2

Who Fights Whom, When, Where, and Why?

Stuart A. Bremer

As I survey the history of the field of international relations (and its distant cousin, diplomatic history), it appears to me that its central concern has been to provide an answer to the question "Who fights whom, when, where, and why?" This is, of course, a paraphrase of Harold Lasswell's (1958) famous definition of politics as the study of "who gets what, when, how." International relations embraces the study of other questions as well, and in the last ten years or so the research agenda has broadened as the subfield of international political economy has matured. Still, I would maintain that, while not as dominant as it used to be, the question posed in the title of this chapter remains the single most important one in international politics. Clearly I do not share the optimism of those like Mueller (1989) who believe that war is like a bad habit that we're learning to break or Fukuyama (1992) who see the end of the Cold War as ushering in a "brave new world" in which wars will not occur. I would like to believe that either or both of these opinions are true, but my reading of history leads me to conclude that contemporary observers tend to overstate the import of changes they experience. We may have to wait several decades before we can judge the impact of the recent changes in the global political system.

Before attempting to answer this chapter's central question, I need to declare one important limitation to this enterprise: I will only be concerned with interstate fights. By this I mean the "who" and "whom" in the question refer to states as they are conventionally defined (Russett, Singer, and Small 1968). I recognize that interstate wars are not the only kind of war we need to worry about (the death toll from civil wars in the last two hundred years probably exceeds that of interstate wars in the same period, but these lie outside the scope of this chapter and my area of expertise). It may be possible that interstate wars are becoming a thing of the past and that future wars will be mostly internal, what Holsti (1996) calls "wars of the third kind." If so, then my focus on interstate wars may be mis-

placed. I do not share this judgment for several reasons. First, over the last two centuries interstate and intrastate wars have been about equally frequent but with notable fluctuation in their frequency from time period to time period and region to region (Small and Singer 1982). Hence, it is too early to determine whether a fundamental shift along the lines postulated by Holsti has taken place. Second, a discernible but ill-understood connection exists between interstate and intrastate wars. Intrastate wars can become internationalized, but they can also indirectly foster interstate wars by upsetting balances of power. And interstate wars in turn can promote intrastate wars directly by undermining existing governments or indirectly by resulting in the creation of new, weak states. While we are far from a good understanding of the connections between interstate and intrastate wars, I think the evidence will ultimately show that they are related to one another in important ways.[1]

With these preliminary matters dealt with, let me turn to the question at hand: "Who fights whom, when, where, and why?" To organize my remarks I will draw on an analogy. Suppose, for the sake of exposition, that the interstate system is like a small political community that lacks law enforcement—a town on the American western frontier in the previous century, perhaps. Fights break out between members (states) of the (interstate) community (named Interstate System) with some regularity but not all that frequently.[2] To understand the conditions that promote fighting in Interstate System, we need to answer the question "Who fights whom, when, where, and why?" Let us take the question apart and see the degree to which our empirical knowledge about militarized interstate conflict can shed light on fighting behavior in our lawless community.

WHO-WHOM?

The first thing we observe is that most members of the community very rarely, if ever, engage in fighting. In fact, most fights involve citizens drawn from the same 20 or so percent of the community. The second thing to be observed is that the pairing of opponents is decidedly nonrandom; that is, the "who" and the "whom" are not independent of one another. In other words, knowing the "who" tells one a lot about who the "whom" is likely to be. This characteristic argues that a dyadic focus is likely to be the most useful one to adopt.

After further observing Interstate System, we would come to the not surprising conclusion that most of those who fight are neighbors. Few would dispute that geographic proximity plays an important role in interstate fights, for the evidence is quite convincing (Bremer 1992; Vasquez 1993). It is not clear, however, whether this effect is due primarily to enhanced opportunities to fight (physical proximity of some sort being a requisite for fighting) or increased willingness to fight (proximity implies a degree of interdependence that almost inevitably leads to sharp conflicts of interest). More than likely some combination of the two effects operates, but untangling their individual contributions looks to be a very difficult task. Moreover, proximity appears to be neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for fighting since most neighbors in Interstate System never fight and a few nonneighbors do fight.

