Election Cycles and War

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Insight into the effect of domestic factors on the international conflict behavior of democratic states can be garnered from treating electoral cycles as cycles in the relative power of state and society. This article shows that there is a discernible relationship between election cycles and the behavior of democratic states in international conflicts. In the past 200 years, democratic states have tended to get into relatively more wars early in the election cycle and fewer wars late in the cycle. Interestingly, this result holds regardless of whether it was a democracy or a nondemocracy which initiated the war. The author argues, however, that this pattern at the international level is insufficient for drawing firm conclusions about the *preferences* of democratic states and societies at the domestic level. Finally, the author suggests that although election dynamics may mitigate against war entry in the short run, it is plausible that they have made war more likely or more severe in the long run.

> There are two things that will always be very difficult for a democratic nation: to start a war and to end it.
>
> — *Alexis de Tocqueville* ([1835] 1969, 649)

There has recently been a resurgence of interest in the conflict behavior of democratic states. This interest has been fueled by the strong international movement towards democratization and by the observation that democratic states are distinctly pacific in their relations with each other (Babst 1972; Small and Singer 1976; Rummel 1983; Doyle 1983a, 1986; Chan 1984; Weede 1984; Maoz and Abdolali 1989). This observation poses an anomoly

for the realist analysis of international relations, which holds that the political arrangements of states in the domestic realm should be irrelevant to their basic behavior in the international realm.

In this article I further explore the distinctive behavior of democratic states in the use of force in their international relations. I begin from the assumption that for these purposes the distinguishing features of democracies are to be found in the relationships between state and society. In particular, there are two elements that must be taken into account. The first, in the cultural and ideological realm, is the distinctive sets of beliefs and conceptual frameworks that order the preferences of actors in the democratic decision-making process. The second element is the decision-making process itself — that is, the institutions that somehow aggregate these preferences into social choices.

There have been many studies of the role of decision-making institutions on international relations. Most of these, however, have focused on decision making within small elite groups, and thus have not adequately addressed the institutional elements that make democratic decision making distinctive. My focus is on an institution that is critical to the definition of democracy: elections.

The particular form of international behavior which I examine is the way in which democratic states enter into wars. Just as elections are a defining characteristic of democratic regimes, war is a defining characteristic of our current international system. I consider here the intersection of these characteristic phenomena at the domestic and international levels.

My working hypothesis is that in a democracy we would expect the power of the society relative to the state to vary within the election cycle. The closer the society is to an impending election, the greater will be the societal restrictions on the courses of action the state can follow. Thus the electoral cycle gives us a dynamic picture of the effects of social constraints on state action. My basic goal will be to offer a rough measure of the size and shape of these restrictions as they show up in the international arena.

PUBLIC OPINION AND WAR

Though a number of analysts have attempted to tackle the role of public opinion in the formation and conduct of foreign policy (Almond 1950; Rosenau 1961; Cohen 1973; Hughes 1978), few have addressed the specific phenomenon of democratic elections (but see Waltz 1967, chap. 10). Rosenau, for example, makes no explicit mention of the electoral process in his basic book which attempts to outline the channels through which public opinion

can influence foreign policy (1961). Bernard Cohen, in his 1973 study of public opinion and foreign policy, devotes three pages to the possibility that there might be some electoral accountability in the foreign policy process, but concludes that "democratic control of foreign policy . . . by means of electoral accountability functions weakly when it even functions at all" (p. 185).

Likewise, whereas many historians have been overly quick to attribute wars to domestic influences (Levy 1988), those who have taken a broader look at the domestic/international nexus have often stopped short of carrying their analysis all the way to the level of war. Those who write about domestic sources of foreign policy behavior have tended to focus on the everyday matters such as tariff policy, foreign aid, and military budgets. They often seem to share the realist belief that war is a phenomenon of such seriousness that it is considerably less susceptible to the pull of domestic forces.

A third limitation of the traditional literature on democratic domestic politics and international conflict is an almost exclusive focus on the United States during the past sixty years. This focus is primarily a result of the very real advantage of the public opinion polling that has been conducted in the United States during this period. A few analysts have branched out to give some consideration to Britain, although they have still focused on the late twentieth century (Waltz 1967; Craig and George 1983). There is no a priori reason to assume that either the United States or the past few decades are representative of democratic politics in general.

THE THEORETICAL SETTING

The realist vision has been a useful model for the study of international relations (Keohane 1983). It has provided a powerful and parsimonious framework for understanding the systemic nature of international relations. Waltz argues, however, that we should not "mistake a theory of international politics for a theory of foreign policy" (1979, 121). He warns us that "a theory at one level of generality cannot answer questions about matters at a different level of generality" (1979, 121). Realism treats states as opaque units that interact in the international system. My interest in the influence of elections on the conflict behavior of democratic states requires a level of abstraction that will make germane the electoral dynamics taking place within the domestic realm.

The statist approach is one level of abstraction removed from the realist approach. (Nettl 1968; Krasner 1978; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol

1985). Both are self-consciously state-centric (Krasner 1978, 12). In the statist approach, however, states are Janus-faced. They interact both with other units in the international system and with their societies at home. Importantly, both approaches can still picture all states as functionally similar units; in this view all states have similar interests in simultaneously maximizing both their domestic and international power.

But, much of the power of the realist model comes from abstracting all goals to the goal of international power (Morgenthau [1948] 1967, chap. 2; Wolfers 1962, chap. 6). As the formal theorists have warned us, there is a quantum change in complexity when we move from single dimensional to two dimensional maximization problems. Theories about the process of balancing the international and domestic realms will require a significantly more rigorous modeling of interests and institutions. Morgenthau highlights the long association between the realist and statist approaches, and outlines the essence of the balancing problem for state leaders:

> Especially when foreign policy is conducted under conditions of democratic control and is inspired by the crusading zeal of a political religion, statesmen are aways tempted to sacrifice the requirements of good foreign policy to the applause of the masses. On the other hand, the statesman who would defend the integrity of these requirements against even the slightest contamination with popular passion would seal his own doom as a political leader and, with it, the doom of his foreign policy, for he would lose the popular support which put and keeps him in power. ([1948] 1967, 548)

Krasner attempts to solve the dimensionality problem with an assumption that the international realm takes precedence over all other realms. Thus in *Defending the National Interest* (1978) he argues that it is only the overwhelming advantage of hegemony that has allowed central decision makers in the United States to pursue goals that were suboptimal from an international standpoint:

> By the end of the Second World War, American central decision-makers commanded a set of power resources unprecedented in modern times. These resources allowed them to turn toward projecting America's vision of a properly ordered society into the international system. They were freed from specific strategic and economic concerns. (P. 15)

The limitation of this approach is that even if there is a clear hierarchy of realms, states will still have to make value trade-offs between the different realms. Even before World War II, American leaders could consider the possibility of trading off a small amount of international power for a large gain in domestic power. Indeed, America's isolationist policies in the interwar years may have been just such a trade-off. In general, large reserves of

international power may decrease the marginal utility of international power and make such trades more likely. But even when international power reserves are low, there may be trade-offs in which the domestic gains are seen as sufficient to warrant some degree of losses in the international realm. Quincy Wright, in his monumental *A Study of War*, opens his chapter on "Conditions of Government and War" with the assertion that in the interest of retaining office, governments may pursue foreign policies they believe are certain to fail (Wright [1942] 1965, 819). The concern for retaining power in the domestic realm always has the potential to override broader concerns about the national interest. Thucydides presents a particularly potent form of this phenomenon in his criticism of the relative preferences of the Athenian oligarchs, who had to make decisions that simultaneously affected the independence of Athens and their own personal and political fortunes:

> Their first wish was to have the oligarchy without giving up the empire: failing this to keep their ships and walls and be independent; while, if this also were denied them, sooner than be the first victims of the restored democracy, they were resolved to call in the enemy and make peace, give up their walls and ships, and at all costs retain possession of the government, if their lives were only assured to them ([400 b.c.] 1951, 505).

