Korean War.” True peace has eluded Korea, but the cease-fire has so far held.

Almost half of the international wars since World War II have been followed by renewed fighting between at least one pair of belligerents. Peace is notoriously hard to maintain among deadly enemies, but in some cases it succeeds and in others it fails. Why do some cease-fires fall apart within days or months, while others last for years, and still others last indefinitely? Why did that first cease-fire in 1948 in the Middle East fail so quickly? Why did the next last longer, and why did it ultimately fail? Why has the armistice in Korea held? Why did Honduras and El Salvador skirmish again seven years after the Football War, and how did they avoid full-scale hostilities? How did Ethiopia and Somalia manage to avert resumption of their 1978 war over the Ogaden? And why, in the mid-1980s, were Vietnam and China unable to avoid another round of their earlier border fighting? What would we need to know to predict whether the cease-fire reached in June 2000 between Ethiopia and Eritrea will hold?

In short, what determines whether peace lasts or war resumes? And perhaps more important, what if anything can the belligerents themselves or the international community do to improve the chances of durable peace? These are the questions that motivate this book. The field of international relations provides surprisingly little guidance on why cease-fires fail or on what helps make peace last. There is a growing scholarly interest in the termination of both civil and international wars, but very little

work has examined the durability of peace once belligerents have stopped firing at each other.¹ How to maintain peace in the aftermath of war is arguably one of the most important questions of the post–Cold War era, and one of the least explored issues in the study of war and peace.

This book explores two sets of factors to help explain why peace sometimes fails quickly and sometimes lasts longer. One set consists of situational or structural factors, characteristics of the situation over which the belligerents have little or no control. These include features of the war just fought, such as the military outcome, the cost of the war, and how many states were involved in it. They also include material conditions such as geography and the relative power of the states involved, as well as features of the belligerents' relationship such as their prior history of conflict and the stakes over which they fought. These "preexisting conditions" at the time of the cease-fire establish the baseline prospects for peace. Situational factors also include shifts over time that affect the likelihood of war, such as changes in military capability or in regime type.

The second set consists of deliberate attempts to enhance the durability of peace. These include measures such as the separation of troops and the creation of demilitarized zones (DMZs), monitoring by international observers, guarantees by third parties, confidence-building measures, and dispute resolution procedures, among others. These measures are often incorporated into cease-fire agreements by belligerents with the intent of helping to enforce the agreement. But do these measures work?

This book examines the role of such agreements in shaping the chances for durable peace after interstate wars. Diplomats and international lawyers might contend that a well-crafted agreement is critical in establishing lasting peace. But many scholars of international relations would argue that like all international agreements, cease-fires agreements are merely scraps of paper; they are not binding in an anarchical system, and they can do little to constrain international behavior. Others might argue that agreements represent purposeful attempts by states to overcome or mitigate the obstacles to cooperation. This debate, between realists and institutionalists, over the prospects for cooperation is well worn, and the purpose of this book is not to defend or attack either side.² But the

¹ Examples of the war termination literature include Fox 1970; Goemans 2000; Iklé 1991; Kecskemeti 1964, 1970; Klingberg 1966; Pillar 1983; Randle 1973; Walter 1997; and Zartman 1989. Holsti 1991 surveys the great multilateral peace conferences after major wars since 1648, focusing on grand efforts to establish a stable international order, rather than attempts to create lasting peace between particular pairs of belligerents. Kacowicz et al. 2000 consider the conditions for "stable peace" in which war is not even considered. By their typology this book is a study of "precarious peace."

² On the debate over prospects for cooperation, see Baldwin 1993. On strategies for making cooperation easier see, for example, Oye 1986a.

disagreement between the two camps does provide a number of competing hypotheses that illuminate the practical question why some cease-fires fall apart quickly while others last, and what if anything can be done to promote stable peace.³ Despite the inherent importance of the question, surprisingly little theoretical or empirical work has explored how to maintain peace in the aftermath of war, and no systematic studies have tested whether cease-fire agreements matter in the construction of lasting peace. Are cease-fire agreements merely scraps of paper that have no effect on stability? Or can the content of agreements improve the chances of a lasting peace?