A second not surprising characteristic of those who fight one another is that they tend to have a history of fighting one another (Small and Singer 1982). Hence, a fight breaking out between states A and B appears to significantly increase the likelihood that they will fight again in the future, leading to what some call "enduring rivalries" (Goertz and Diehl 1992a, 1993). There are two explanations for this phenomenon. One asserts that fights take place over issues, which are rarely settled by a single fight, and so as long as the issues remain unresolved, fighting continues to periodically occur. In addition, fighting itself can give rise to new issues and lay the basis for future fighting. A second perspective focuses less on tangible issues and more on intangible psychological processes. In this view, the mere act of fighting produces feelings of grievance and hostility, even hatred, for the opponent that lead in turn to cognitive distortions such as stereotyping and enemy imaging (Boulding 1956; Jervis 1976). The outcome of this is that small differences of opinion are easily transformed into major reasons to fight and conflicts take on the nature of irrational feuds. The two perspectives are not inconsistent with one another, for they both may be operating in the propensity of fighting to beget fighting. In these times when the assumption that all state behavior is rational seems to be in ascendance there is a danger that we will underestimate the importance of social-psychological factors.

A third characteristic of those who fight is that in Interstate System the strong tend to fight the strong and the weak tend to fight the weak (Garnham 1976b; Bremer 1992; Geller 1993). While exceptions occur, it is somewhat unusual for fighters to be mismatched in terms of strength. The commonly accepted explanation for this is that the strong can prevail over the weak without fighting through intimidation, while evenly matched opponents may each believe that they can best their opponent in a fight and conclude that fighting is a viable option. This does not mean that strong-strong and weak-weak confrontations are equally likely, for some evidence suggests that the stronger two states are, the greater the likelihood of a fight between them (Bremer 1995a).

Ideological differences are present in Interstate System, and these appear to influence patterns of fighting behavior. The ideological spectrum runs from very democratic to very authoritarian, and it appears to have two effects. The first is that town members that are ideologically similar tend not to fight one another, and the likelihood of fighting seems to be at least partly determined by the degree of ideological dissimilarity between two potential opponents (Bremer 1995a; Mousseau 1998). The second is that the inhibition about fighting ideologically similar town members appears to be stronger among the more democratic than among the more authoritarian ones (Bremer 1992; Russett 1993; Ray 1995; Mousseau 1998). The first effect may be due to a more general tendency for those

with different value systems to have difficulty communicating and understanding one another and to look on each other with fear and suspicion. The second effect is commonly attributed to unique features of the democratic ideology that allow those that embrace it to resolve conflicts more readily without resorting to fighting.

The evidence in support of the previously discussed characteristics of fighters is reasonably strong, and I feel fairly confident about these generalizations. I suspect that some other factors are operative, but the evidence is weaker. Among those is the tendency for those who fight to be socially unconnected. This means that they tend to belong to different groups and to have few friends in common. Alliances or gangs tend to develop within Interstate System, and it appears that members of the same gang are less likely to fight one another than members of different gangs (Weede 1975; Bremer 1992). But the effect is not as strong as we would expect it to be, perhaps due to the fact that some gangs are a lot more cohesive than others. More research is clearly needed here before we have confidence in this generalization. In the meantime, it may be postulated that such an effect, if it is found to be operative, grows out of the tendency for gangs to form to promote common interests and group dynamics that inhibit intragroup conflict but promote intergroup conflict (Coser 1964).

Another characteristic of those who fight that I suspect is relevant is that at least one of the fighters is typically a community leader. These town members, who call themselves the "major powers" and have great influence over town matters, are involved in a disproportionate number of fights (Bremer 1980; Small and Singer 1982; Eberwein 1982). It is difficult to disentangle this effect from other confounding factors, however, because these community leaders tend to have other characteristics that place them in the fight-prone category (e.g., superior strength). If further research supports this generalization, this would not come as a surprise since in a lawless community, a leader achieves and maintains his or her position, in part, by fighting.