A statist modification of the realist model raises the question of whether or not there are specific characteristics of some kinds of domestic regimes that lead to distinctive international behaviors. Such a result would, of course, be contrary to the realist vision of states as like units that are differentiated along the single dimension of power. It is here that we are brought to the issue of distinctive democratic behaviors, and the question of whether the level of abstraction should be further adjusted to allow for distinctions between different kinds of states and different kinds of societies. The starting point for this area of inquiry is to consider some of the competing claims about the effect of public influence on the conflict behavior of democratic states.

PERSPECTIVES ON POPULAR PRESSURE

1. THE PACIFIC PUBLIC

The first perspective is the traditional liberal belief that the public will always be a restraint on war. Though his own views are considerably more complex, Kant set out the central logic of the perspective when he wrote that if the people who have to pay for it with their lives and possessions decided whether or not there should be a war, then there would always be a very great hesitation to start "such an evil game." "By contrast," he says, "under a constitution where the subject is not a citizen and which therefore is not republican, it is the easiest thing in the world to start a war" ([1795] 1949, 438).

This perspective was particularly popular following the slaughters of World War I. In the United States it was embodied in the movement for a "war referendum" process that would require a popular vote for the declaration of war. Alanson Houghton, the American ambassador to England and a staunch advocate of the referendum approach, argued that wars were caused not by peoples but by "little groups of men called governments" (Bolt 1977, 141). One prominent proposal by a retired admiral even suggested that those who voted 'yes' in a war referendum involving all women and men over seventeen years of age should be obligated to enlist for the duration of the war and should be the first assigned to combat duty on the front lines (Bolt 1977, 136).

In this view, the approach of an electoral contest, and thus the increased power of the pacific society vis-à-vis the more war-prone state, should imbue national leaders with extra caution. Democratic leaders facing elections should be prepared to make extra efforts to avoid wars. They may well choose to sacrifice international goals for their more immediate electoral needs. If their efforts at war avoidance are successful, we should see the democracies involved in fewer wars as elections approach.

2. THE PASSIONATE PUBLIC

Of course, liberals do not have a monopoly on theories about the relationship between public pressures and war. It has long been a popular endeavor to link war behavior and the legitimation needs of the state. There is no better way to knit together a fractious community than to find some external group that everyone can agree to hate together. It is not implausible that democratic leaders face a temptation to loose the dogs of war when their own reins of authority most need tightening. There is a persistent strain of thought that worries that the masses are too easily mollified by foreign adventures, and democratic politicians are too quick to pander to these mob instincts (Hermens 1944; Kennan 1951; Lippmann 1955). Vicarious military adventures are often surprisingly popular in the public imagination. George Kennan argues that "People are not always more reasonable than governments." Demagoguery can too often carry the day and, in so doing draws, in his words, "a shadow of great doubt over the validity of democratic institutions" (1951, 61-62).

American displays of force abroad are often followed by a surge in public support for the president in a kind of "rally-round-the-flag" effect (Mueller 1973; Lee 1977; Kernell 1978; Sigelman and Conover 1981; Brody and Shapiro 1989). It is widely argued that this surge in popularity following international crises takes place regardless of whether the crisis is resolved successfully or unsuccessfully (Polsby 1964, 25; Lee 1977, 253). For example, Jimmy Carter's approval rating jumped 4% after the failure of the hostage rescue attempt.

From this point of view, we might expect an increase in foreign adventures as elections draw near. National leaders may seek out foreign troubles either to take advantage of this rally effect, or simply to avoid the negative fallout of appearing weak in the face of a less scrupulous, or less informed electoral opponent who attempts to exploit easily aroused popular passions.

3. THE PROTEAN PUBLIC

A third perspective is embodied in the work of those who have attributed to public sentiments a highly changeable quality. Hartz and Almond are perhaps the best known representatives of this approach. Hartz argues that the ideal of democracy that is manifested in American political beliefs is messianic in character. When American ideals encounter the inevitable limitations of the external world the only two possible reactions are withdrawal or the evangelical attempt to convert the world (1955).[1]

Almond rejects any regular cycling or periodicity to public moods (1950). Instead, he suggests that the nature of public moods is shifting and superficial, so that it must be recognized that,

> an overtly interventionist and "responsible" United States hides a covertly isolationist longing, that an overtly tolerant America is at the same time barely stifling intolerance reactions, that an idealisic America is muttering *soto voce* cynicisms, that a surface optimism in America conceals a dread of the future (P. 67).

From these various mood perspectives on public opinion, we would expect the increase in popular control that is presumed to shadow the electoral cycle to have effects that are contingent on the particular mood of the public. When the public mood is belligerent, the government should pursue more belligerent policies as elections approach. When the public

1. Another perspective on changing public moods is represented in the recent work of John Mueller, who argues that World War I makes a fundamental shift in public attitudes (1989). Mueller believes that before the First World War the public imagination was fascinated by war, and largely approved of highly conflictual foreign policies. He argues that after the slaughters of that conflict the public mood changed unmistakeably in favor of peace.

mood is pacific or isolationist, the government should pursue more conciliatory policies with the approach of elections.

ELECTIONS AND WAR: THE BIG PICTURE

Two different approaches could be adopted to begin an inquiry into the relationship between elections and war. One approach would be to start with a few dramatic cases from which to develop a set of hypotheses that could then be tested on other cases. An alternative approach — and the one that I adopt in this study — is to begin with an examination of the relationship across a large number of cases, and then move to individual cases to understand more fully the causal mechanisms that might be producing the results observed at the macro level. The advantage of this latter approach is that it allows the research to begin with an understanding of the relationship between election cycles and war in general, and it avoids the danger of following idiosyncratic hypotheses that might be thrown up by the particular character of individual cases.

THE DATA

The movement from qualitative conjecture to empirical analysis requires an acceptance of the inevitable imperfections of real world data. Three kinds of data are required for this project, each of which brings its own special problems into the analysis.

The first dataset is a listing of international conflicts and their various participants and measures of severity. For this data I have relied on the Wages of War dataset from the Inter-University Consortium on Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (Singer and Small 1984). Although this dataset is not completely free from controversy, its basic acceptance is widespread (Maoz 1988). For each participant, disputes are coded for entry and exit dates, for the number of battle deaths, and for several other measures of involvement and severity. Where the exact day of war entry is missing, I have used the 15th of the month.

The determination of which countries are democratic is also a difficult issue. Rather than introduce some new criteria which would surely ignite a new controversy, I have relied on the coding of liberal states provided by Doyle in his work on liberalism and war (1983a, 1986). This is not, strictly speaking, a listing of democracies, but Doyle's criteria include a requirement

for competitive elections and thus his list should serve as a reasonable surrogate for this investigation. Although Doyle's coding may be controversial around the edges, it strikes me as reasonable in the main.[2]

Working from Doyle's list of liberal regimes, I assembled the election data from a number of sources (Rokkan and Meyriat 1969; Mackie and Rose 1982; *The Statesman's Yearbook*, and others). There are several difficulties associated with even so apparently straightforward a task as this. In the first place, I have had to make judgments about which level of elections are relevant to the war question. I have tried to use the election cycle for the governmental branch that is most central to foreign policy. This means, of course, the use of national rather than local level elections. More controversial, in systems with a president I have used elections to that office on the assumption that the president is the central actor in a state's foreign policy. There are also problems in some of the older data with elections that are held over the period of several weeks or involve different parts of the country at different times.

