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Preface

In the March 1998 *Journal of Peace Research* Roslyn Simowitz (1998, 228) evaluates conflict research on the diffusion of war and among her concluding observations is the following statement:

Clearly, there has not been a great deal of research on conflict diffusion in recent years, particularly compared to the number of studies done in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One of the reasons for diminished research activity in this area could be due to the fact that conflict diffusion is a relatively rare phenomenon. But I believe that the marginal progressiveness of this research program is an even more significant reason for the reduced interest in this topic.

While I agree that this is a reasonably accurate assessment of the state of conflict diffusion research, I take issue with the suggestion that conflict diffusion might be “relatively rare.” On the contrary, I will propose here that such diffusion is quite common and strongly influential. As such, conflict diffusion is one of the world’s most problematic social dynamics and, potentially, one that is most immediately remediable. There does appear to be a serious impasse in the research stream that thwarts further progression in our understanding of this problem, however. In their response to Simowitz, Starr and Siverson (1998) defend the diffusion research program mainly by criticizing Simowitz’s criticisms; they can not refute the observation that there has been a waning interest in the topic. Research interests have dwindled to focus mainly on two issues: one is called “war diffusion” and looks mainly at the expansion of wars to involve additional participants in a specific episode (e.g., Siverson and Starr 1991), the other may be called “non-war diffusion” as it looks at the expansion of democracy in the light of the democratic peace proposition (e.g., Starr 1991, Ward et al. forthcoming).

I have my own problems with the conflict diffusion research program and these collected problems serve as the point of departure for the study presented here. I believe the main impasse in the extant research stream lies in our conception of war: what it is and how it works. Starr and Siverson implicate this point of departure when they identify “one of the key activities of . . . first phase studies [as being] an exercise in conceptualization and concept clarification.” They go on to point out that the original “Most and Starr studies *were* about the diffusion of *violence*.” (1998, 234 emphases added) Most of the prior studies of conflict diffusion conceptualize war conventionally, as an instrumental object and objective, but, as pro-gun lobbyists like to point out, “weapons don’t kill people, people kill people (often with weapons).” It is the subjects of war themselves, not

the instruments they wield, that are the determining factor in the transformation of normal (non-violent) human relations to violence and war. As such, it must be the subjective nature of war, not its objective nature, that informs our conceptualization of the act as a social problem. There are three principal components of warfare that must be reassessed if progress is to be realized: system, process, and conflict dynamics. These are the topics of the first three chapters in this book. Chapter 1 briefly introduces the systemic scope of the study. Chapter 2 concentrates on re-conceptualizing war so we may better understand it as a social problem. Chapter 3 constructs a dynamic social context in which we can situate the problem of war both as violence and as a violation of systemic development.

Bringing this work to fruition was hampered mainly by the enormity and ambiguities inherent to the task. It has been a logistical dilemma: how to cogently present an idea so large within the confines of reasonable space. My answer to the dilemma is contained herein: conceptual visualization. Conceptual visualization schemes are formal models; they situate ideas and define interrelationships among those ideas formally in a geometric arrangement termed *conceptual space*. Complex formal relationships are rendered in schematic presentations. Mathematics underpin the models but do not intrude upon our thinking in ways that undermine our comprehension of social phenomena, that is, with an array of abstract symbols that seem to deny humanity and human agency. Admittedly, the geometric symbols used here are equally abstract, but the abstractions posed are images that are compatible with the abstractions commonly used in the imagination. Still, the schematic presentation, like mathematical formulas, imposes discipline on the chaotic elements of the complex, dynamic system so they can be defined specifically and examined critically. It is the social science equivalent to quantum mechanics. With the aid of nearly seventy schematic graphs and models, I have tried to capture complex systemic dynamics and convey them plausibly in an essentially static medium. Not entirely successfully but enough, hopefully, to stimulate consideration, imagination, and debate and, yes, criticism, correction, and refinement.

Theory construction is one of two major components in the book's systematic examination of the Third World War. The second component is extensive quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis at the global systemic level was not possible until very recently. Major advances in information and communication systems, combined with a major breakthrough in political accountability provided by the human rights movement, has, since the 1970s, breached the great walls of sovereignty around the world. Just a bit. This study seizes the opportunity to assess the revealed situation empirically. Like the early years of television, the image is rudimentary, fuzzy, plagued with "noise," and biased toward the dramatic and atrocious (i.e., statistical errors). Our incipient global data base is not a precision instrument. The data it contains is intrinsically "soft" and can not withstand intensive statistical analysis. The "prisoner" here is so weak that it is susceptible to random and false confessions under duress. The primary method used in the

present study's data analyses has been a search for systemic consistency among related variables in support of the model-derived hypotheses, that is, *extensive* quantitative analysis. For further explanation of this understanding of the prospects for global quantitative analysis, I encourage the reader to examine the monograph, *The Scientific Study of International Conflict Processes*. (Marshall 1998)