Virtually all members of Interstate System are armed to one degree or another. Some are very well armed, while most cannot or will not pay the price of being well armed. Controversy simmers in the community about whether armaments inhibit or promote fighting. Those who believe in deterrence feel strongly that weapons offer protection and reduce the likelihood of fighting,[3] while others believe that weapons in the community make fights more likely and certainly more deadly. I am uncertain about the overall impact of weapons on the community. I see a slight tendency for one or both fighters to be drawn from the ranks of the well armed rather than the poorly armed, but, again, because of confounding factors, it is difficult to see the independent effect of armaments. My personal opinion is that the maxim "If you seek peace, prepare for war" is off the mark. On the contrary, I believe that "If you prepare to war, chances are pretty good that you're going to get it."

I suspect that another set of citizens in Interstate System is disproportionately

involved in fights, for there appears to be a tendency for at least one of the fighters to be a "young rebel" (Maoz 1996). These community members are immature and come from violent backgrounds, but it does not appear that their young age is the critical factor since young states that do not have violent backgrounds do not appear to be disproportionately involved in fights. Hence, early socialization and exposure to violence seem to play a critical role in accounting for this tendency.

Like any community, residents of Interstate System belong to different economic classes. Some states are highly skilled and well-off, what we might call "white collar," but the majority are "blue collar" or even "shirtless" by virtue of the fact that they are less educated and skilled. As a consequence, these latter states are relatively poor. It is unclear to me precisely what the impact of economic class is on fighting behavior, for the evidence on this factor is less than conclusive. I suspect that there is a disproportionate tendency for at least one of the fighters to be blue-collar or shirtless states, but white-collar states also engage in fights, so the pattern is not all that clear. It does appear that fights between white-collar states occur less often than one would expect by chance (Bremer 1992). Still, potentially confounding factors make it difficult to sort out the unique effect of economic class on fighting behavior, so I remain uncertain about the importance of this factor.

Another characteristic that seems to distinguish pairs of states that fight is that at least one of the states involved behaves like a "bully" (Leng 1993). With this style of interaction, resistance on the part of an opponent is met by escalation and increased intimidation to make the other side back down. This differs from what has been called the "tit-for-tat" style of interaction in which actions by an opponent prompt responses that are comparable (i.e., nonescalatory). Although the evidence is far from complete, I believe that fights between those who have a tit-for-tat style of interaction are relatively rare. It is not clear, however, to what degree the choice of interaction style is situationally determined or an inherent characteristic of the "personality" of the state. That is, it may be that some states habitually employ a bully strategy, regardless of the situation, or it may be that all states sometimes adopt such a strategy, depending on the situation. Further research is clearly needed in this area.

Interstate System is very heterogeneous, culturally speaking, for its citizens possess quite different ethnic, linguistic, and religious characteristics. Evidence from social psychology suggests strongly that cultural differences such as these should lead to misunderstandings, stereotyping, clashes of values, and so forth, which in turn promote intercultural fights (Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim 1994). I suspect that those who fight one another tend to come from different cultures, but I have little systemic evidence that bears directly on this question.[4] The measurement of cultural differences and similarities is far from easy, and perhaps for that reason the impact of cultural factors on fighting behavior has had a low priority on the conflict research agenda. I think the importance of the cultural dimension

has been underestimated by conflict researchers, and more of our attention should be directed to cultural factors.