Another difficulty in the elections dataset arises from interrupted election cycles. Most prominent in this regard are the European democracies overrun by Germany in World War II. For the tests that examine the whole election cycle, and thus require a beginning election and an ending election I have had to remove these cases. I have included them in the tests that require only a previous election.

A final problem is with the absolute length of the election cycles. If a state had annual elections, for example, any war entries would be very close to an election in absolute terms. Likewise a very long election cycle would make even random events tend to be far from elections in absolute terms. The length of election cycles in the cases examined here has varied from seven months for France between the 1945 and 1946 elections bracketing entry into their Indochinese imbroglio, to nine years and nine months for the Italian election cycle from 1861 to 1870 in which the Seven Weeks War was imbedded.[3] I have compensated for this problem by looking at relative election cycles as well as absolute. The relative measure is based on the percentage of the time between elections that has passed when democratic states engage in conflict behavior.

2. The identification of stable democratic regimes is a subjective and context dependent undertaking. Doyle includes the Commonwealth countries, for example, before many consider them to have gained independent control of their foreign policy (and thus, before even being coded as countries by the Singer and Small standards). Many states are included before the franchise was extended to women or to nonproperty holders. For example, Italy is included in the middle of the nineteenth century when the franchise extended to less than 2% of the population. Doyle's criteria for these choices are outlined in his article (1983a, 212).

3. Forty-four of the cases fall between forty-five and sixty months. The median election cycle is forty-eight months, the mean is fifty-one months, and the standard deviation is eighteen months.

To summarize, the Wages of War dataset includes 76 instances of democracies being militarily involved in wars between 1815 and 1980 (see the appendix). I have been able to collect adequate election data for 74 of these.[4] In the tests that require a beginning and ending election, five cases are omitted because they involve states that were overrun by the Germans in World War II, and thus had their election cycles truncated.[5]

The remaining 69 cases cover the involvement of 17 different democratic states in 45 wars from the first British-Afghan War in 1838 until the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Of these cases, 23 involved fewer than 1,000 battle deaths, and 46 involved more. Twenty-six cases involved participation in a war which lasted for less than one year, and 43 lasted for longer than one year. Thirteen of the cases are coded as losses for the democracy, but there are 45 wins with 11 ties — 10 of which are the various UN participants in the Korean war, the other tie being the Israeli-Egyptian war of attrition from 1969 to 1970. In 52 of the cases the nondemocracy is coded as the initiator. There are 17 cases in which the democratic side is coded as having initiated the war. Twenty-two of the cases began in the nineteenth century, and the remainder are twentieth-century conflicts.

THE RESULTS

1. ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC WAR INITIATION

The appropriate place to begin this analysis is with a consideration of the 17 cases in which war is coded as having been initiated by a democratic state. Presumably, these are the cases in which the democratic states would have tended to have more freedom to directly choose the starting date of a war. Seventeen is an insufficient number of cases for much statistical analysis. There are, however, several interesting descriptive aspects of these cases. Table 1 lists the democratic initiation cases in terms of the relative election cycles. Each grouping represents one quintile of the election cycle. Thus there are three cases in the first quintile, four in the second, four in the third, three in the fourth, and three in the fifth. Clearly, the distribution of war initiation dates relative to the election cycle gives us no basis for rejecting the null hypothesis that war initiation is independent of the election cycle. It is

4. The two missing cases are Denmark in the Second-Schleswig War of 1864 and the Netherlands in the Dutch-Achinese War of 1873.

5. These states are Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, Finland, and France. In none of these cases was the truncated election cycle sufficiently advanced to offer much of a threat to the findings presented here, even if we tried to extrapolate the likely election date.

TABLE 1
Wars in Which the Democratic State Is Coded as the Initiator,
Sorted by the Point in the Election Cycle at Which War Was Entered

Country	War	Mo[a]	Year[b]	Battle Deaths	Cycle Length[c]	Entry Ratio[d]
France	Roman Republic	6	1849	300	34	.02
U.S.	Vietnamese	2	1965	56,000	47	.07
India	Bangladesh	12	1971	8,000	71	.12
Lebanon	Palestine	5	1948	500	46	.25
Israel	Sinai	10	1956	200	47	.32
U.S.	Spanish-American	4	1898	5,000	47	.37
U.S.	Mexican-American	5	1846	11,000	47	.38
Israel	Six Day	6	1967	1,000	47	.40
Greece	Greco-Turkish	2	1897	600	45	.48
France	Boxer Rebellion	6	1900	24	47	.52
Italy	Italo-Turkish	9	1911	6,000	55	.55
India	Hyderabad	9	1948	1,000	49	.67
India	Second Kashmir	8	1965	3,000	60	.68
France	Sino-French	8	1884	2,100	49	.72
U.K.	Anglo-Persian	10	1856	500	56	.90
U.S.	Boxer Rebellion	6	1900	21	47	.90
U.K.	Boxer Rebellion	6	1900	34	62	.94

a. Month in which war was entered.
b. Year in which war was entered.
c. Length of election cycle bracketing war entry in months.
d. Proportion of electoral cycle already passed at time of war entry.

notable, however, that the only initiations in the final quintile are the British initiation of the Anglo-Persian War, at a cost of 500 battle deaths and the British and American participation in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion at 21 and 34 battle deaths respectively. There have been no serious wars initiated by a democratic state in the final year before an election. If we look at the mean number of battle deaths associated with wars entered in each of the quintiles, we see a substantial difference between the mean of 185 for the last quintile and the mean of 6,766 for the first four quintiles.[6]

A more detailed analysis of the war entry patterns of democratic states relative to their election cycles will require an increase in the number of cases to be analyzed. There are both empirical and theoretical reasons to expand

6. If we drop the extreme case of Vietnam, the mean number of battle deaths for the first four quintiles drops to 2,979, but remains quite different from 185.

the data to include *all* cases of war entry, rather than just the cases of war initiation.

First, in most wars, the identification of the initiator has proven a consistently difficult feat (Blainey 1973, chap. 11; Singer and Small 1984). Singer and Small, by coding for initiators in the Wages of War dataset used here, have made a judgment about the state that initiates *violent* military action. But in many cases there is plenty of blame to apportion among all the participants. Israel, for example, is coded as the initiator of the 1967 War, though it is widely agreed that Israel's attack on June 5, 1967 was a preemptive action in the face of an immanent attack from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. Similarly, the Boers are coded as the initiators of the Boer War, yet that initiation came on the heals of a significant British troop buildup on the border of the Cape Colony and a British move to cut off all discussions with the Boers. Many states might well choose the advantages of a preemptive attack in the face of the perception of a high probability of attack by the opponent.

A second reason for expanding this analysis to include all the cases of democratic war entry is provided by the several analysts who have posited that wars occur only when *both* sides decide that war is preferable to the available alternatives (Blainey 1973; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1986; Lalman 1988). It is not at all implausible that if, for example, democratic leaders wanted to avoid starting a war in the face of an impending election, they would also be anxious to avoid being the target of an attack in such a period. The more a democratic state wants to avoid a war that an adversary wishes to start, the more effort it may expend in seeking out other alternatives. If these efforts result in a decrease in the relative merits of war for the adversary, then the probability of an ensuing war will decrease.

Thus, for both empirical and theoretical reasons, I propose to expand the analysis from a description of the cases of democratic war initiation, to a broader analysis of all the cases of democratic war entry. The use of the larger universe of about 70 cases will make possible the employment of more rigorous statistical analysis. The introduction of some number of cases in which the actions of the democratic state could have little or no influence on the timing of the nondemocratic initiator will weaken the analysis but strengthen the conclusions. Any results that stand out above the noise of the high compulsion cases will be all the more impressive.