Maintaining peace in the aftermath of war requires cooperation. This book develops and tests cooperation theory to explain how the content of agreements influences the duration of peace. In brief, war is extremely costly and both sides would be better off if they could avoid a resumption of hostilities. But both sides may have strong incentives to break the cease-fire, and both have good reason to fear the other—they are, after all, deadly enemies who have just fought a war. Moreover, in the atmosphere of mistrust just after a war, accidents and skirmishes can easily spark renewed conflict. Cease-fires are by their nature reciprocal; it is the prospect of return fire that deters attack. But for reciprocity and deterrence to keep peace, several things must be true. The cost of renewed warfare must outweigh the incentives to attack; both sides must be reassured about the other's actions and intentions; and accidents must be kept from spiraling back into war. I argue that belligerents can draft cease-fire agreements that foster peace by altering the incentives to attack, by reducing uncertainty about intentions, and by preventing and controlling accidents. This study distinguishes between and examines armistice agreements that aim to stop the fighting but do not purport to settle the conflict, and peace agreements that address the political dispute underlying the conflict.⁴

Specific mechanisms incorporated into cease-fire agreements, such as demilitarized zones, can make defection more costly by imposing physical constraints. Belligerents might also alter incentives by involving third parties in the enforcement of a cease-fire. They can reduce uncertainty

³ Realism and institutionalism are certainly not the only relevant theories of international relations. Constructivists might argue that agreements affect the durability of peace in part by changing actors' understandings of their relationship. This study is not necessarily incompatible with a constructivist approach; it pays attention to variables, such as the history of conflict between belligerents, that reflect social interaction and its effects. However, the construction of interests is not "problematized" in this study. A constructivist approach might be particularly useful in a separate study focusing on the difference between cases in which war is avoided but relations remain chilly, and those that involve greater reconciliation.

⁴ I treat political settlement as a variable distinct from the "strength" of mechanisms within a cease-fire agreement (see chap. 1).

by defining compliance in specific terms, and the international community can provide neutral peacekeepers to monitor a cease-fire. Mechanisms such as dispute resolution procedures, confidence-building measures, and measures to control potential rogue groups opposed to peace might help prevent and manage unintended violations, while willingness to invoke cost can provide a credible signal to alleviate fears about enemy intentions.

This study tests the relationship between cease-fire agreements and the duration of peace after interstate wars. Do stronger agreements, those that incorporate more of these measures, fare better than weaker ones? Do demilitarized zones actually help prevent war? Are more specific agreements more likely to maintain peace? Are agreements with dispute resolution provisions more successful? Does peacekeeping keep peace? This project is a systematic study of what works and what does not work to maintain peace. Cooperation theory is thus developed and tested to answer the practical questions whether and how we can foster durable peace in conflicts around the globe.

Whether the measures studied here matter in the construction of durable peace cannot be answered in isolation, however. The counterargument to the notion that cease-fire agreements foster peace is that they merely reflect other factors that determine the duration of peace. According to this argument, when cooperation is relatively easy because relations are fairly good, parties will be able to draft strong agreements incorporating many of the mechanisms examined in this study. But these are the very cases in which peace will last in any case. Conversely, when cooperation is difficult and the chances that peace will fall apart are high for other reasons, belligerents will be unable to conclude agreements that do more than paper over differences. Any apparent relationship between the strength of agreements and the duration of peace may therefore be spurious.