The economy of Interstate System is characterized by a division of labor, so its inhabitants are not economically self-sufficient (or, more accurately, they choose not be self-sufficient because of the economic gains they obtain from a division of labor). This means that they must engage in exchange to obtain the things they need or want. These exchanges create economic interdependencies that many believe inhibit fighting behavior between those involved. That is, states that trade a lot with one another should refrain from fighting one another because, to the degree that fighting interferes with exchange (Barbieri and Levy 1998), it will adversely affect their economic well-being. Recent evidence on this subject offers us a confusing picture. Some studies suggest that states that trade a lot with one another fight each other less frequently than one would expect (e.g., Oneal and Russett 1997b), while other studies present evidence that this is not so (e.g., Barbieri 1996a). Measurement problems abound in this area, particularly with respect to assessing trade in the more distant past. As with the cultural area, comparatively little research has been done on the effects of exchange on fighting behavior, and we may not have a clearer understanding of the effect of trade on conflict for some time. At a more general level, social psychologists tell us that "close" or "intimate" relationships have a dual nature; they can produce the strongest bonds of amity but can also lead to high degrees of enmity (Rubin et al. 1994). My own suspicion is that we will not understand which of these will prevail in a relationship until we discover those critical factors that play an intervening role.

Most fights in Interstate System are small affairs involving only two states. Occasionally, however, other states do join one or both sides of the fight, and a few of these grow into large brawls involving a large number of the town's residents. These brawls, although rare, are very dangerous situations, but the conditions that trigger them are not well understood. We do know a few things about who is likely to join an ongoing fight, however. Neighbors of fighting states have a significantly higher probability of joining the fight, as do states that are allied with fighters (Siverson and Starr 1991). Beyond these basic facts, very little is known about fight joining, and it remains an area where much work needs to be done if we want to prevent devastating brawls. Evidence suggests that the larger a fight becomes, the greater the likelihood that still more states will join (Yamamoto and Bremer 1980). This self-aggravating process may be similar to what is observed in hockey, a sport in which fighting is not uncommon. Officials observed that if fights between players remain one-on-one conflicts, they were generally brief distractions. But if a third player enters the fight, the odds that other players will join in go up significantly, and a brawl involving all the players becomes much more likely. For this reason, officials impose a heavy penalty on the "third person in." Perhaps the town of Interstate System would benefit from such a rule.

There is obviously a lot we don't know about the "who-whom" part of our central question, but we know even less about the next part of the question, "When?"

WHEN?

The frequency and intensity of fighting in Interstate System has varied significantly over time, but it is not clear why this so. Some wonder why the "big fight of 1914" didn't start in 1913 or 1915 or some other year, for example, but little research has been explicitly focused on this kind of question. Many studies have examined the question of whether fighting exhibits some kind of cyclical pattern (Singer and Cusack 1981; Bremer 1982; Levy and Morgan 1986), but these have not revealed strong or consistent temporal regularities. Still, a few things can be surmised to make those with a predisposition to fight more likely to fight at one time rather than another.

One factor that has received a lot of attention and that may provide us with a partial answer to "When?" is the distribution of power across the community as a whole. This has varied over time in Interstate System, and some find it useful to distinguish among unipolar periods, when one state is considerably more powerful than all the rest; bipolar periods, when two states are significantly more powerful than the rest; and multipolar periods, when a half a dozen or so states are roughly equal in power but noticeably more powerful than the rest. Great debates have raged over which of these periods should be the most peaceful—hegemonic stability theorists argue that unipolar periods should have that distinction (Gilpin 1981; Thompson 1988), structural realists tend to award that honor to bipolarity (Waltz 1979), and old-fashioned balance-of-power theorists credit multipolarity with being the most peaceful (Morganthau 1966; Gulick 1955). Empirical efforts to test these contentions have not been notably successful because of the difficulties of measuring polarity.

Studies that focus on the concentration of power among the major powers rather than polarity have revealed an interesting pattern.[5] Fighting occurs less often when power is highly concentrated in the hands of one major power or when power is more evenly distributed across all the major powers (Mansfield 1994; Bremer 1995a). Fighting tends to be more frequent, then, when the distribution of power is somewhere in between these high and low values of concentration. It may be that there are two ways by which some degree of order is brought to Interstate System. When power is highly concentrated, then the dominant state acts as a kind of police officer who prevents some (but not all) fights from taking place. But fighting appears also to be inhibited by checks and balances that are alleged to be operative when power is distributed more evenly across the powers. Under this interpretation, then, fights will be more frequent when both of these

ordering principles are weak; that is, when power concentration is in the medium range.