This tome is intended as one component in a multi-media triad: conventional text, computer CD, and Internet website. Each of the three media contributes to the presentation of the whole, that is, the presentation approximates its subject; it is itself a dynamic system. The conventional text allows for the greatest explanation but falters when the explanations become too large or are predicated on process dynamics. The conventional text is the epitome of stasis; it moves us but it can not move itself. It lectures us; we either grasp its message or reject it or we recreate it to our liking, in our own image. The computer CD, on the other hand, does move; that is its greatest strength, what it does best. The CD is all about graphics, sound, and animation. The CD can present text but, apparently, not very well. Conventional text and cyberspace are incompatible media; they run at far different speeds. Text is a plodding horse that quickly lags behind as our eyes run and dance and dodge the myriad sensations flying across the cyberwindow. Too much text tends to frustrate and dull the experience. The CD entertains and amazes but it is still simply a monologue; it asks us to suspend our credibility while it takes us on a ride that requires us either to answer for ourselves any questions that arise or suppress them from our thoughts. The Internet website possesses many of the best qualities of the other two media but in much smaller measure. The website is mechanistically constrained by the limits of our patience (and our equipment). It is suited best to the "info-byte" bombardment, that is, flinging nuggets of meaning and trying to hit the moving mind of the cybersurfer. The Internet's greatest strength lies in its discursive potential; it can be a dialogue. When it listens, it can learn as well as teach and it can adapt to differential circumstances through feedback loops. It enables its operators to field and respond to questions and requests for the further clarification of ideas (perhaps, also, up to the limits of our patience). That is my vision of it, anyway. In any case, the website component of the triad is in place and I invite the reader to make use of it. The future genesis of the CD will make the multi-media triad complete; that announcement will be posted (hopefully in 1999) on the Center for Systemic Peace website.¹

I began formulating this study in the mid-1980s. My initial interest was to study the systemic effects of the superpowers' Cold War hostilities. The original idea was that, in order to transform the predominant global political culture from enmity to amity, we would need to understand and somehow counteract the negative conditioning imposed upon the global system by the ideological confrontation between the superpowers. A vivid example of this kind of psychological conditioning can be conjured up by reference to the red scare and

nuclear terror propaganda campaigns of the 1950s (an incantation lost on anyone younger than 40!). A classic cultural icon of this early phase in the balance of terror is the short film titled, “Duck and Cover.”² The film was shown to this country’s very young and impressionable school children and, I must say, it scared the daylight out of me. I was too young then to be confronted with irrational fears based on abstract notions of horror, mortality, and the prospect of nuclear holocaust (still am). Of course, it was the Vietnam and counter-culture experiences of the late 1960s and early 1970s that made the problem of political violence in world politics (and the possibility of its transformation) real for many people in the United States. In any case, it soon became clear that the Cold War system was far too complex, stylized, and institutionalized to serve as a “laboratory experiment” for analyzing evidence of distinctive traces of cultural conditioning.³ Cold War conditioning suffused the entire known system (East and West). Objectivity was hampered by the lack of a “control set,” that is, an unaffected (or substantially, differentially affected) empirical vantage point, an alternative perspective. The rise of the “Third World” as an empirical object has increased the potential for objectivity in political analysis.⁴ System dynamics are more visible in Third World politics because Third World states often lack the strength, wherewithal, and political acumen to distort or control or redirect (“spin”) the effects of systemic conditioning. They are less complex, less stylized, and less institutionalized, mainly because they are new actors or new to the game of global politics. The most provocative proposal made in this study is that the Third World matters, that “we” can learn from their experiences, that “they” are not simply primordial clones of “us.” Diversity is the teacher, because diversity is a consequence of systemic and societal development. The foundational tenets of this proposition have been very specially articulated in an excellent examination of differential societal development titled, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. (Diamond 1997)

The theoretical breakthrough that marks the genesis of this project is contained in the *social forms* model (see figure 3.4—Social Identity Group: Human Society Model). This model is probably the most innovative, provocative, and potentially controversial of the several theoretical propositions underpinning the study. I refer to the basic model as the *social forms* model because it was originally informed by the sociological work of Louis Coser and, before him, of Georg Simmel on the “functions of social conflict” and the “web of group affiliations.” It could just as well be called the “human condition” model, after the ideas of philosopher Hannah Arendt, or the “human predicament” model, after the ideas of social psychologist Muzafer Sherif. All of these great thinkers possessed the core of what I think is a great idea, an idea that can move political science toward greater coherence and relevance in the twenty-first century.

The *social forms* model is the central, conceptual construct in the elaboration of a four-dimensional, existential, conceptual space model (see figures 3.11 and 3.12). Statistical methods are based on the delineation and distillation of variations

in uni-dimensional attributes. “Q” methodology (see, for example, Brown 1980 1986) attempts to work with two-dimensional attributes but this methodology remains controversial and has not gained much acceptance. Chaos theory is a fairly recent development in the mathematical modeling of complex, multi-dimensional, systems (see, for example, Prigogine and Stengers 1984; Huckfeldt 1990; Kiel and Elliot 1997) but its practical application to the social sciences remains underexplored and underdeveloped. The most exciting multi-dimensional mathematical modeling of social systems I have seen has been done by Zinnes and Muncaster (1984). Their work on “hostility systems” closely approximates the work done in this study: both studies focus on the conflict dynamics of social systems, both build on the idea of protracted social conflict promoted most eloquently by Ed Azar. Unfortunately, I remained ignorant of their modeling work until after I had completed this study. The fact that we independently arrived at similar results using similar assumptions but far different methodologies lends important corroborating support to our shared conclusions. In any case, chapter 3 will likely prove to be the most difficult one for most readers to follow and comprehend as it will ask the reader to “stand on their head.” I suggest that those among us who are more impatient with journeyman efforts at abstract reasoning could skip chapter 3 and come back to it later when one’s curiosity has been piqued by the more conventional treatments. The study will stand on its own without chapter 3, but it will lack the critical depth that gives the theory of the diffusion of insecurity real, practical importance for the design of effective public policy and strategies of conflict management.

