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TURBULENT TRANSITIONS
WHY EMERGING DEMOCRACIES GO TO WAR

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THE DANGERS OF TRANSITION

The idea that democracies never fight wars against each other has become an axiom for many scholars. It is, as one scholar puts it, "as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations."[1] President Bill Clinton invoked this law to explain why promoting democracy abroad was a pillar of his foreign policy. A premise of President George W. Bush's strategic doctrine is that U.S. security may even require preventive wars to unseat dangerous despots so as to build the "infrastructure of democracy" abroad and create a "balance of power that favors freedom."[2] Declaring that U.S. security from terrorism depends on the success of democracy in Iraq and its neighbors, Bush argued that "sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe—because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty."[3]

It is probably true that a world in which more countries were mature, stable democracies would be safer and preferable for the United States. But countries do not become mature democracies overnight. They usually go through a rocky transition, where mass politics mixes with authoritarian elite politics in a volatile way. Statistical evidence covering the past two centuries shows that in this transitional phase of democratization, countries become more aggressive and war prone, not less, and they do fight wars with democratic states. This danger is greatest when states embark on a transition prematurely, when they lack the strong political institutions that are needed to make democracy work. Under these conditions, fearful old elites and ambitious new politicians have the motive and the opportunity to use nationalist appeals to rally support from newly empowered masses.

The 1990s bore out this historical pattern of democratization, nationalism, and war. In the decade following the collapse of the Berlin

Wall, armed violence was intense in a number of regions that had just begun to experiment with electoral democracy and increased pluralism of public debate, including such hotbeds of ethnic warfare as the former Yugoslavia, the post-Soviet Caucasus, and Burundi in Central Africa.[4] At the close of the millennium, this trend showed no signs of abating. Ethiopia and Eritrea, both adopting electoral forms of government in the 1990s, fought a bloody border war in 1999–2000.[5] The nuclear-armed, elected regimes of India and Pakistan fought a war in 1999 in the mountainous borderlands of Kashmir. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin ascended to the presidency of Russia's shaky new democracy by riding the popularity of his war in 1999–2000 against the unruly autonomous region of Chechnya.[6] After the fall of the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia, elections and referenda led quickly to violence and international intervention in the province of East Timor, a former Portuguese colony seeking national independence in 1999, and to ethnic mayhem elsewhere in Indonesia.

The following evidence, which has been updated from an article we published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1995, should raise questions about the U.S. policy of promoting peace by promoting democratization.[7] The expectation that the spread of democracy will probably contribute to peace in the long run, once new democracies mature, provides little comfort to those who may face a heightened risk of war in the short run. Pushing unsettled Islamic societies and a nuclear-armed great power like China to democratize is like spinning a roulette wheel: many of the possible outcomes are undesirable. The roulette wheel is already spinning for Iraq and Iran and perhaps will be soon for other geopolitically significant states. Washington and the international community should be realistic about the dangers of fomenting democratization where conditions are unripe. The building of institutions that are needed to make democracy work should precede the unleashing of mass electoral politics, or else the risk of violence will increase.

These arguments apply to both external wars and civil wars. In states lacking the institutional infrastructure needed to manage democratization, this process increases the risk of nationalist politics that often stimulates conflict abroad. For many of the same reasons, in ethnically divided countries, nationalist politics occurring during the early stages of a democratic transition can lead to domestic violence. Most of the evidence presented in this chapter centers on external wars during the past two centuries. Nonetheless, we also draw on some cases of ethnic nationalist violence that include civil wars to illustrate our argument, since democratizing regimes are also disproportionately prone to internal conflict, and the underlying causal processes through which democratization encourages external and civil wars have much in common.[8]

THE EVIDENCE

In earlier research, we conducted some preliminary statistical tests of the relationship between democratization and war.[9] Since then, the data and measures of regime type on which we relied have been updated and extended.[10] Here, we use these more recent data and measures to reevaluate the argument that democratic transitions promote war.

Our statistical analysis relies on the classifications of regimes and wars used by most scholars studying the democratic peace. Starting with these standard data, we classify each state as a democracy, an autocracy, or an "anocracy"—that is, a mixed regime with both democratic and autocratic features. Initially, this classification is based on a composite index developed by Keith Jaggers and Ted Robert Gurr that emphasizes the constitutional constraints on the chief executive, the competitiveness of domestic politics, the openness of the process for selecting the chief executive, and the strength of the rules governing participation

in politics.[11] However, we also classify each state's regime type based on three of the components that make up this index: the openness of the process for selecting the head of state, the extent of the constraints on the chief executive, and the competitiveness of political participation.[12] In the following tests, we analyze separately Jaggers and Gurr's composite index and each of the three component factors just mentioned.

In these tests, we distinguish between two phases in the process of democratization: the transition from autocracy to a partially democratic regime—which we refer to as incomplete democratization—and the shift to a fully institutionalized democracy—which we refer to as complete democratization. Our argument is that hostilities are more likely to break out when states have made only an incomplete democratic transition. When military, communist, colonial, dynastic, or other authoritarian regimes break down and mass politics begins, democratic procedures are likely to be intermittent, subject to manipulation by both rising and declining elites, and animated by nationalist or other populist ideologies that give rise to international frictions.