Although essentially lawless, Interstate System is not without a normative order, and the normative order has been observed to vary over time. Sometimes this order is permissive, allowing states to behave pretty much as they like, while at other times it is more restrictive. During the restrictive periods states are expected to behave in a more honest and honorable fashion, and it comes as no surprise that fights are more frequent when the normative order is permissive (Kegley and Raymond 1990). How strong these normative constraints are remains an open question.

One final item that may be relevant to the "when" part of our question is the general state of Interstate System's economy. We don't know too much about the effect of this factor, but some evidence suggests that fighting is more prevalent during periods of prosperity rather than periods of stagnation or depression (Goldstein 1988). The explanation for this is that during prosperous periods states are more optimistic and expansionistic, leading them, perhaps, to adopt more aggressive foreign policies that in turn lead to more fighting (Blainey 1988). But the overall effect of this factor does not appear to be all that strong with respect to individual states (Boehmer 1998).

Answering the "When?" question with some degree of precision may ultimately prove to be the second most difficult of those examined here—"Why?" being the most difficult to answer scientifically. My own hunch is that predicting the precise day when fighting is likely to begin is forever beyond our powers of prognostication because of the influence of chance factors that I discuss later. For the same reason, I am dubious about our ability to predict the month or quarter-year in which fighting will begin, which leaves us with the year of onset as perhaps the most precise answer we can expect to achieve to the "When?" question. Even this level of precision will be difficult to achieve, I think, owing to the causal complexity of the genesis of fighting behavior. Before addressing this latter issue directly, let me briefly consider the "Where?" question.

WHERE?

With few exceptions (Houweling and Siccama 1988b), the spatial distribution of interstate fighting has not been a major focus of research. Indeed, until quite recently geographic factors played little direct role in analyses of fighting behavior.[6] This is unfortunate, I think, because geography certainly facilitates and constrains fighting behavior and probably does so in interaction with other factors like those discussed earlier. Hence, geography per se may not have a direct, independent effect on fighting, and its impact may be mostly reflected in its role in answering the "who-whom" question.

Nevertheless, the evidence for spatial contagion in fighting behavior is reasonably strong, and it appears that a fight in a particular region increases the likelihood that another fight will occur in that region (Bremer 1982; Faber, Houweling, and Siccama 1984). We do not know whether this is due to some direct spillover effect from one fight to the next or whether states in a region share a common political climate that encourages or discourages fighting behavior. One hypothesis that I have played with is that fights are like earthquakes that may or may not lead to a more stable configuration of potentially destructive forces. If the quake (fight) relieves pressure and does not destabilize other delicate balances in the region, then future quakes (fights) are less likely in the region. If, on the other hand, a quake (fight) does not relieve the underlying pressure that caused it and/or upsets other balances of force in the region, then quakes (fights) in that region will be more likely in the future. In the latter situation, we would expect to see regional epidemics of interstate violence not unlike those we have observed in the past (Hensel and Diehl 1994b).

WHY?

We come now to the big question: Why do states fight one another? This is by far the toughest and most important part of the central question being addressed. It very well may be that it is not possible to give a scientific answer to this question because of the impossibility of proving causality. Current philosophers of science are nearly unanimous in their view that causality is inherently a subjective framework that we impose on observations rather than an objective phenomenon that we can observe. From this, I conclude that the best we can hope for are plausible rather than "true" answers to the "why" question. I don't think we have any such answers yet that are fully satisfactory, but it may be useful to consider three types of answers—choice, destiny, and chance—that have been put forth.