On the other hand, an argument can be made for just the opposite logic. If mechanisms within cease-fire agreements help belligerents keep peace, the greater the obstacles to peace, the greater the need for these mechanisms. When peace is most fragile, states will have greater incentive to invest in measures to prevent its demise. This argument suggests that the strongest agreements will be put in place in the most dangerous situations, not the easiest ones. Peacekeepers, for example may be most likely sent to assist the most precarious cease-fires; they are not needed in more secure situations. Likewise, belligerents are more likely to insist on buffer zones when they least trust the other side to comply. If either argument is right, ignoring the situational factors or the “preexisting conditions” that influence the underlying prospects for peace will skew our findings about the causal relationship between agreements and the duration of peace.

This project thus addresses three central questions: First, what factors or situational variables affect the baseline prospects for peace? How, for example, do factors such as the decisiveness of military victory, geography, the actors' relative capabilities, their history of conflict before the war, their form of government, the stakes of the war, or its cost affect whether peace lasts or falls apart?

Second, how do these situational factors affect the content of cease-fire agreements? Are belligerents and the international community likely to implement measures to try to maintain peace only in the easy cases when peace would last in any case? Or are they more likely to invest in these measures when peace would otherwise be most precarious?

And third, given the baseline prospects for peace, how does the content of cease-fire agreements affect the durability of peace empirically? Do stronger agreements improve the chances for durable peace? Do measures such as demilitarized zones or military transparency measures help maintain peace? Does peace last longer when peacekeepers or monitors are present? Or when a third party offers a guarantee of the peace? Is peace more stable if the belligerents sign a formal agreement, or is a tacit understanding just as effective?

This study is set up to provide a hard test for the notion that states can improve the chances for peace. Studies of international cooperation have mostly focused on interactions between relatively friendly states, usually in economic or environmental issues. Cooperation is generally thought to be more difficult in matters of security and war than in economics, however. According to Jervis, security issues tend to be marked by greater competition, with interests more inherently conflictual; the security dilemma, in which one's own attempt to protect oneself threatens others, operates most severely in military matters; and the stakes tend to be higher in the security field than in economics.⁵

More important, on any issue, cooperation is more difficult for deadly enemies than for friendly nations.⁶ Enemies cannot rely on previously established reputations for complying with their commitments. Indeed, enemies are more likely to be concerned with their reputations for toughness than with demonstrating their cooperativeness. In the absence of any

⁵ Jervis 1983, 174–75. Jervis is analyzing the prospects for security regimes, but his argument applies to cooperation more generally. See also Jervis 1978. The difference between prospects for cooperation in security and economic affairs does not apply across the board. The United States and Japan, for example, can cooperate much more easily in military affairs than in economic matters in which they are competitors.

⁶ The important difference between relations among friends and among enemies is a key insight of constructivist approaches to international relations. Wendt 1992, 397, notes the difference for the United States between British and Soviet nuclear forces, for example. The same capabilities in the hands of a friend or a foe have very different meanings.

good will, cooperative gestures are likely to be interpreted as signs of weakness, and therefore to be avoided. Concern with relative gains also makes relations among adversaries more difficult. Deadly enemies have good reason to worry that their opponent might use any comparative advantage against them down the line.⁷ And yet, despite all this, cooperation is possible. By examining success and failure where cooperation is most difficult, this study contributes to the theoretical and empirical debate over the prospects for cooperation. It draws on this debate to develop competing hypotheses about the effectiveness of measures to improve the prospects for peace, and then tests these hypotheses empirically.

This testing involves three complementary research methods: quantitative analysis, in-depth case studies, and what for lack of a better term I will call “large-*N* qualitative” comparison. The statistical analysis employs a duration model designed for studies of longevity (medical studies of life expectancy, for example, or in this case the durability of peace), and a data set created for this project. It covers all cease-fires in wars between sovereign states from 1946 through 1997. The data include information on the cease-fires and how long they lasted, on the situational variables that shape the underlying prospects for peace (the belligerents’ history of conflict, the decisiveness of military victory, etc.), and any mechanisms put in place to help foster the chances for peace.