Because we view democratization as a gradual process rather than a sudden change, we test whether a transition over a five-year period is associated with the outbreak of an external war in the year following that period. We code each state as democratic, autocratic, or anocratic at the beginning and then again at the end of each five-year period. An incomplete democratic transition occurs if a state changes from an autocracy to a mixed regime during this period. A complete democratic transition occurs if a state shifts from either an autocracy or a mixed regime to a democracy. War is measured in the year immediately after each five-year period. We analyze the outbreak of all external wars, those between nation-states as well as imperial and colonial wars launched by a state against a nonstate actor.[13]

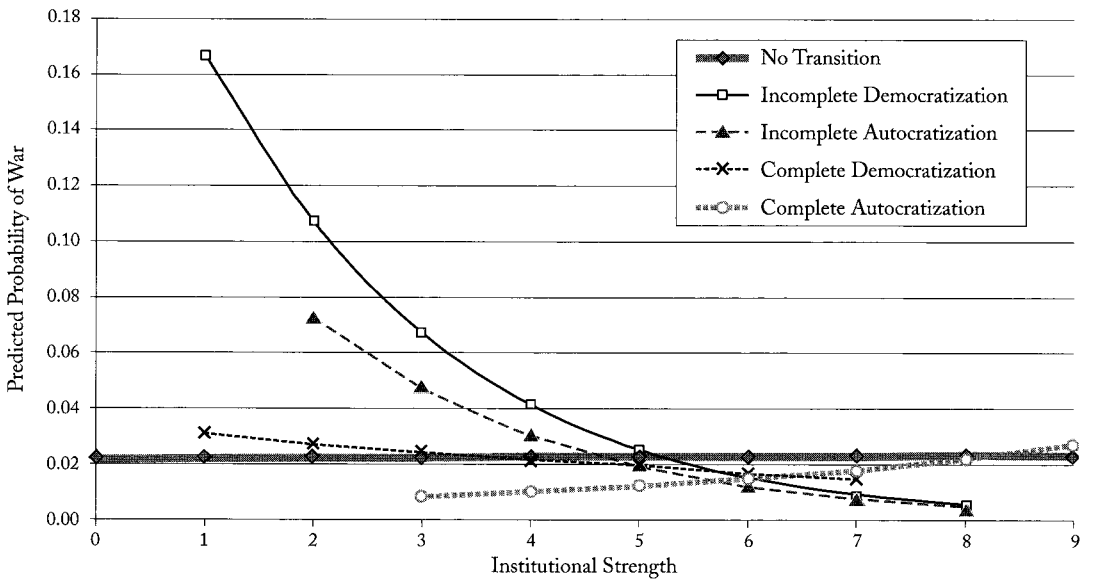
Our argument is that the effects of democratization on war will be stronger and more pronounced in countries having less institutional strength and centralization. Incomplete democratization occurring in the face of weak governmental institutions undermines the state's ability to manage elite interests and newly politicized mass groups. Political institutions are unable to resolve or suppress the conflicts of interest stemming from growing demands for political participation, thereby creating various dynamics that encourage belligerence abroad. Unless the state has the rare luck to inherit fairly strong political institutions at the outset of the transition from autocracy, turbulence is hard to avoid during this first step on the road to democracy.

To measure the extent of institutional strength and centralization, we rely on an eleven-point index—ranging from 0 to 10—created by Gurr and his colleagues.[14] The index takes on higher values where a regime has more clearly established rules regulating political competition and where it enjoys a more centralized grip on the reins of domestic power. Under these conditions, the regime should be better able to manage the rivalry of elite factions and minimize the adverse consequences of interest-group logrolling.

Since our argument is that incomplete democratic transitions are more likely to stimulate the outbreak of war in countries marked by weak and fragmented institutions, we analyze this index of institutional strength as well as its interaction with our measure of incomplete democratization. We also analyze the interaction between this index and our measure of complete democratization to determine whether the effects of all aspects of democratization depend on the strength of domestic institutions.

While our focus is on democratization, it is also important to assess the effects of autocratization on war. It is only through such an analysis that we can determine whether the effects of democratization stem from a more

Figure 1. Predicted Probability of War by Transition Type, Based on the Composite Index



general tendency for regime change of any type to promote conflict. We therefore create two variables, one indicating whether a country underwent a complete autocratic transition (i.e., a transition from either democracy or anocracy to autocracy), and a second indicating whether it underwent an incomplete autocratic transition (i.e., from democracy to anocracy) during each five-year period. Finally, we analyze the interaction between each type of autocratization and our measure of institutional strength and centralization to assess whether the influence of autocratization on war depends on the strength and coherence of domestic institutions.

Our tests span the period from 1816 to 1992, the years that the data sets used to measure regime type and war have in common. We use logistic regression to estimate the effects of democratization and autocratization on war.[15] The results of these tests (which are not presented here to conserve space) strongly support our argument that incomplete democratization is a potent impetus to war when domestic institutions are weak.[16]

Furthermore, our results refute the view that transitional democracies are simply inviting targets of attack due to their temporary weakness: in fact, they tend to be the initiators of war. We also exclude the possibility that the effect of democratization on war actually reflects the influence of war on democratization: our findings indicate that war has very little bearing on either the occurrence of democratic transitions or whether those transitions that do occur yield coherent democratic institutions.

To illustrate the substantive effects of incomplete democratization on the outbreak of war, figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the predicted probability of a given state becoming involved in a war, based on the composite index and the three component measures of regime type. Using the results of the logistic regressions, we calculate the probability of war for each type of regime change analyzed here. For each type, the predicted probability of war is derived

Figure 2. Predicted Probability of War by Transition Type, Based on the Competitiveness of Political Participation

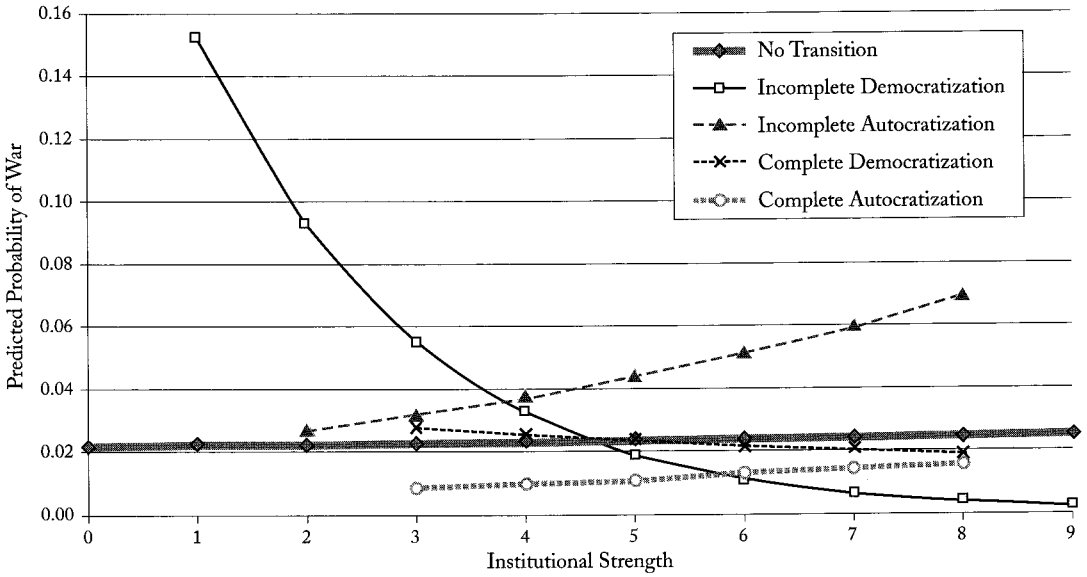


Figure 3. Predicted Probability of War by Transition Type, Based on the Openness of Executive Recruitment