Choice

The answer given to the "why" question in almost all journalistic (and many historical) accounts of interstate fighting is that two leaders (or groups of leaders) within two states decided that they would be better off fighting than not fighting. That is, through a process of "reasoned choice," decision makers concluded that it is in their best interests to fight. Often this type of answer looks a lot like armed robbery: state B has something that state A wants, state A demands that state B turn over the desired objects or else, state B refuses to do so, and a fight begins. There is something seductively simple about this type of answer to the "why" question. In a perverse way, it "humanizes" fighting since it makes decision makers the core of the answer and leads us to believe that, for good or evil, we are masters of our fate. It also facilitates dividing the world into good guys and bad guys, smart and stupid decision makers, risk-acceptant and risk-adverse actors,

and so forth, and using such divisions to generate simple answers to complex questions. And, of course, rationality may be nothing more than a tautology; that is, by assuming that decision makers are rational, we inevitably are led to the conclusion that a fight occurs because decision makers believed that fighting was the best alternative available to them.

I think we need to resist the siren song of "choice" and be careful not to assign too much importance to it with reference to interstate fighting for several reasons. First, if such an answer rests on the accounts of the participants in a fight, then it is very likely that the answer will be biased by "reconstructed rationality." The need to justify actions ex post facto leads decision makers to rationalize their actions in terms of a clear cost/benefit calculation that may have been at the time, in fact, quite unclear and even (if we are to believe the views of psychologists who study how humans actually make decisions) secondary (White 1970). It may even be true that the least reliable source of an answer to the "why" question may be the decision makers involved because of the inherently biased nature of their recollections.

Second, if such an answer rests on the accounts of observers to a fight—be they journalists or historians—the same kind of bias is often present. The news media in particular seem to need to personify war, as is evidenced by their general treatment of the Gulf War. In that case, the Western media by and large followed the line that the war was due to the reckless/aggressive decisions of Saddam Hussein, and little attention was given to larger forces operating in the region.[7] The blame for this bias does not lie with the news media alone but rather with the public as well. They (or should I say "we"?) respond to the drama of "mano a mano" far more than they ("we"?) respond to the dry discussion of political and economic forces.

My third reason to doubt that choice can be the sole basis for a plausible answer to the "why" question is that while participants and observers may be aware of the immediate cause—what Aristotle called the "efficient" cause—of fighting, they may know little or nothing of the fundamental or "final" cause. I have long felt that one of the most interesting findings that emerged from the Stanford studies of World War I was that the decision makers involved saw themselves as being pushed by historical forces that left them no alternatives to war.[8] This leads directly to the second kind of answer to the "why" question: destiny.

Destiny

In contrast to the free will coloration of choice-based answers, answers that invoke destiny as a causal agent see deterministic forces at work, and these forces are large scale and slow moving rather than small scale and rapidly changing. Tolstoy invoked this kind of answer when he portrayed Napoleon as a small boy riding in a carriage with strings in his hands, believing that he thereby controlled the fate of Europe when, if fact, the reins of the horses pulling the carriage were

in the hands of the unseen driver on top of the coach. Many of the explanations for fighting are of this type—power transition, imbalance of power, lateral pressure, hegemonic stability, polarity, imperialism, and so forth—in which pressures beyond the control of any decision maker impel them toward fighting.

Returning to my analogy that the interstate system is like a small, lawless town, I would point out that we know that poverty breeds crime. Not all poor people are criminals, of course, but economic conditions do have an observable effect on crime rates. A choice-based explanation for crime would maintain that criminals conduct a cost/benefit analysis and conclude that their expected gain from robbing the corner store is higher than the alternatives. Consequently, they undertake the robbery. But it is clear that the poor do not have the same options as the more wealthy, and therefore their range of choice is severely restricted by conditions over which they have little control. Their choices are much more limited and heavily conditioned by big forces that sweep through the community that render them expendable, unusable, and unnecessary to the functioning of the community. The result is that crime becomes a more attractive option because other options have been removed from the table by outside forces. I think we can see something like this also operating in the interstate system. For example, it has been argued that Japan was essentially "boxed in" by the United States prior to World War II, and, as a result, Japan had little choice but to attack the United States to escape its confinement. And there is evidence that the Kaiser held a similar view toward England prior to World War I. In short, I think before we enthusiastically embrace choice-based explanations for fighting, we should take into consideration how bigger forces impel and constrain decision makers and define their menu of choices.