The in-depth case-study research focuses on India and Pakistan, and Israel and Syria. These particular cases were chosen for two reasons. First, they provide a hard test of the cooperation theory presented here. All of the cases in this study consist of enemies who have just fought a war, but these cases involve enemies more intransigent than most. Both the India-Pakistan conflict and the Israel-Syria conflict are marked by deep hostility in which animosity began at or before independence and was only exacerbated over time. Second, because in each case there have been several wars over time, and therefore several cease-fires, they provide multiple observations and variation within the two cases. Indeed the primary comparisons in this part of the analysis are within-case comparisons, not between the two cases. This allows me to hold relatively constant particularities of culture, geography, and so on.

The third research method falls somewhere between the quantitative analysis and the in-depth case studies, and draws on the strengths of both. Because the universe of cases of interstate cease-fires in the post-World War II era is relatively small (48 bilateral cease-fires in 25 wars), it is possible to examine them all qualitatively. This “systematic eyeballing” of minicases or “large-*N* qualitative” method allows one to see patterns

⁷ On the debate over relative and absolute gains, see Grieco 1988; Snidal 1991; and Powell 1991.

in the data that get lost both in the condensation of complex cases into numerical data and in case studies of only a few cases. These three techniques dovetail so that each compensates for the limitations of the others.

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In a world characterized by anarchy, international agreements are fundamentally unenforceable. Without a world government, states are not subject to a higher authority that will guarantee their contracts. There is nothing to stop states from breaching their commitments if it is in their interests to do so.⁸ And yet, most agreements are honored most of the time. In general, international agreements appear to be more than mere scraps of paper, ignored whenever they become inconvenient.⁹ This is a study of whether and how agreements affect outcomes after they are signed, of how states “enforce” their own agreements.

Related to the issue of whether and how agreements bind actors is the impact of international institutions on political outcomes. Institutional theory rests on the claim that the existence and form of institutions affect international relations by making cooperation easier to achieve. Critics of institutionalism claim, on the contrary, that such arrangements are epiphenomenal—they are created reflecting the interests of major powers, and they fade away when these interests shift, but they exert no independent influence on international outcomes.¹⁰ Cease-fire agreements are not necessarily institutions,¹¹ but because they perform similar functions—providing information, setting standards of legitimate behavior, and making the gains from cooperation later contingent on cooperation now¹²—scholarship on institutions is relevant to the study of peacemaking. An empirical analysis of the impact of cease-fire agreements, particularly one that takes seriously the charge of spuriousness, sheds light on whether and how institutions matter in international relations.

This is also a study of “enduring rivalries” and protracted conflicts. The enduring rivalries literature focuses on pairs of states that are repeatedly in conflict with each other: “The concept of enduring rivalries is a way to understand how previous conflict interactions between states af-

⁸ For examples of the growing literature at the intersection of international politics and international law, see Slaughter 1995; Setear 1996; Abbott et al. 2000; and Koremenos 2001.

⁹ See Chayes and Chayes 1995.

¹⁰ See, for example, Mearsheimer 1994–95.

¹¹ Institutions are often defined as “persistent and connected sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations.” Keohane 1989, 3. Cease-fire agreements are ad hoc rather than persistent.

¹² Keohane 1984.

fect their future propensity for conflict or cooperation.”¹³ But the literature has not yet answered this question directly because most studies examine only cases where there is future conflict. It has not addressed what distinguishes conflicts that set off enduring rivalries from those that are not repeated.¹⁴ By studying both cases in which armed conflict resumes and those in which a pair of states fights only once, research on the durability of peace helps fill this gap. This book thus contributes to our understanding both of how rivalries form, and of how established rivals can maintain peace, and thereby, perhaps, end their cycle of conflict.

Last but not least, this study is a “how to” of sorts for would-be peacemakers. Studies have been done on some of the particular peace-maintaining mechanisms examined here. But this literature tends to be descriptive rather than analytic and rarely involves systematic tests of the effectiveness of these measures. Studies of peacekeeping, for example, tend to examine only cases where peacekeepers were deployed with no comparison to nonpeacekeeping cases, so that it is difficult to judge empirically what difference peacekeeping makes. This project thus aims to contribute both to important theoretical and empirical questions in international relations, and to the practical issue of how to create peace that lasts.