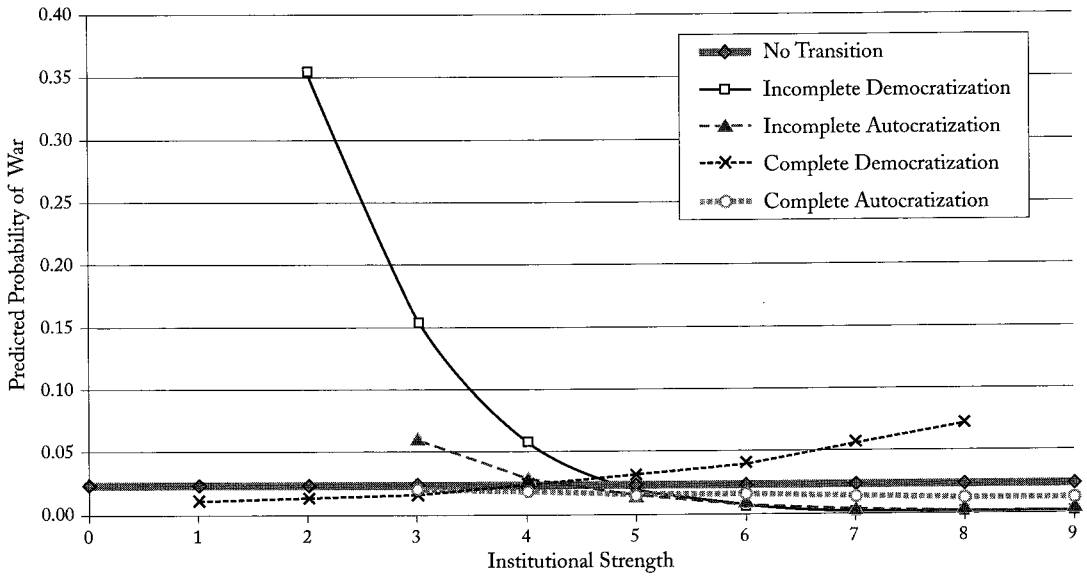
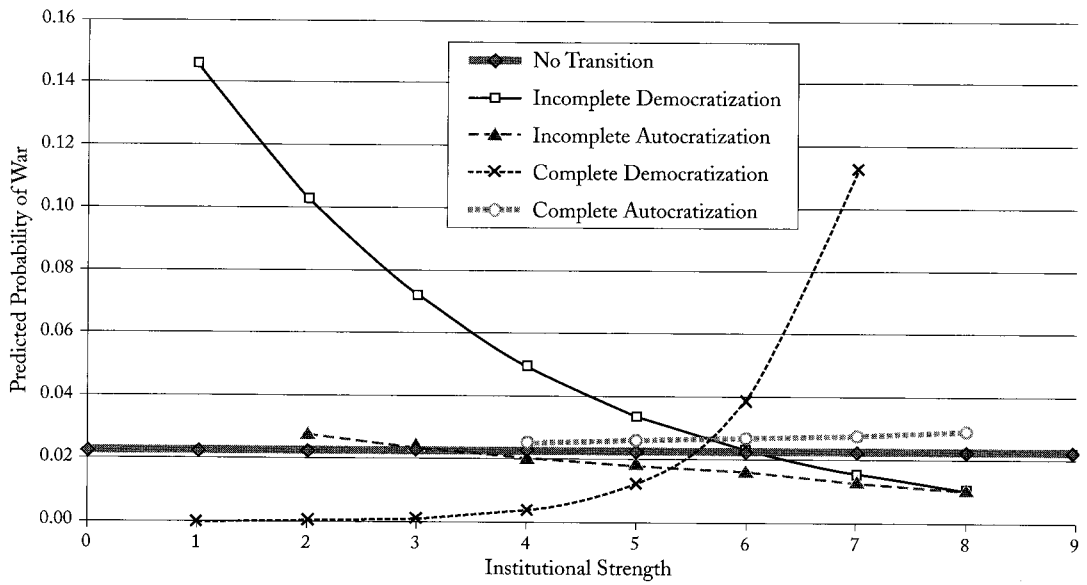


Figure 4. Predicted Probability of War by Transition Type, Based on the Constraints on the Chief Executive



only for the range of values of our measure of institutional strength that actually appears in the data.[17]

These figures show that, regardless of which measure of regime type we analyze, incomplete democratization coupled with weak institutions (i.e., a low score on our measure of institutional strength) is more likely to stimulate war than any other conditions that we consider. Furthermore, these results do not reflect a more general tendency for either all types of democratization (both complete and incomplete) or all types of regime change (both democratization and autocratization) to precipitate hostilities. Although there is some scattered evidence that other kinds of regime change also promote antagonism, the effect of each of these changes is weaker, smaller, and less consistent across our four measures of regime type than is the effect of incomplete democratization. Thus, these findings offer substantial support for our argument.

NATIONALISM AND DEMOCRATIZATION

The connection between democratization and nationalism is striking in both the historical record and today's headlines. Data limitation precluded the direct measurement of nationalism in our statistical tests. Nonetheless, historical and contemporary evidence strongly suggests that rising nationalism often goes hand in hand with the early phases of a transition toward democracy. It is no accident that the end of the Cold War brought both a wave of democratization and a revival of nationalist sentiment in the former communist states.