2. WARS AND IMPENDING ELECTIONS

The most basic level at which the relationship between elections and all democratic war entries can be considered is to look at the distribution of wars

entered relative to impending election dates. Figure 1 offers an initial picture of this relationship. On the horizontal axis are the number of years prior to an election in which a war is entered. The vertical axis is simply the number of wars that have been entered by the democracies in each period. The vertical bar on the extreme right is the number of wars entered within one year of an impending election. The next bar to the left is the number entered between one and two years of an impending election, and so on. The distribution is well-behaved, but hardly overwhelming. The smaller number of war entries at the beginning when elections are still far away should be discounted to the degree that it is a function of the smaller number of electoral cycles that are sufficiently large to allow five- and six-year lags between war entry and an election. For example, the U. S., with a rigid four-year election cycle, could never have a five-year gap between war entry and an election.

Figure 1 shows that the democracies have entered fewer wars in the last year before an election than in the second, third, or fourth years before an election. This is consistent with a view that elections and the cycle of state-social power make a difference in the behavior of democratic states. But statistically, this distribution is not sufficiently skewed to allow us to reject the hypothesis that the time until an election is irrelevant to war entry patterns.[7]

The picture becomes a little clearer if we consider election cycles in terms of relative rather than absolute time, as in Figure 2. In this picture, the last quintile of the cycle before an election (the last vertical bar in the figure) begins to gain some statistical as well as visual distinction from the rest of the election cycle. If war entries were distributed randomly throughout the election cycle, then we would expect about 14 of the 69 wars in the last quintile with the remaining 55 in the first four quintiles. Instead, the observed numbers are 8 and 61 respectively. There is less than a 5% probability of this observed distribution having occurred by chance if war entry and election cycles are statistically independent.[8]

7. Using the cumulative binomial formula, we can find the probability of the observed distribution occurring if war entries and election cycles are statistically independent. If we drop the fifth and sixth year cases, then there is about an 18% probability of getting 11 or fewer war entries in the last year before an election when there are 59 total war entries and the probability of a war entry falling within any one of the four years is 25%.

8. There is only a 4.9% probability of 8 or fewer war entries out of a total of 69 occurring in the last quintile of the election cycle if the probability of a war entry falling in any quintile is 20% – that is, if there is no relationship between election cycles and war entries. The use of quintiles is a somewhat arbitrary definition of the prewar period. The statistical significance of the results tends to get better as the relative size of the prewar period is increased, and gets worse if the prewar period size is reduced.
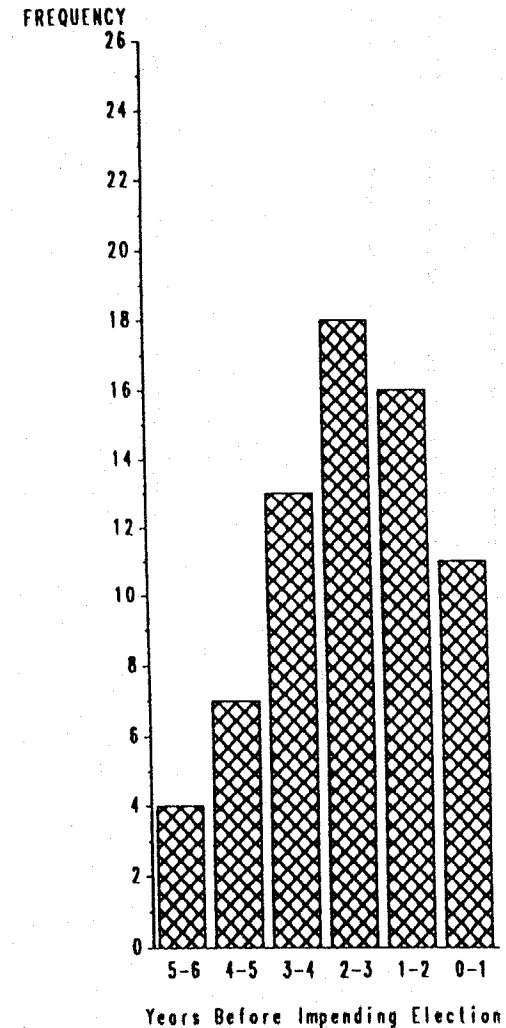

Figure 1: Number of Wars Entered in Years Before an Election

The relationship between war entry and impending elections becomes even more focused if we isolate the more serious conflicts. Figures 3 and 4 show the distribution of war entries for wars in which the democratic state
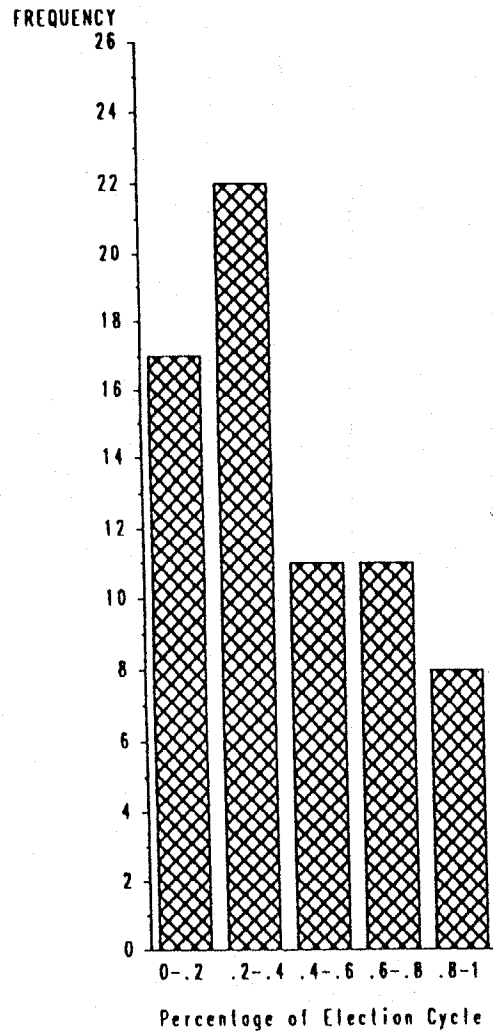
Figure 2:   Number of Wars Entered in Election Cycle Quintiles

Figure 3:   Number of Serious Wars Entered in Years Before an Election

suffered 1,000 battle deaths or more. The distribution of war entries over both the absolute and the relative election cycles becomes significantly more skewed, with decreased war entries in the period immediately preceding

elections.[9] Between 1815 and 1980, there are only three serious wars that were entered by any democratic state in the year immediately preceding an

