

## Naval War College Review

---

Volume 58  
Number 2 *Spring*

Article 14

---

2005

# Solving the War Puzzle: Beyond the Democratic Peace

James P. Terry

John Norton Moore

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Terry, James P. and Moore, John Norton (2005) "Solving the War Puzzle: Beyond the Democratic Peace," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 58 : No. 2 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol58/iss2/14>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

international authority. Without a recognized legitimate international authority, he declares, future humanitarian wars will be conducted unilaterally or by a coalition.

Another chapter describes the intent of area bombing campaigns as either to target the “enemy’s capability to conduct military operations” or to “terrorize civilian populations and demoralize enemy citizens.” While today it is not politically correct to target civilians deliberately, the author believes any targeting of the enemy’s infrastructure could have a disproportionately negative effect on innocent civilians. The consequences of bombing now—the loss of clean water, heat, medical care, and food—would surely be death later. In addition, Cook states, that new precision targeting may tempt political leaders to use force early, instead of as a last resort.

The short, seven-page chapter on “Resisting Global Terrorism” briefly describes the challenges of applying the just-war framework to terrorism. Since al-Qa’ida is not a sovereign state and war is waged only against states, does the United States have the legitimate authority to curb terrorist organizations throughout the world? Is there a reasonable hope of success? Cook suggests that the former model of state sovereignty for the just-war framework must be adapted when dealing with terrorism, because terrorism is not necessarily a threat to a single state but to our civilization’s world order. I would have liked Cook to expand his thoughts on modifications to the just-war framework for terrorism.

What moral direction should the United States take now that it is the sole remaining superpower? What is the proper role of professional military

advice from an ethical and practical viewpoint? Why is force protection so imperative in humanitarian operations? Is the desire for human rights and democratic governments universally shared? Can we assume that the trend towards globalization will make it “irrational for large-scale interstate warfare”? These are a few of the thought-provoking questions that are discussed in this book.

Of the nine chapters, eight have been previously published. This may account for the lack of smooth flow among the numerous themes. Those interested in just-war theory will find this book an interesting read, but in our post-9/11 environment, this extensive treatment of “humanitarian war” has lost some of its post-Kosovo luster.

CYNTHIA PERROTTI

*Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force, Retired*



Moore, John Norton. *Solving the War Puzzle: Beyond the Democratic Peace*. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic, 2003. 212pp. \$40

*Solving the War Puzzle* may be the most insightful and important examination of the causes of war since Clausewitz published *On War* in 1832. This slim volume, precisely written, superbly researched, and elegantly presented, carefully evaluates, integrates, and synthesizes the multiple elements the confluence of which results in armed conflict. This presentation is then used as a basis for choosing reasonable indices for the deterrence of interstate violence.

The broader international system is reviewed in terms of the government structures involved, the incentives presented to decision makers, and an examination of whether these structures

coupled with the totality of external incentives enable or constrain high-risk behavior that can lead to conflict.

The construct of war avoidance is further addressed by examining the nature of specific governments involved—intercourse between well established democratic nations, between democracies and nondemocracies, and between non-democratic states. By reference to historical examples and by examining the factors that influence the conduct of states, Moore concludes that the nature of the government alone may not be nearly as important in creating effective deterrence as the aggregate of external incentives, “which may be high or low, adequate or inadequate.”

In concluding that the best theory of war avoidance will use the “full human arsenal of insights against war,” Moore carefully identifies the entire quiver of measures available to decision makers to achieve security. These include but are not limited to: diplomacy, the existence of unequal power between adversaries, the willingness to precommit forces to a troubled area, the existence of arms control agreements, and mutual participation in international organizations. Similarly, Moore carefully analyzes those factors that influence the leadership elite to employ the military instrument—the absence of democracy, the absence of effective deterrence, and most importantly, the synergy of an absence of both.

The “incentive theory” is further tested in its application to instances of terrorist violence, specifically to the U.S. response to the 9/11 attack by al-Qa’ida, and finally, to the 2003 war with Iraq. Arguing that assessing and influencing the incentives of the decision elite who run terror networks may be even more

effective than terror, Moore suggests that extremists will no longer choose to pursue it. Arguing that the incentive theory fits the Afghan War “like a glove,” Moore also posits that had Saddam Hussein focused more clearly on the incentives affecting President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, he would have understood that his only opportunity to avoid war was a highly visible effort to achieve full compliance with Security Council resolutions.

In assessing the way forward, the author urges the positive consequences for foreign policy of a paradigm rooted in the importance of internal and external incentives. As long as incentives *within* certain nations do not properly operate to control these scourges, incentives must be supplied externally. Moore argues that by considering the operation of collective security in deterrence terms, created through effective incentives, an essential element of foreign policy can be both preserved and enhanced.

JAMES P. TERRY  
*Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired*



Flanagan, Stephen J., and Michael E. Marti, eds. *The People’s Liberation Army and China in Transition*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense Univ., 2003. 364pp. \$34.50

Based on an October 2001 conference at the National Defense University, but published with revised papers two years later, this collection of seemingly miscellaneous essays all too often either misses the mark completely or treats only very lightly a long list of potential U.S.-Chinese problems.

After an introduction, the book is divided into six sections examining