In eighteenth-century Britain and France, when nationalism first emerged as an explicit political doctrine, it meant self-rule by the people. It was the rallying cry of commoners and rising commercial classes against rule by aristocratic elites, who were charged with the sin of governing in their own interests, rather than those of the nation. Indeed, dynastic rulers and

imperial courts had hardly been interested in promoting nationalism as a banner of solidarity in their realms. They typically ruled over a linguistically and culturally diverse conglomeration of subjects and claimed to govern by divine right, not in the interest of the nation. Often, these rulers were more closely tied by kinship, language, or culture to elites in other states than to their own subjects. The position of the communist ruling class was strikingly similar: a transnational elite that ruled over an amalgamation of peoples and claimed legitimacy from the communist party's role as the vanguard of history, not from the consent of the governed. Popular forces challenging either traditional dynastic rulers or communist elites naturally tended to combine demands for national self-determination and democratic rule.

This concoction of nationalism and incipient democratization has been a volatile brew, leading in case after case to ill-conceived wars of expansion. The earliest instance remains one of the most dramatic. In the French Revolution, the radical Brissotin parliamentary faction polarized politics by harping on the king's slow response to the threat of war with other dynastic states. In the ensuing wars of the French Revolution, citizens flocked to join the revolutionary armies to defend popular self-rule and the French nation. Even after the revolution turned profoundly antidemocratic, Napoleon was able to harness this popular nationalism to the task of conquering Europe, substituting the popularity of empire for the substance of democratic rule.

After this experience, Europe's ruling elites decided to band together in 1815 in the Concert of Europe to contain the twin evils of nationalism and democratization. In this scheme, Europe's crowned heads tried to unite in squelching demands for constitutions, electoral and social democracy, and national self-determination. For a time nationalism and democratization were both held back, and Europe enjoyed a period of relative peace.

But in the long run, the strategy failed in the face of the economic changes strengthening popular forces in Western and Central Europe. British and French politicians soon saw that they would have to rule by co-opting nationalist and democratic demands, rather than suppressing them. Once the specter of revolution returned to Europe in 1848, this reversal of political tactics was complete, and it led quickly to the Crimean War. British foreign secretary Palmerston and French emperor Napoleon III both tried to manage the clamor for a broader political arena by giving democrats what they wanted in foreign affairs—a "liberal" war to free imprisoned nations from autocratic rule and, incidentally, to expand commerce.

But this was just the dress rehearsal for history's most potent combination of mass politics and rising nationalism, which occurred in Germany around the turn of the twentieth century. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, counting on the conservative votes of a docile peasantry, granted universal suffrage in the newly unified Reich after 1870; but in foreign and military affairs, he kept the elected Reichstag subordinate to the cabinet appointed by the kaiser. Like the sorcerer's apprentice, however, Bismarck underestimated the forces he was unleashing. With the rise of an industrial society, Bismarck's successors could not control this truncated democracy, where over 90 percent of the population voted. Every group was highly politicized, yet none could achieve their aims through the limited powers of the Reichstag. As a result, people organized direct pressure groups outside electoral party politics. Some of these clamored for economic benefits, but many of them found it tactically useful to cloak their narrow interests in a broader vision of the nation's interests. This mass nationalist sentiment exerted constant pressure on German diplomacy in the Wilhelmine years before 1914 and pushed its vacillating elites toward war.

Democratization and nationalism also became linked in Japan on the eve of the

Manchurian invasion in 1931. During the 1920s Japan expanded its suffrage and experimented with two-party electoral competition, though a council of military elder statesmen still made the ultimate decisions about who would govern. These semielected governments of the 1920s supported free trade, favored naval arms control, and usually tried to rein in the Japanese army's schemes to undermine the Open Door policy in China. During the 1920s, young radicals in the army developed a populist, nationalist doctrine featuring a centrally planned economy within an autarkic, industrialized, expanded empire, while scapegoating Japan's alleged internal and external enemies, including leftist workers, rich capitalists, liberals, democrats, Americans, and Russians. After the economic crash of the late 1920s, this nationalist formula became persuasive, and the Japanese military had little trouble gaining popular support for imperial expansion and the emasculation of democracy. As in so many previous cases, nationalism proved to be a way for militarist elite groups to appear populist in a democratizing society while obstructing the advance to full democracy.

The interconnection among nationalism, incipient democratization, and war was likewise present among some of the postcommunist states in the 1990s. Shortly after the breakup of the Soviet Union, one-quarter of Russia's voters, disgruntled by economic distress, backed the tough-talking nationalist party of the anti-Semite Vladimir Zhirinovsky in the 1993 parliamentary elections. Before long, more mainstream politicians learned to co-opt popular nationalist issues. Following a series of mysterious terrorist bombings in Moscow, which were attributed to "Chechens," and Chechen bandit raids into Russian territory in the summer of 1999, President Boris Yeltsin's new prime minister, Vladimir Putin, used a highly popular military intervention in Chechnya to position himself as Yeltsin's successor.

The early stages of democratization were also implicated in the violent breakup of communist Yugoslavia. Especially in Serbia, the political and military elites of the old regime, facing pressure for democratization, cynically but successfully created a new basis for popular legitimacy through nationalist propaganda in the mass media they controlled. In the climate of opinion that this manipulation fostered, Serbian elections in the late 1980s and 1990s became contests among different varieties of nationalists, each trying to outbid the others to claim the mantle of the true defenders of Serbdom against its ethnic foes.

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Although the early stage of democratization increases the likelihood of war in countries with weak political institutions, the average voter in such states does not necessarily want war. Public opinion in democratizing states often starts off highly averse to the costs and risks of war. In that sense, the public opinion polls taken in Russia in early 1994 were typical. Respondents said, for example, that Russian policy should make sure the rights of Russians in neighboring states were protected, but not at the cost of military intervention. Notwithstanding the ambivalence of the Russian public's view of the Chechen problem during the 1990s, by 1999 the Russians had been primed by inflammatory media coverage and the Putin government's military faits accomplis to adopt a more belligerent stance toward the perennially troublesome Chechens.