9. The results presented here are relatively insensitive to the number of battle deaths used as a measure of seriousness. The basic result — the paucity of serious wars in the final quintile before
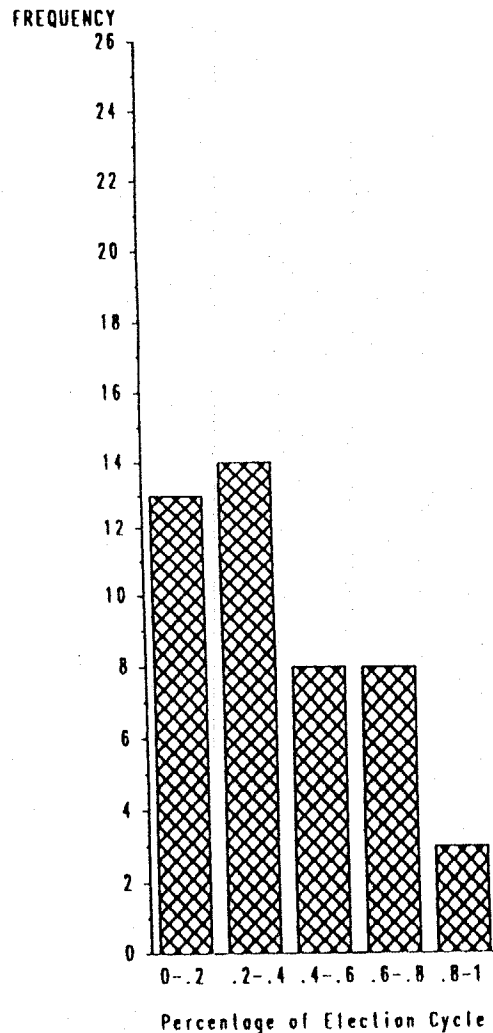
election. These three cases are Israel in the Yom Kippur War, Britain in the Boer War, and Canada in World War II. In Figure 3, these three cases of war entry in the last year prior to an election are represented in the rightmost vertical bar. This period was statistically indiscernible from the other periods when all the cases were included, but it becomes statistically significantly different from the rest of the election cycle when we consider only the more serious wars.[10]

The effect is similar when we restrict the relative election cycle picture to the more serious wars. The same three cases show up in the final quintile of the election cycle. In Figure 4 the vertical bar on the far right represents the last quintile of the election cycle. When we use relative election cycles, the difference between the last quintile before an election and the other four quintiles increases its statistical significance from the 95% level for all wars to the 99% level for the serious wars.[11]

Democratic leaders facing imminent elections appear to have been more careful about entering wars that have subsequently involved more battle deaths than in entering wars that have subsequently involved fewer battle deaths. This is, of course, a post hoc measure and can be considered only a secondary indicator of leaders' perceptions of the probable seriousness of the war prior to war entry. Still, given this potential for sloppiness in the relationship, it is notable that the data hold up as well as they do.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM

One potential difficulty in the data for impending elections is that the majority of observations are for parliamentary systems that do not have fixed election dates. It is plausible that the relationships observed here are an artifact of democracies avoiding elections after the outbreak of war, rather than of avoiding wars in the face of impending elections. Of course, there is a limited degree to which elections can be put off given statutory limits on how long states can go between elections. And even if avoiding elections was

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an election—would change by only one case, for any threshold for a serious war between 500 and 22,000 battle deaths. Although no more cases could show up close to an impending election in this range of battle deaths, the statistical significance of the result could vary as the number of cases in the other four quintiles varied with the different definitions of seriousness. More specifically, as the battle death threshold goes higher, the total number of observations and the number of wars entered in the first four quintiles both decrease, and thus statistical significance

declines. Definitions of serious war above 5,000 battle deaths produce distributions that, although still quite skewed, are no longer statistically significant at the 95% level.

10. Again, the fifth and sixth years are dropped, so the comparison is made between the last year before an election in which we expect one quarter of the cases to fall under the null hypothesis, and the previous three years, in which we expect three quarters of the cases to fall. There is only a 1% probability of getting 3 or fewer wars out of a total of 36 in the last year before an election if the probability of any given war entry falling in the last year is 25%.

11. The probability of getting three or fewer war entries in the last quintile of the election cycle is 1%, when the total number of war entries is 69, and when there is a 20% probability of any war entry occurring in the last quintile.

widespread, there would still be something important to say about the relationship between domestic politics and international relations for democracies. At a minimum, the findings reported here would suggest that getting into wars is not a popular electoral strategy — politicians do not rush to call elections in the flush of popularity and social solidarity that is often assumed to follow war entry. But, to the degree that delayed elections are a problem, this analysis would say less about the effect of domestic politics on international behavior, because it would weaken the causal link running from domestic elections to international behavior.

A primary indicator of the influence of parliamentary systems on these results is found at the other end of the electoral cycle: the gap between the previous election and war entry. Of the 42 cases in which war entry came more than two years before an election, there is only one case in which war entry came more than four years after a previous election (Italy in the Seven Weeks War), and there are only three cases in which war entry came more than three years after a previous election (Britain in World Wars I and II, and Italy in the Seven Weeks War). Indeed, there are only 5 cases out of this 42 in which the previous election was more than two years prior to war entry (to the previous list add Britain in the Mahdist War of 1882 and Italy in the Italo-Turkish War of 1911). Thus it does not look likely that there are many cases in which a democratic state may have entered a war at a time when an election would have been expected soon if it had not been for the war.

3. WAR AND ELECTIONS JUST PAST

The flip side of the coin for the relationship between war entry and impending elections is to consider the other end of the electoral cycle in general: the relationship between war entry and elections just past. Just as there are fewer wars entered in the final periods of the electoral cycle, there are more wars entered in the first periods of the cycle. Figure 5 shows the number of wars entered in one-year periods after elections in democratic states between 1815 and 1980. It is important to remember, again, that in looking at absolute time there is a problem of a decaying number of cases as the number of years increase. Still, if we compare the number of wars entered in the first two years with the number entered in the third and fourth years, as against the null hypothesis that there should be an equal number in both two-year periods, we find a difference that is statistically significant at well above the 99% level.[12] This can be seen in Figure 5 by comparing the two

12. There is only a .04% probability of getting 47 war entries in the first two years and only 19 war entries in the last two years, if the timing of war entries and elections are statistically independent.
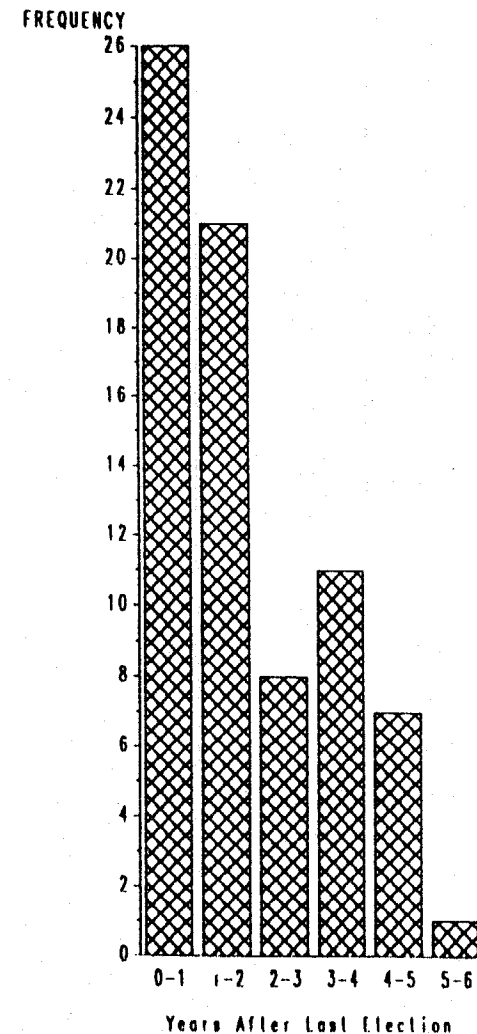
Figure 5:   Number of Wars Entered in Years After an Election

leftmost vertical bars — the two years right after an election — with the next two vertical bars — the third and fourth years after an election.

The same phenomenon remains clear when we control for the problem of different electoral cycle lengths by looking at relative election cycles. In this case, the difference between the first two quintiles and the last three quintiles

of the election cycle remains statistically significant at above the 99% level.[13] Graphically, we can rely on Figure 2 for this picture because the relative election cycles include both the preelection and postelection periods. In Figure 2 the postelection effect is observable in the comparison between the first two vertical bars — the postelection period — and the last three bars.