Chance

Chance has two meanings. One refers to what might be called "pure randomness"—that is, events without causes. Most international relations scholars find it difficult to accept the notion that events can happen without causation because causal reasoning is the bedrock of explanation for them. But chaos theory suggests that randomness plays a role even in apparently very deterministic systems like sets of differential equations. It is not clear in my mind whether chaos theory directly challenges the notion of causation or whether it only sets limits on our ability to predict events due to the large impact that small disturbances can have. My sense is that the philosophical implications of chaos theory are still being sorted out. It may be that the interstate system is very chaotic, which would mean that our ability to predict behavior accurately is highly and inherently constrained.

The second meaning of *chance* is one with which I think most international relations scholars would be more comfortable—that is, "happenstance" or "coincidence." This occurs when two or more events or forces that are not causally

related to one another accidentally align to produce an effect much larger than either could produce separately. My own theory of fighting is based on what I have called elsewhere the "concatenation of weak forces" (Bremer 1995b). By this I mean that fighting does not stem from any single, strong cause but rather from a combination of factors that by themselves are fairly harmless. But when mixed together in accordance with a specific recipe, they lead to interstate violence. The situation is actually more complicated than this because I think we need to recognize that several different recipes for fighting may be possible, involving different combinations of factors. As a consequence, I think it is vitally important that we conceive of fighting not as an event but rather a process, a process in which happenstance and coincidence may play a significant role.

To see how the latter may affect events, consider the outbreak of World War I. Most analysts would agree that the immediate cause of that war was the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, and an examination of the events of that fateful day reveals many coincidences. On that day, several assassins sought opportunities to kill the archduke without success. The archduke, who had been greeted at the town hall, decided at the last minute to visit a military hospital on his way to a museum, which in turn required a change in the planned route of his motorcade. What happened next demonstrates how chance can affect events.

> The column of cars started to drive back along the Appel Quay, Grabež by the Kaiser bridge saw it coming but did nothing. For the seventh time within an hour the Archduke drove safely past a would-be assassin, and there were none left on the quay ahead. But fate then again took a hand and dealt Princip the ace of trumps. A hundred yards beyond the Kaiser bridge, for some reason which has never been explained, Gerde's car, instead of proceeding straight on, turned right into the Franz Joseph Strasse, and Loyka, Harrach's chauffeur, having been given no instructions to the contrary, followed it.
>
> Potioreck [who was riding with the Archduke] realised what had happened, turned round and told the chauffeur to get back on the Appel Quay. To do this Loyka had to pull up and change gear into reverse. He braked, and for a few seconds the car came to halt by the curb of the right-hand pavement in front of Schiller's delicatessen shop outside which Princip, unable to think of anything else to do, was still waiting in the hope of getting another chance of assassinating the Archduke. The car stopped within five feet of him. He raised his revolver, saw that Sophie was seated on the near side of it, and for a split second hesitated. But "a strange feeling" came over him and "greatly agitated," he fired two shots in quick succession. Since he fired without taking aim, "I had turned my head away," the odds against either of them doing any serious damage were long, but the first went through the right-hand door of the car and hit Sophie, and the second hit Franz Ferdinand in the neck. (Cassels 1984)

Reading this account certainly leaves one with the impression that coincidence—or, in this case, a simple mistake—gave Princip the opportunity to assassinate the archduke that he had been seeking all day without success. It has been argued that the assassination was only a trigger for the events that followed and that war was inevitable between Austria-Hungary and Serbia due to their sharply conflicting interests. If the assassination had not occurred, it is asserted that some other event would have precipitated the war, perhaps later but inevitably. But who can say whether a different triggering event, a day, a month, or a year later, would have led to the same chain of events that produced World War I?