Numerous historical and recent cases point to the effectiveness of calculated elite efforts to whip up belligerent nationalism among an initially pacific population during the earliest stages of a democratic transition. For example, Napoleon III successfully exploited the domestic prestige from France's share of the victory in the Crimean War to consolidate his rule, despite the popular reluctance and war weariness that had accompanied the war. Having learned this lesson well, Napoleon tried this tactic again in 1859. On the eve of his military

intervention in the Italian struggle with Austria, he admitted to his ministers that "on the domestic front, the war will at first awaken great fears; traders and speculators of every stripe will shriek, but national sentiment will [banish] this domestic fright; the nation will be put to the test once more in a struggle that will stir many a heart, recall the memory of heroic times, and bring together under the mantle of glory the parties that are steadily drifting away from one another day after day."[18] Napoleon was trying not just to follow opinion but to make opinion bellicose, in order to stir a national feeling that would enhance the state's ability to govern a split and stalemated political arena.

Much the same has happened in contemporary Serbia. Despite the memories of fascist Ustashi Croatian atrocities in World War II, intermarriage rates between Croats and Serbs living in Croatia were as high as one in three during the 1980s. Opinion was turned warlike by propaganda campaigns in state-controlled media that, for example, carried purely invented reports of rapes of Serbian women in Kosovo, and even more so by the fait accompli of launching the war itself. V. P. Gagnon argues, moreover, that nationalist propaganda served not so much to whip up ethnic hatred as to discredit liberal democratic critiques of the nationalist Croatian and Serbian regimes.[19]

In short, democratizing states are war prone, not because war is popular with the mass public, but because domestic pressures create incentives for elites to drum up nationalist sentiment.

THE CAUSES OF WARS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Democratization often goes hand in hand with a syndrome of weak central authority, unstable domestic coalitions, and high-energy mass politics. It brings new social groups and classes onto the political stage. Political leaders, finding no way to reconcile incompatible interests, resort to shortsighted bargains or reckless gambles in order to maintain their governing coalitions. Elites need to gain mass allies to defend their weakened positions. Both the newly ambitious elites and the embattled old ruling groups often use appeals to nationalism to stay astride their unmanageable political coalitions.

Needing public support, they rouse the masses with nationalist propaganda but find that their mass allies, once mobilized by passionate appeals, are difficult to control. So are the powerful remnants of the old order—the military, for example—which promote militarism because it strengthens them institutionally. This is particularly true because the early stages of democratization may weaken the central government's ability to keep policy coherent and consistent. Governing a society that is democratizing is like driving a car while throwing away the steering wheel, stepping on the gas, and fighting over which passenger will be in the driver's seat. The result, when political institutions are weak, is often war.

Political Stalemate and Imperialist Coalitions

Democratization creates a wider spectrum of politically significant groups with diverse and incompatible interests. In the period when the great powers were first democratizing, kings, aristocrats, peasants, and artisans shared the historical stage with industrialists, an urban working class, and a middle-class intelligentsia. Similarly, in the postcommunist world, former party apparatchiks, atavistic heavy industrialists, and downwardly mobile military officers share the stage with populist demagogues, free-market entrepreneurs, disgruntled workers, and newly mobilized ethnic groups. In principle, mature democratic institutions can integrate even the widest spectrum of interests through competition for the favor of the average voter. But where political parties and representative institutions are still in their infancy, the diversity of interests may make political coalitions difficult to maintain.

Often the solution is a belligerent nationalist coalition.

In Britain during the period leading up to the Crimean War, neither the Whigs nor the Tories could form a lasting governing coalition because so many groups refused to enter stable political alliances. None of the old elites would coalesce with the parliamentary bloc of radicals elected by urban middle-class and Irish voters. Moreover, protectionist Tories would not unite with free-trading Whigs and Peelite Tories. The social and political mid-Victorian equipoise between traditional and modern Britain created a temporary political stalemate. Lord Palmerston's pseudoliberal imperialism turned out to be the only successful formula for creating a durable ruling coalition during this transitional period of democratization.

The stalemate in Wilhelmine-era electoral politics was even more serious. In principle, coalitions of the left and the right might have formed a two-party system to vie for the favor of the average voter, thus moderating policy. In fact, both the left and the right were too internally divided to mount effective coalitions with internally consistent policies. Progressives dreamed of a bloc extending "from Bassermann to Bebel," from the liberal-democratic middle classes through the Marxist working classes, but the differences between labor and capital chronically barred this development. Conservatives had more success in forging a "marriage of iron and rye," but fundamental differences between military-feudal Junkers and Ruhr industrialists over issues ranging from the distribution of tax burdens to military strategy made their policies incoherent. Germany wound up with plans for a big army and a costly navy, and nobody willing to pay for it.

Inflexible Interests and Short Time Horizons

Groups threatened by social change and democratization, including still-powerful elites, are often compelled to take an inflexible view of their interests, especially when their assets cannot be readily adapted to changing political and economic conditions. In extreme cases, there may be only one solution that will maintain the social position of the group. For Prussian landowners, it was agricultural protection in a nondemocratic state; for the Japanese military, it was organizational autonomy in an autarkic empire; for the Serbian military and party elites, it was a Serbian nationalist state. Since military bureaucracies and imperial interest groups occupied key positions in many authoritarian great powers, whether monarchal or communist, most interests threatened by democratization have been bound up with military programs and the state's international mission. Compromises that may lead down the slippery slope to social extinction or irrelevance have little appeal to such groups. This adds to the difficulty of finding an exit from the domestic political impasse and may make powerful domestic groups impervious to the international risks of their strategies.