The following chapter develops cooperation theory to explain why agreements might be expected to affect the durability of peace. It also discusses the counterargument that agreements are merely epiphenomenal. Chapter 2 describes the evidentiary issues involved in studying why peace lasts or war resumes. It describes the three research methods used in the book: the econometric model and the data set created for the quantitative analysis, the “large-*N* qualitative” comparisons used to flesh out the study, and the case selection and research methods employed in the in-depth case studies of war and peace between Israel and Syria and between India and Pakistan, as well as a brief overview of these conflicts.

In the rest of the book the hypotheses generated in chapter 1 are put to empirical test. Chapter 3 is a study of the baseline prospects for peace. It examines the relationship between a number of situational variables and the durability of peace, testing, for example, whether peace lasts longer after decisive victories, whether costly wars lead to a more or a less stable peace, and so on. Five variables turn out to be particularly important: the decisiveness of military victory, the cost of war, belligerents’ history before the war, the stakes of conflict, and whether the fighting states are contiguous. Other factors, relative power, the number of states in the war,

¹³ Goertz and Diehl 1992, 153. See Goertz and Diehl 1993 for evaluations of various definitions of the concept. On protracted conflicts, see Brecher 1984; and Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1989.

¹⁴ In the jargon, most of the literature “selects on the dependent variable.” One notable exception is Stinnett and Diehl 2001.

whether the conflict is over territory, measures of states' "expected utility" for war, and changes in regime type, for example, are less helpful for understanding whether peace will last.

Chapter 4 addresses the counterargument that agreements are epiphenomenal or spurious. Despite empirical tests that are biased in favor of the counterargument, there is surprisingly little evidence that belligerents reach strong agreements only when the prospects for peace are good in any case. If anything, just the opposite is true: parties tend to invest more in keeping peace when it would otherwise be precarious.

Chapters 5 and 6 then turn to the practical question of whether and how these mechanisms work. Chapter 5 tests the central hypothesis of the book—that stronger cease-fire agreements yield more stable peace. Taking the baseline prospects for peace into account, I show that the content of agreements does indeed matter in the construction of durable peace. All else equal, peace lasts longer when stronger agreements are in place. Chapter 6 focuses on specific measures and their empirical effectiveness in maintaining peace. This chapter shows that some measures are more important than others. Demilitarized zones are particularly effective, for example, but arms control measures are not. Explicit guarantees of peace by outsiders help. Peacekeeping and monitoring by the international community can be very effective, but once a peacekeeping mission is discredited by the outbreak of another war (as in South Asia, for example) it becomes completely ineffectual. Joint commissions set up to resolve disputes as they arise also help belligerents maintain peace. The conclusion recaps the argument and findings, drawing out implications for international relations theory and for the practice of maintaining peace.

In this study peace is defined as merely the absence of war. I do not distinguish between relations that become very friendly and those that remain acrimonious despite the absence of violence. Under this definition, North and South Korea have been at "peace" for over forty years. While I do examine the role of political settlements, agreements on the underlying issues of the conflict, this is not a study of how former adversaries reconcile and become friends. It is a study of how even deadly enemies can prevent shooting wars. Nor do I address whether the peace achieved in the cases studied is just. This is not to imply that all varieties of peace are equally desirable or moral. Some wars, wars of liberation and anticolonial wars, for example, may make the world a better place; stability does not necessarily coincide with social justice. But most wars cause poverty, disease, and dislocation, and all entail the large-scale loss of human life. Repeated conflict only exacerbates these tragedies. This study is inspired by a normative concern for victims of repeated warfare and instability. By studying both durable cease-fires and those that have proved failures, and by focusing on deliberate efforts to maintain peace, I hope to contribute to practical efforts to restore lasting peace to regions torn apart by war.