As with the preelection phenomenon, the distribution is more skewed for the more serious wars than the less serious wars. The dates of entry for the 17 wars that resulted in fewer than 500 battle deaths for the democratic state are only slightly skewed in favor of the postelection period. Figure 6 uses 1,000 battle deaths for the democratic state as the threshold of serious war. It shows the number of serious wars entered by the democratic states in each year after an election. Again, comparing the first two vertical bars with the second two shows a substantial difference in the number of serious wars entered.[14] The effect in terms of relative cycles can be seen in Figure 4 by comparing the first two vertical bars with the last three vertical bars. As with the preelection effect, the results are quite robust relative to different definitions of seriousness. The entry pattern for more serious wars is more skewed than the entry pattern for less serious wars for any threshold of seriousness below 20,000 battle deaths.

ELECTIONS AND WAR ENTRY: THE CAUSAL AMBIGUITIES

The raw data suggest that there is a relationship between democratic election cycles and the timing of war entry in the past 200 years of democratic experience. In the postelection period, when public power is hypothesized to be lowest relative to the power of the government, democracies are not only more likely to start wars, but are more likely to be the targets of others' aggressive aims. Even more surprising, in the preelection period, when public power is hypothesized to be highest relative to governmental power, democratic states seem not only to resist the international pressures to start wars, but also somehow to defuse the international pressures that would lead others to start wars against them. These results, I believe, are quite unambiguous, and are significant and interesting in and of themselves. They would appear to add some validity to the liberal argument that public control will have a distinct influence on the war-making behavior of democratic states. But, correlation is not causality. These data and the results I have derived from

13. There is a 0.4% probability of getting 39 war entries in the first two quintiles and 30 war entries in the last three quintiles, if election cycles and war entries are statistically independent.
14. There is a .05% probability of getting 32 or more war entries out of a total of 46 if there is an equal probability of a war entry occurring in either the first or second two-year periods after an election.

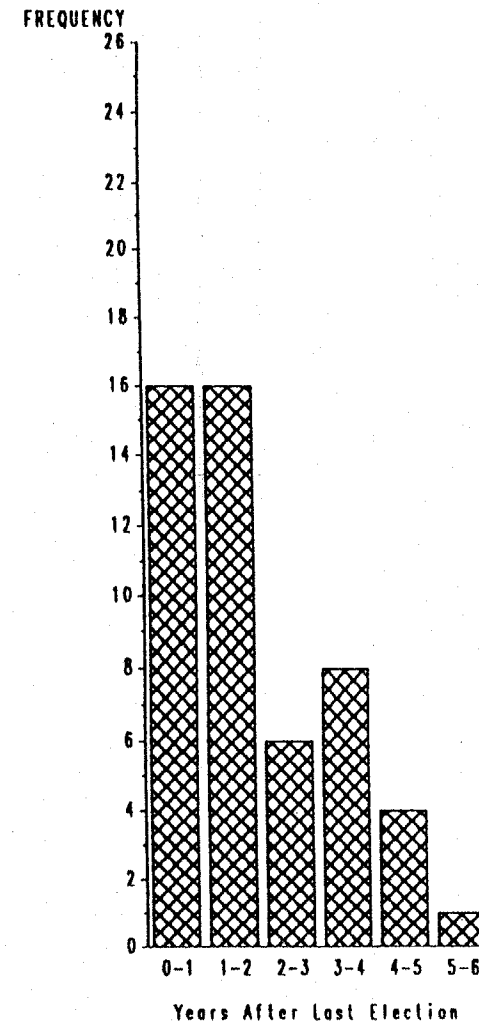Figure 6:   Number of Serious Wars Entered In Years After an Election

them are inadequate to derive fully the causal characteristics of the relationship. A full subscription to the liberal belief in the pacific nature of democratic publics will require a different level of data and the resolution of several important questions. There are three domains of causal ambiguity that need, eventually, to be addressed.

AMBIGUITY 1: COERCION OR CONCILIATION?

The important point here, is that we not jump to the conclusion that the liberal formula is right: that belligerence and high public influence are inversely related. The statistical evidence I have presented demonstrates only that democracies get into fewer wars in the period prior to elections and more wars in the periods just after an election. It does not tell us what kind of behavior leads to that result. The question raised by liberal theory about the pacific nature of democratic publics remains. The reason it remains is simply that we do not have a universal theory of war prevention, much less of war timing. The empirical record and logic both tell us that states sometimes have used threats and the judicious application of military force to avoid war, and sometimes have used well-designed and carefully timed concessions (Jervis 1971; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman, 1986; Patchen 1988). Conversely, the prominent examples of World War I and World War II suggest cases in which, respectively, belligerence and appeasement are widely viewed as having led to war.

If the effect of election dynamics is systematic and consistent, then there are two possibilities: election-oriented behavior could lead democratic states to be more belligerent or it could lead them to be less belligerent than they would otherwise be. For example, thinking of the period before an impending election, it could be that preelection dynamics make electorally vulnerable democratic leaders more resolute and more ready to use force in their international relations, and that this could have a deterrent effect on their adversaries. On the other hand, it could be that preelection dynamics make democratic states more conciliatory and more ready to make compromises in the face of conflict, and that this could allow conflicts to dissipate nonviolently, either through the reduction of misunderstandings, or simply because adversaries can get what they want from the democratic state without resorting to force. *Mutatis mutandi*, the same two possibilities hold for postelection behavior. One need barely scratch the surface of the international relations literature to find theories and examples that point to belligerence or appeasement as the efficient causes of war.

AMBIGUITY 2: HOW DO DEMOCRATIC LEADERS RESPOND TO ELECTORAL PRESSURES?

Even if we could derive a definitive answer as to whether democratic states behave more or less belligerently in preelection periods, we would still be unable to answer satisfactorily the question about the pacifism of democratic publics. We have observed the international result of state behaviors relative to election cycles, but a different level of data will be required if that behavior is to be causally connected to societal preferences. It may be that the preferences of democratic publics are most directly translated into state action in the preelection period of high social power relative to state power. It is also possible that there are electoral effects that work on the preference structure of leaders regardless of public preferences, or as long as the distribution of public preferences remains in some reasonable range.

For example, the electoral need to move towards the position of the median voter and to avoid alienating large and vocal segments of public opinion may lead to a kind of policy moderation in which, on the one side leaders might try to take electoral advantage of small-scale military adventures and appeals to flag and nation, but shrink before the more serious rungs of the escalatory ladder. On the other side, they may feel generous with their concessions to keep a lid on embarrassing international conflicts, but will avoid paying so dearly for peace that the price itself might become a damning electoral issue.

One might also construct an argument in this realm based on the changes in social cohesion with the electoral cycle and the importance of high social cohesion that is needed to maintain the resource extraction required for as costly an endeavor as war.

AMBIGUITY 3: DO OPPOSING STATES RESPOND TO DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL POLITICS?

The third causal ambiguity arises because the evidence of electoral cycle effects I have presented here is not sufficient to tell us to what degree these effects are caused by the behavior of the democratic states and to what degree they are caused by an interaction of democratic electoral dynamics and the decision making of adversary states.

The important point here is that for both the preelection and postelection effect there are several mechanisms that could cause electoral dynamics in democratic states to influence the behavior of the states that might wish to initiate a war against them. The most straightforward mechanism is for elections to cause the democratic state to act in a way that changes the calculation of the opponent as to the value of a military conflict. There are also more complex mechanisms by which the opposing state may respond more directly to democratic electoral dynamics.