Indeed, World War I is a wonderful example of how destiny, choice, and chance combine to produce war. The winds of nationalism were blowing through Europe, and they were shaking the foundations of the tottering house of Hapsburg. In retrospect it seems unlikely that the multinational empire that was Austria-Hungary could have survived under any circumstances, and it also seems improbable that the Austro-Hungarian leaders would have allowed their empire to disintegrate without a fight. This is an example of the big forces that destiny-based explanations for war invoke. But the element of choice was also present because the leaders of Austria-Hungary decided to resist those forces by sending the heir to their throne into a dangerous situation. Perhaps an equivalent action would be Britain sending Prince Charles to Belfast during the height of the violence in Northern Ireland to make a political statement. This would not be a prudent thing to do, but the Austrians chose this risky option nevertheless. And, as the quotation given earlier demonstrates, the immediate cause of the war was certainly influenced by chance. Our greatest challenge in answering the "why" question may be sorting out how choice, destiny, and chance interact to produce fights.

CONCLUSION

Having come to the end of my attempt to answer the question "Who fights whom, when, where, and why?" I must admit that this has not been a very successful endeavor. There is too much that we don't know yet, and some aspects of the recipe(s) for fighting may defy understanding and rigorous analysis. But the goal of our enterprise should not be "truth," for I believe that is unobtainable. Rather, we should seek the more modest objective of "uncertainty reduction," for if we can achieve that, we may find the recipe for "probable peace" in our little, lawless town of Interstate System.

NOTES

1. Enterline (1998) examined the relationship between domestic political instability and militarized conflict and found some evidence to indicate that the two are positively connected.

2. Throughout this chapter, I use *fighting* rather than *making war* to describe the behavior I seek to explain because this term embraces a wider range of uses of force that do not meet the Correlates of War definition of war.

3. This is the position taken by the local chapter of the National Rifle Association in Interstate System.

4. A cursory examination of wars between and among Huntington's (1996) civilizations conducted as a classroom exercise revealed that wars were not more frequent than expected between different civilizations once the effects of contiguity were removed.

5. The difference between polarity and power concentration is not always clear. To me, measuring polarity inevitably requires taking alliance structures into account, while measuring power concentration does not.

6. This neglect of geography is probably due to the frequent use of the systemic level of analysis where spatial factors play no role. These factors became truly relevant only after there was a shift from the systemic to dyadic level of analysis. On the importance of geography, see Starr (1991).

7. The same would appear to be true for the more recent fighting in Kosovo. In that situation Milosević is given full credit for the fighting, and other factors have been largely ignored.

8. It is interesting to note how the focus of the Stanford project shifted from the perceptions and choices of decision makers (e.g., Holsti, North, and Brody 1968) to the operation of large forces, or what I am calling "destiny" (e.g., Choucri and North 1975).

3

Escalation and War in the Twentieth Century

Findings from the International Crisis Behavior Project

Michael Brecher, Patrick James, and Jonathan Wilkenfeld

I think it's kind of intriguing that everybody who was asked to contribute to [this volume] loves their variable; nobody was willing to stand up and say, "I give up my variable."

—Dina A. Zinnes, Norman Thomas Lecture Series, Vanderbilt University, 16 March 1997

One of the great challenges for the scientific study of international conflict, crisis, and war is to decide among the many options for further testing. In particular, what variables deserve pride of place in the increasingly sophisticated, multivariate research designs that are becoming standard in the field? Nowhere is the choice more difficult than with respect to the escalation of crisis to war. The problem really is one of knowing too much and, therefore, too little. Many years of data analysis on the correlates and potential causes of war have produced a wealth of variables that, under the right circumstances, seem to play a role. Thus, the amusing commentary from Zinnes highlights a fundamental question: What are the areas of consensus and disagreement about the variables associated with crisis escalation to war?

This chapter reviews and assesses research on the escalation of international crisis in an attempt to answer the preceding question. The effort unfolds in four stages. The first is an overview of the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) Project, which is the only sustained enterprise on the subject of crisis escalation to war. Second, the ICB Project's findings on crisis escalation to war are reviewed and synthesized at four levels: (1) global or regional, (2) dyadic (i.e., pairs of crisis actors), (3) monadic (i.e., individual crisis actors), and (4) interactive. The third stage compares results from ICB research with those obtained by scholars using