Competing for Popular Support

The trouble intensifies when elites in a democratizing society try to recruit mass allies to their cause. Threatened elite groups have an overwhelming incentive to mobilize mass backers on the elites' terms, using whatever special resources they might retain. These resources have included monopolies of information (the Wilhelmine navy's unique "expertise" in making strategic assessments), propaganda assets (the Japanese army's public relations blitz justifying the invasion of Manchuria), patronage (Lord Palmerston's gifts of foreign service postings to the sons of cooperative journalists), wealth (the Krupp steel company's bankrolling of mass nationalist and militarist leagues), organizational skills and networks (the Japanese army's exploitation of rural reservist organizations to build a social base), and the ability to use the control of traditional political institutions to shape the political agenda and structure the terms of political bargains (the Wilhelmine ruling elite's agreement to

eliminate anti-Catholic legislation in exchange for Catholic support in the Reichstag on the naval budget).

This elite mobilization of mass groups takes place in a highly competitive setting. Elite groups mobilize mass support to neutralize mass threats (e.g., creating patriotic leagues to counter workers movements) and counter other elite groups' successful efforts at mass mobilization (such as the German Navy League, a political counterweight to the Junker-backed Agrarian League). The elites' resources allow them to influence the direction of mass political participation, but the imperative to compete for mass favor makes it difficult for a single elite group to control the outcome of this process. For example, mass groups that gain access to politics through elite-supported nationalist organizations often try to outbid their erstwhile sponsors. By 1911, German popular nationalist lobbies were in a position to claim that if Germany's foreign foes were really as threatening as the ruling elites had portrayed them, then the government had sold out German interests in reaching a compromise with France over the Moroccan dispute. In this way, elite mobilization of the masses adds to the ungovernability and political impasse of democratizing states.

Ideology takes on particular significance in the competition for mass support. New entrants to the political process, lacking established habits and reliable information, may be uncertain where their political interests lie. Ideology can yield big payoffs, particularly when there is no efficient and free marketplace of ideas to counter false claims with reliable facts. Elites try out all sorts of ideological appeals depending on the social position they are defending, the nature of the mass group they want to recruit, and the kinds of appeals that seem politically plausible. A nearly universal element of these ideological appeals, however, is nationalism, which has the advantage of positing a community of interest uniting elites and masses. This distracts attention from class cleavages that divide elites from the masses they are trying to recruit.

The Weakening of Central Authority

A weakening of the state's authority in the early stages of democratization deepens the political impasse and the recklessness of the ruling elite. The autocrat can no longer dictate to elite interest groups or mass groups. In many such transitions, democratic institutions lack the strength to integrate these contending interests and views. Parties are weak and lack mass loyalty. Elections are rigged or intermittent. Institutions of public political participation are distrusted because they are subject to manipulation by elites and arbitrary constraints imposed by the state, which fears the outcome of unfettered competition.

Among the great powers, the problem was not excessive authoritarian power at the center, but the opposite. The Aberdeen coalition that brought Britain into the Crimean War was a makeshift cabinet headed by a weak leader with no substantial constituency. Likewise, on the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, Napoleon III's regime was in the process of caving in to its liberal opponents, who dominated the parliament elected in 1869. As Europe's armies prepared to hurtle from their starting gates in July 1914, Austrian leaders, perplexed by the contradictions between the German chancellor's policy and that of the German military, asked, "Who rules in Berlin?" Similarly, the 1931 Manchurian incident was a fait accompli by the local Japanese military; Tokyo was not even informed.

In each of these cases, the weak central leadership resorted to the same strategies as did the more parochial elite interests, using nationalist ideological appeals and special-interest payoffs to maintain their short-run viability, despite the long-run risks that these strategies unleashed.

Prestige Strategies

One of the simplest but riskiest strategies for a hard-pressed regime in a democratizing

country is to shore up its prestige at home by seeking victories abroad. During Russia's Chechen interventions in the 1990s, newspaper commentators in Moscow and the West were reminded of Russian interior minister Viacheslav Plehve's fateful remark in 1904, on the eve of the disastrous Russo-Japanese War, that what the tsar needed was "a short, victorious war" to boost his prestige. Though this strategy often backfires, it is a perennial temptation as a means for coping with the political strains of democratization. German chancellor Johannes Miquel, who revitalized the imperialist-protectionist "coalition of iron and rye" at the turn of the century, told his colleagues that "successes in foreign policy would make a good impression in the Reichstag debates, and political divisions would thus be moderated."[20] The targets of such strategies often share this analysis. Richard Cobden, for example, argued that military victories abroad would confer enough prestige on the military-feudal landed elite to allow them to raise food tariffs and snuff out democracy: "Let John Bull have a great military triumph, and we shall have to take off our hats as we pass the Horse Guards for the rest of our lives."[21]

Prestige strategies make the country vulnerable to slights to its reputation. Napoleon III, for example, was easily goaded into a full declaration of war in 1870 by Bismarck's insulting editorial work on a leaked telegram from the kaiser. For those who want to avoid such diplomatic provocations, the lesson is to make sure that compromises forced on the leaders of democratizing states do not take away the fig leaves needed to sustain their domestic prestige.

MANAGING THE DANGERS IN TODAY'S WORLD

Though mature democratic states have never fought wars against each other, promoting democracy may not promote peace because states are especially war prone when they start making a transition toward democracy before the requisite institutions are in place. This does not mean, however, that democratization should be squelched in the interests of peace. Rather, it means that proponents of democratization should carefully weigh the timing of their efforts to promote democratization. In particular, they should try to encourage a sequence of transition that begins with institution building and culminates in unfettered electoral competition. This sequence, where it is feasible, is likely to minimize the undesirable side effects of democratization.

Of course, democratization does not always lead to extreme forms of aggressive nationalism, just as it does not always lead to war. But it makes those outcomes more likely. Cases where states democratized without triggering a nationalist mobilization are particularly interesting, since they may hold clues about how to prevent such unwanted side effects. Among the great powers, Great Britain followed the smoothest path toward democracy because it created the necessary institutions—a free press, a legislative body, the rule of law, an effective state apparatus—before opening up electoral competition under wide suffrage. Similarly, South Africa has had a reasonably smooth transition to mass democracy because the institutions needed for effective democracy were created for the white minority under the apartheid regime. They got the sequence right. In contrast, Burundi, where international donors abruptly pressed elections on its ethnic Tutsi minority dictatorship in 1993, had none of these institutions to build on. Within months of the election, more than one hundred thousand people were killed in ethnic strife.