For example, preelection dynamics may increase the variation in the range of expected reactions of a democratic state to actions taken by a potential opponent, whereas in the postelection period this variance could be reduced.

Democratic states might sometimes be more belligerent in their preelection period and sometimes less, but other states might always be wary of the instability of electoral period behavior. It is plausible that democracies behave more unpredictably in election periods: a wider range of domestic interests may come into play; candidates may need to appeal to party extremists in the nested game of nomination followed by general election; and if nothing else, there may be uncertainty as to who will be leading the country following the election. If these dynamics are at work, then the leaders of an opposing state will face a greater variance in the reactions to any serious action they choose to take. If the variance of the possible outcomes increases, then ceteris paribus, it will take a more risk-acceptant actor to undertake such an action (Morrow 1986, 1144). Likewise, in the postelection period, the set of expected responses to aggressive initiatives may be more narrowly defined and predictable. The winner of the election is known, the government is again established, and its policies are now freer of domestic electoral distortions. If the variance of possible outcomes is thus decreased, then, ceteris paribus, more risk-averse actors will be ready to undertake an aggressive action.

A second way in which electoral dynamics may influence the decision-making behavior of opponent states is through changes in the negotiating environment. This logic could work in two different ways, depending on whether or not the internal issues are highly salient in the domestic election. If an international issue has high electoral salience, then the state will be more highly constrained. Schelling set out the basic logic for this situation in his argument that a constrained actor—one whose options are visibly limited — has a negotiating advantage (1960). Building on this logic, Putnam has discussed the effects of the nesting of the domestic and international arenas on international negotiations (1988). When other states in the international arena know that a state is constrained by domestic factors, their level of aspirations for the resolution of a given situation may be lowered. Lower aspirations could lead to a greater willingness to make concessions (Pruitt 1981, chap. 1). Likewise, after an election, aspirations may rise as the domestic electoral constraints are seen as diminishing. Elections may constrain democratic states in a way that is particularly effective at the international level, because they are highly visible for the other actors. In order for these constraints to increase the willingness of opponents to make concessions, however, the costs of a failure to come to some accommodation must be greater than the costs of making those concessions. If the costs of failure to reach agreement are insufficient, then the narrowed options of the democratic state will be outside of the range of acceptable outcomes for the adversary state and negotiations will be more likely to break down.

Democratic leaders facing an international issue of low electoral salience can either try to make the issue more salient and hope for a rally effect combined with the risky negotiating advantages of a high salience issue as discussed above; or they might be able to keep the issue's salience low by making greater concessions and thus avoid a high visibility escalation. A democratic leader running on an I-kept-the-peace platform might be willing to make a wider range of concessions to keep the lid on potential international conflicts. The danger in this approach is that of making too many concessions and being labeled a peace-at-any-price candidate.

SHIFTING THE FRAME OF REFERENCE: A FINAL PROBLEM

Thus far, I have not addressed the question of the total number of wars democracies enter. I have considered here only the timing of the wars they enter. The evidence suggests that democracies get into their wars early in the electoral cycle. In presenting it this way, I have implied an election cycle that starts with one election and ends with another. From this frame of reference the picture is of a higher number of wars at the beginning of the cycle and a lower number of wars at the end. Democratic states faced with international pressures for conflict seem to be getting their war entries out of the way early in their terms.

Alternatively, however, it may be conceptually helpful to think of the cycle as a preelection period, followed by an election, and then a postelection period. Looking through this referential frame we see a low number of war entries before elections followed by a high number of war entries after the elections. Sorting out between these alternative reference frames will, again, require a different level of data. But, the second point of reference raises the disturbing possibility that, although elections may discourage democracies from entering wars in the short run, they may encourage other kinds of behaviors that make war either more likely or more severe in the long run.

The views of the likes of Kennan and Lippmann suggest that democracies face the simultaneous problems of insularity and vulnerability to demagoguery. Denouncing other states may be a way of winning elections, and thus elections may exacerbate a tendency toward inflammatory language and weak actions at times of international crisis. Such behavior could increase the long run probability of war by increasing an opponent state's sense of threat and thus of the benefits of war, while decreasing its sense of the cost of war.

A preelection hesitancy to take decisive action when international pressures require it may lead to more and worse war. An even more cynical possibility is that politicians may attempt to exploit the rally phenomenon with small crises before an election, and then aroused passions and escalating tensions may lead to war in the postelection period. In this scenario, it would be less that there are fewer wars in the preelection period, than that there are more wars in the postelection period when the bills for preelection risk-taking come due. There is some evidence for just this sort of effect. In the cases of the United States and Israel, several analysts have pointed to an increased willingness to use force short of war as elections approach (Russett 1990, chap. 2; Mintz and Russett 1990).

CONCLUSIONS

As with much social science research, there are serious ambiguities in the causal structure of the electoral phenomenon I have outlined in this article. I would like to conclude, however, by putting these serious ambiguities aside and focusing on the central issue of this article: the large relationship between election cycles and war entries.

All states face the problem of dealing simultaneously with internal and external pressures. The possibility I have suggested here is that electoral cycle variations in the relative power of internal and external pressures faced by democratic states will be apparent in their international conflict behavior. The empirical findings I have presented suggest that there is an electoral cycle effect on the war entry patterns of democratic states. In the past 200 years, democratic states have entered more wars in the early stages of their electoral cycles and fewer wars in the later stages.

Admittedly these findings are based on aggregate statistics over a relatively small number of cases that bring together the theoretical problems of three different kinds of data. Some of the findings have just the barest toehold on statistical significance. In general, these are not the kinds of results that should elicit fireworks and marching bands. Still, the fact that there are interpretable results at all has to be viewed as surprising. Even a staunch believer in the liberal faith would be likely to come up with several reasons (or rationalizations) as to why we should not observe a relationship between election cycles and war entry at the aggregate level, even if democratic publics are basically pacific. From a perspective that incorporates some of the realists' concerns such reasons are even easier to envision.

These results obtain despite extreme international pressures. The timing of wars should often be a function of events independent of electoral cycles. We would expect a certain number of Hitlers and Napoleons, of great transitions of power, of opportunistic surprise attacks, and even of the historians' horseshoe- nail events to occur on their own timetables with little reference to the internal events of that minority of states that have democratic forms of government.

These results obtain despite alliance commitments that constrain a state's war entry decision. It could hardly be the case that before choosing June 25, 1950 to cross the 38th parallel, North Korea consulted the election timetables of the 10 democracies that responded to the UN call. Indeed, that single event contributes three of the cases of minor war entry within one year of an impending election. Even if bilateral disputes escalate on an electoral calendar, we would expect the aggregate cyclical effect to be washed out to the degree that alliance commitments determine the timing of war entries.

These results obtain despite the waves of jingoism and militarism that infect democracies on occasion. The advocates of mood theories of public opinion and those who worry about the influence of emotional propaganda believe that there are times when democratic publics can all too easily be whipped into a militaristic frenzy. To the degree that there are times of high popularity for embarking on military expeditions, we would expect to see more wars entered close to elections.

Similarly, these results obtain despite the fact that a third of the cases predate World War I. Mueller argues that before the slaughters that began in August 1914, war was quite popular in the public imagination (1989, 38). If Mueller is right, and if publics have more power before elections, then we would expect politicians to have been more tempted by war opportunities as elections approached in that era. But comparing the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the distributions of war entries are statistically indistinguishable. In terms of raw numbers, the nineteenth century is actually slightly more skewed than the twentieth with only 2 out of 22 war entries in the last quintile before an election, compared to 6 out of 47 in the last quintile for the twentieth century.

Finally, these results obtain despite a weak definition of democracy. Italy's 2% franchise in the 1860s can be considered democratic in only a highly context-dependent sense. Many of the cases occur in domestic situations where public influence on foreign policy appears minimal at best. In the mid-nineteenth century, John Bright complained that in England, "when you come to our foreign policy, you are no longer Englishmen, you are no

longer free; you are recommended not to inquire. If you do you are told you cannot understand it; you are snubbed, you are hustled aside. We are told that the matter is too deep for common understandings like ours" (Richards 1967, 19). To the degree that the electoral effect reflects social power, we would expect such cases in which social power is greatly restricted to wash out the electoral cycle-war entry relationship.[15]

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There are, then, a number of forces that should blur the shadow that election cycles cast on the international stage. The persistent results suggest that there is, indeed, some force at work. Further inquiry is indicated. Research directed both at the aggregate level with more variables, and with cases involving lower levels of conflict, and at the disaggregated level looking at the forces and politics involved in individual cases will help cut through the ambiguities of causation I have discussed. If we can direct light on the problem from these alternative angles, we should be able to specify more fully the actual shapes that are casting this electoral shadow on the international stage.

15. Craig and George combine this point with the previous one to argue that in the nineteenth century public opinion did not count for much in the formation of foreign policy (1983, 60-61).

APPENDIX
List of Cases

The following is a list of cases in the Wages of War dataset for countries that are coded as liberal by Doyle (1983a).

Country	War	War Type[a]	Mo[b]	Yr[c]	Win[d]	Battle Deaths	Init[e]	Cycle[f]	Entry Ratio[g]
U.K.	First Afghan	I	10	1838	W	20,000	N	46	.29
France	Franco-Algerian	I	11	1839	W	15,000	N	39	.19
U.K.	Second Syrian	C	9	1840	W	10	N	46	.78
U.K.	First British-Sikh	I	12	1845	W	1,500	N	73	.72
U.S.	Mexican-American	S	5	1846	W	11,000	Y	47	.38
U.K.	Second British-Sikh	I	10	1848	W	1,500	N	58	.23
France	Roman Republic	S	6	1849	W	300	Y	34	.02
U.K.	Crimean	S	3	1854	W	22,000	N	56	.35
U.K.	Anglo-Persian	S	10	1856	W	500	Y	56	.90
U.K.	Sepoy	C	5	1857	W	3,500	N	24	.01
Italy	Seven Weeks	S	6	1866	W	4,000	N	117	.55
U.K.	Second Afghan	I	11	1878	W	4,000	N	74	.77
U.K.	British-Zulu	I	1	1879	W	3,500	N	74	.79
France	Franco-Indochinese	I	4	1882	W	4,500	N	49	.15
U.K.	Mahdist	C	9	1882	L	20,000	N	67	.42
France	Sino-French	S	8	1884	W	2,100	Y	49	.72
France	Franco-Madagascan	I	12	1894	W	6,000	N	56	.27
Italy	Italo-Ethiopian	I	12	1895	L	9,000	N	21	.28
Greece	Greco-Turkish	S	2	1897	L	600	Y	45	.48
U.S.	Spanish-American	S	4	1898	W	5,000	Y	47	.37
U.S.	Second Philippine	C	2	1899	W	4,500	N	47	.56
U.K.	Boer	C	10	1899	W	22,000	N	62	.81
U.S.	Boxer Rebellion	S	6	1900	W	21	Y	47	.90
U.K.	Boxer Rebellion	S	6	1900	W	34	Y	62	.94
France	Boxer Rebellion	S	6	1900	W	24	Y	47	.52
Italy	Italo-Turkish	S	9	1911	W	6,000	Y	55	.55
U.K.	World War I	S	8	1914	W	908,000	N	95	.45
Belgium	World War I	S	8	1914	W	87,500	N	65	.04
France	World War I	S	8	1914	W	1,350,000	N	66	.05
Italy	World War I	S	5	1915	W	650,000	N	72	.26
U.S.	World War I	S	4	1917	W	126,000	N	47	.11
Poland	Russo-Polish	S	2	1919	L	40,000	N	45	.01
France	Riffian	C	4	1925	W	4,000	N	47	.23
France	Druze	C	7	1925	W	4,000	N	47	.30
Canada	World War II	S	9	1939	W	39,300	N	53	.88
U.K.	World War II	S	9	1939	W	270,000	N	114	.40
France	World War II	S	9	1939	W	210,000	N	.	.
Australia	World War II	S	9	1939	W	33,826	N	34	.64
New Zealand	World War II	S	9	1939	W	17,300	N	59	.18

APPENDIX Continued

Country	War	War Type[a]	Mo[b]	Yr[c]	Win[d]	Battle Deaths	Init[e]	Cycle[f]	Entry Ratio[g]
Finland	Russo-Finnish	S	11	1939	L	40,000	N	.	.
Norway	World War II	S	4	1940	W	2,000	N	.	.
Netherlands	World War II	S	5	1940	W	6,200	N	.	.
Belgium	World War II	S	5	1940	W	9,600	N	.	.
U.S.	World War II	S	12	1941	W	408,300	N	47	.27
U.K.	Indonesian	C	11	1945	L	1,000	N	56	.09
France	Indochinese	C	12	1945	L	95,000	N	7	.18
France	Madagascan	C	3	1947	W	1,800	N	54	.08
India	First Kashmir	I	10	1947	W	1,500	N	49	.45
Lebanon	Palestine	S	5	1948	L	500	Y	46	.25
India	Hyderabad	I	9	1948	W	1,000	Y	49	.67
U.S.	Korean	S	6	1950	T	54,000	N	47	.41
U.K.	Korean	S	8	1950	T	670	N	19	.31
Philippines	Korean	S	9	1950	T	90	N	48	.21
Turkey	Korean	S	10	1950	T	720	N	47	.11
Canada	Korean	S	12	1950	T	310	N	49	.36
Australia	Korean	S	12	1950	T	281	N	16	.72
Netherlands	Korean	S	1	1951	T	110	N	47	.64
Belgium	Korean	S	1	1951	T	100	N	46	.16
France	Korean	S	1	1951	T	290	N	54	.90
Greece	Korean	S	1	1951	T	170	N	18	.58
France	Algerian	C	11	1954	L	18,000	N	54	.74
U.K.	Sinai	S	10	1956	W	20	N	52	.33
France	Sinai	S	10	1956	W	10	N	34	.29
Israel	Sinai	S	10	1956	W	200	Y	47	.32
India	Sino-Indian	S	10	1962	L	500	N	60	.13
U.S.	Vietnamese	S	2	1965	L	56,000	Y	47	.07
Australia	Vietnamese	S	2	1965	L	492	N	35	.40
S. Korea	Vietnamese	S	5	1965	L	5,000	N	42	.44
India	Second Kashmir	S	8	1965	L	3,000	Y	60	.68
Philippines	Vietnamese	S	10	1966	L	1,000	N	47	.22
Israel	Six Day	S	6	1967	W	1,000	Y	47	.40
Israel	Israeli-Egyptian	S	3	1969	T	368	N	47	.84
India	Bangladesh	S	12	1971	W	8,000	Y	71	.12
Israel	Yom Kippur	S	10	1973	W	3,000	N	48	.98

a. S = interstate war, C = colonial war, I = imperial war.
b. Month in which war was entered.
c. Year in which war was entered.
d. W = democratic state was on the winning side, L = democratic state was on the losing side, T = the war is coded as a tie.
e. Y = democratic state initiated military conflict, N = democratic state did not initiate military conflict.
f. Length of election cycle bracketing war entry in months.
g. Proportion of electoral cycle already passed at time of war entry.

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