Where the needed institutions are lacking, they can sometimes be built quickly and easily. This has been the case in countries that are relatively rich, where literacy and citizen skills are high, or where past experiments with democracy left a legacy of legal, administrative, or journalistic institutions that could have new life breathed into them. These conditions have

facilitated peaceful transitions in much of South America, Northeastern and Central Europe, Korea, and Taiwan.

All too often, however, building the needed institutions has proved exceedingly difficult. Where many citizens are illiterate, per capita income is low, society is ethnically divided, religious sects or other illiberal groups dominate civil society, powerful spoilers fear democracy, nationalist mythmakers control the media, and/or oil revenue makes the state unaccountable to taxpayers, the path of democratization is likely to be neither smooth nor peaceful. In such hard cases, some of the preconditions of effective democracy, including reformed state institutions, need to be put in place before mass electoral politics are unleashed. Premature electoral competition is often an occasion for violence and tends to play into the hands of nationalist demagogues and ethnic or sectarian politicians.

Many of the countries that are still on the "to do" list of democracy promotion are lacking in most of the preconditions for an easy transition. Many Islamic countries that figure prominently in the Bush administration's efforts to promote democracy are particularly hard cases. While we do not claim to be able to foretell the future of democratization in these troubled states, our findings suggest that their path toward electoral politics will be fraught with risk.

Although democratization in the Islamic world might contribute to peace in the very long run, Islamic public opinion in the short run is generally hostile to the United States, reluctant to condemn terrorism, and tolerant of forceful measures in disputed areas. Although much of the belligerence of the Islamic public is fueled by resentment of the U.S.-backed authoritarian regimes under which many of them live, renouncing these authoritarians and pressing for a quick democratic opening is unlikely to lead to peaceful democratic consolidations. On the contrary, unleashing Islamic mass opinion through a sudden democratization might raise the likelihood of war. All of the risk factors are there: The media and civil society groups are inflammatory, as old elites and rising oppositions try to outbid each other for the mantle of Islamic or nationalist militancy.[22] The rule of law is weak, and existing corrupt bureaucracies cannot serve a democratic administration properly. The boundaries of states are mismatched with those of nations, making any push for national self-determination fraught with peril. Per capita incomes, literacy rates, and citizen skills in most Muslim Middle Eastern states are below the levels normally needed to sustain democracy.[23]

In the Arab world, in particular, states commonly gain their popular legitimacy not through accountability to their own citizens but by acting demagogically in the purported interests of the Arab nation as a whole, which often means taking a belligerent stand on Palestinian issues.[24] When Iraq attempted to make a democratic transition in the late 1940s, the elected leaders of its weak state felt compelled to grant military basing rights to its former colonial ruler, Britain; they then took an inflammatory stance against Israel to try to recoup their diminished nationalist credibility in the eyes of their urban Arab nationalist constituents. This vocal stance by Iraq's flawed democratic regime pushed the more moderate monarchies in the Arab frontline states to reject compromise on the creation of an Israeli state, opening the door to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the deepening entrenchment of the Arab-Israeli rivalry.

We do not argue that Islam is culturally unsuited for democracy, but rather that the institutional preparations for democracy are weak in most Islamic states. Thus, sudden increases in mass political participation are likely to be dangerous. Evidence of this is found in the theocratic pseudodemocracy established by the Iranian Revolution; it relentlessly pressed the offensive in a bloody war of attrition with Iraq and supported violent movements abroad. A quarter of a century later, Iranian electoral

politics still bears the imprint of incomplete democratization. With liberal democratic reformers barred from running for office, Iranian voters looking for a more responsive government turned in the June 2005 presidential election to the religious fundamentalist populist mayor of Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a staunch proponent of the Iranian nuclear program. The use of nationalism as part of a popular appeal in an electoral system that rules out liberal alternatives is a common tactic.

This does not necessarily mean that all steps toward democracy in the Islamic world would lead to disaster. Etel Solingen argues, for example, that reforms leading toward "democratization from above," combined with economic liberalization, have been consistent with support for peaceful policies in such Arab states as Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Qatar. "The more consolidated democratizing regimes become," she notes, "the less likely they are to experiment with populism and war."[25] Consistent with our argument, these modest success cases indicate that the most promising sequence for democratization in such settings begins with reforms of the state and the economy, together with limited forms of democratic participation, rather than a headlong jump into popular elections before the strengthening of the institutions—such as efficient and evenhanded public administration, the rule of law, professional journalism, and political parties—that are needed to make a democratic system work.

Islamic democratization is hardly the only such danger on the horizon. A future democratic opening in China, though much hoped for by advocates of human rights and democratization, could produce a sobering outcome.[26] China's communist rulers have presided over a commercial expansion that has generated wealth and a potentially powerful constituency for broader political participation. However, given the huge socioeconomic divide between the prosperous coastal areas and the vast impoverished hinterlands, it seems unlikely that economic development will lead as smoothly to democratic consolidation in China as it has in Taiwan. China's leadership showed its resistance to pressures for democratic liberalization in its 1989 crackdown on the student movement at Tiananmen Square, but party elites know that they need a stronger basis of popular legitimacy to survive the social and ideological changes that economic change has unleashed.

Nationalism is a key element in their strategy. China's demand to incorporate Taiwan in the People's Republic of China, its animosity toward Japan, and its public displays of resentment at U.S. slights are themes that resonate with the Chinese public and can easily be played on to rally national solidarity behind the regime. At the same time, newly rising social forces see that China's leaders permit more latitude to expressions of nationalism than to liberalism. Thus, some of the same intellectuals who played a role in the Tiananmen prodemocracy protests turned up a few years later as authors of a nationalist text, *The China That Can Say No*.[27]

Like many other established elites who have made use of popular nationalist rhetoric, China's party leadership has walked a fine line, allowing only limited expressions of popular nationalist outrage after such perceived provocations as the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, anti-Chinese pogroms in Jakarta, the U.S. spy plane incident of 2001, and the Japanese bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. They realize that criticism of external enemies can quickly become transformed into popular criticism of the government for not being sufficiently diligent in defense of Chinese national interests. It is doubtful that they could maintain a fine-tuned control over an aroused nationalist public opinion if an incompletely democratizing China becomes embroiled in a future crisis with Taiwan.

In short, the Bush administration's efforts to force the pace of democratization in countries that lack the preconditions for it risk playing

into the hand of nationalists, ethnic and sectarian politicians, and other populist purveyors of violent political strategies. Instead, democracy promotion should be focused on countries where conditions for it are ripe, or on the patient, properly sequenced construction of the institutional supports that undergird true democracy. In the long run, the enlargement of the zone of stable democracy will probably enhance prospects for peace. In the short run, much work remains to be done to minimize the dangers of the turbulent transition.

NOTES

Adapted from Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 3 (May-June 1995): 79–97. Copyright © 1995 by the Council on Foreign Relations, Inc. Used by permission. Figures 5.1 through 5.4 are adapted from tables that appeared in Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005). Used by permission of MIT Press. © Belfer Center for Science in International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard.

1. Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (Spring 1988): 662.

2. Executive Office of the President, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (September 2002), 21, 29.

3. George W. Bush, "Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," Washington, D.C., November 6, 2003, reported in David Sanger, "Bush Asks Lands in Mideast to Try Democratic Ways," *New York Times,* November 7, 2003, A1.

4. Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), chaps. 5 and 6.

5. In *Peoples Versus States* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000), 293, Ted Robert Gurr codes Ethiopia as making a transition to "anocracy" (a partially democratic, mixed regime) in 1994. On Eritrea, see Ruth Iyob, "The Eritrean Experiment: A Cautious Pragmatism?" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (December 1997): 647–673.

6. Michael R. Gordon, "Russia Votes, Like It or Not: Chechnya War Fever Gives Pause in the West," *New York Times,* December 21, 1999, A1, A22.

7. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 3 (May–June 1995): 79–97. We have updated the statistical findings and added discussions of recent cases, but the historical and conceptual discussion in this chapter remains similar to that article. The fullest statement of our work on the topic is Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005).

8. For a more extensive analysis of how democratization promotes civil violence, see Snyder, *From Voting to Violence.*

9. See Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 5–38.

10. See Keith Jaggers and Ted Robert Gurr, "Tracking Democracy's Third Wave with the Polity III Data," *Journal of Peace Research* 32, no. 4 (November 1995): 469–482.

11. Ibid.

12. For the procedures used to code these variables, see Mansfield and Snyder, *Electing to Fight,* chap. 4.

13. More specifically, we code each state's regime type in year t-1 and then again in year t-6. We measure incomplete and complete democratic transitions by determining whether the state's regime type changed between years t-6 and t-1. War is measured in year t. On the definition of and data on external wars, see Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816–1980* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1982); and Singer and Small, "Correlates of War Project: International and Civil Wars Data, 1816–1992" (data set, stored at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1994). Note that the following results are much the same if we focus only on interstate wars rather than all external wars.

14. This variable measures the degree to which domestic authority is concentrated in each state's central government in year t-1. See Ted Robert Gurr,

Keith Jaggers, and Will H. Moore, "Polity II: Political Structures and Regime Change, 1800–1986" (codebook for data set, stored at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1989), 39–40. Here, we refer to this variable as "institutional strength." Elsewhere, we have referred to it as the domestic concentration of authority (or "DomConcentration"). See Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Capacity, and the Onset of War," *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 297–337; and Mansfield and Snyder, *Electing to Fight,* especially chaps. 4–6.

15. In conducting these tests, we controlled for whether each state is a major power in year t-1, whether each state is involved in a civil war in year t-1, the distribution of power throughout the international system, and the length of time since each state last experienced the onset of an external war.

16. These parameter estimates and a more detailed explanation of our tests are presented in Mansfield and Snyder, *Electing to Fight,* chap. 5.

17. Thus, for example, we do not present the predicted probability of war for any type of regime change when our measure of institutional strength equals zero because there is no case in the data where a regime change took place and this measure was equal to zero. We do present the predicted probability of war when no regime change takes place and our measure of institutional strength equals zero, since there are some cases of this sort in the data. Note also that, for the purpose of calculating these probabilities, we hold constant the distribution of power at its mean and assume that the state neither is experiencing a civil war nor is a major power.

18. Alain Plessis, *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 146–147.

19. V. P. Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004).

20. J. C. G. Rohl, *Germany without Bismarck* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 250.

21. Richard Cobden, letter to John Bright, October 1, 1854, quoted in John Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden,* abridged ed. (London: Thomas Nelson, n.d.), 311–312.

22. In "Islamism, Revolution, and Civil Society," *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 2 (June 2003): 257–272, especially 265, Sheri Berman draws parallels to belligerent civil society in the flawed democracy of Weimar Germany and stresses the "Huntingtonian gap" between high demand for political participation and ineffective state institutions.

23. In *Human Development Report 2004* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), the United Nations Development Programme reports the following percentage rates of illiteracy among adults over age fifteen: Algeria, 31.1; Bahrain, 11.5; Egypt, 44.4; Iran, 22.9; Jordan, 9.1; Kuwait, 17.1; Lebanon, 13.5; Libya, 18.3; Morocco, 49.3; Oman, 25.6; Saudi Arabia, 22.1; Syria, 17.1; Tunisia, 26.8; United Arab Emirates, 22.7; and Yemen, 51. See also Daniela Donno and Bruce Russett, "Islam, Authoritarianism, and Female Empowerment: What Are the Linkages?" *World Politics* 56, no. 4 (July 2004): 582–607.

24. Michael Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

25. Etel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences of Grand Strategy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 213.

26. For a balanced view that discusses many of the following points, see David Bachman, "China's Democratization: What Difference Would It Make for U.S.-China Relations," in *What If China Doesn't Democratize?* ed. Edward Friedman and Barrett McCormick (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2000).

27. Song Qiang, Zhang Zangzang, and Qiao Bian, *Zhongguo keyi shuo bu* [The China That Can Say No] (Beijing: Zhonghua gongshang lianhe chubanshe, 1996).