There are several crucial ideas that I hope the reader will understand (if not, accept) from reading chapter 3. One is that a disposition to violence is an inherent aspect of societal systems. In one sense, simple probability theory will account for the presence of individuals with varying degrees of the disposition to violence within any society: the more people, the more likely that some will be variably disposed toward varying degrees of violence. But the model proposes something that goes beyond simple probability: *the structure of societal relations creates and recreates the disposition, in individuals, to violence*. That is, the structure of society stabilizes the probability of violence according to the level of societal development. It gives “social form” to instrumental behaviors. This notion gives rise to another crucial idea: *the aggregated dispositions to violence are partly inherent, as posited in the first point, but largely contingent*. The dispositions are contingent on the development of sociational factors, the alternatives to violence. Dispositions to violence are also contingent on the character of our leadership and our normative images of ourselves and the “other.” How do we express and value the differences apparent between social identities? What do we think of as acceptable outward expressions of our inner dispositions? How will our peers react to our expressions as our dispositions manifest in overt behaviors? What will be the dispositions of our leaders and how will they use their societally-granted authority to affect our prospects and our choices of expression?

We can not eliminate violence as a possibility but we can work to minimize the likelihood of violence as a social problem. The presence of a social psychology of *insecurity* in the political culture heightens the probability that dispositions to violence gain expression as overt violence. Policies designed correctly to counteract the effects of insecurity will dampen (lower) that probability. This is something immediately political, something that we can do now to lessen both the experience of violence and the long-term effects that experience will have on society's development. Two other crucial ideas from this chapter are, one, that societal development and performance are contingent on the degree of success of the conflict management function and, two, that the political economy of conflict and violence makes it imperative that the conflict management function be made as successful as possible, given the constraints posed by the level of societal development. Another related, crucial idea is that more-developed societies can proactively intervene in potentially hostile situations by providing access to their sociational capabilities (e.g., technology transfers), by acting as a surrogate source of legitimate authority (e.g., leadership), by increasing awareness and access to the alternatives to violence (e.g., education and assistance), and by favoring proactive leaders and proactive solutions to societal dilemmas (e.g., systemic incentives and sanctions).

There are two crucial ideas that chapter 3 does not convey well enough. One is the idea that societal development is not a technology-driven linear progression. The societal development process often stagnates and may even be reversed. Societal development is a human social construct that is contingent on the continuity of individuals' contributions and of the coordinated, coherent efforts of its members, all its members. When member support flags, progress lags. When member support deteriorates seriously (such as, when a society falls into an episode of protracted conflict), developmental progress may be reversed.⁵ No society can rest on its laurels; life is a participation sport. A second shortcoming is the chapter's presentation of the idea of systemic and societal complexity. For the sake of simplification, a three-unit systemic complex is presented in figures 3.11 and 3.12. However, modern societal systems comprise hundreds and thousands of social identity units. These complex, pluralist systems are held together by the existence, maintenance, and reproduction of the social structure: a vibrant network of multiple identifications (individuals are members of more than one identity group) and multiple associations (individuals maintain relational affinities, or associational ties, both within and across groups) with other individuals that lend cohesion to the societal system and help transcend group identification boundaries (see figure 3.10). These activities gain focus within the context of societal dilemmas over the utilization of common-pool resource problems and are enabled by the technological network of information and communication flows. Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker (1994) are doing absolutely marvelous work on developing our understanding of the complex societal

mechanics of coordination in regard to social dilemmas and common-pool resources.

The empirical foundations for this study were uncovered during nearly five years of intense research conducted under the direction of Ted Robert Gurr, first as a part of Barbara Harff's genocide/politicide project at the University of Colorado (where Barbara first "discovered" me) and afterwards as the primary research assistant and project coordinator for the Minorities at Risk project at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland. As an essential part of that work, I learned about the uses of violence in political relations in all the countries of the world for the entire twentieth century (and earlier in most cases). Similar to staring at one of those computer-generated, three-dimensional pictures, while looking at the "whole picture" I began to detect what appeared to be pronounced patterns. The patterns grew more distinct as my studies progressed and, when placed in the "social forms" theoretical context, became the basis for the *diffusion of insecurity* theory and the present study. I thank both Ted Gurr and Barbara Harff for the many wonderful opportunities and for their unwavering support over the past fourteen years. Ted's influence is visible throughout this work and that fact is appropriate testimony to the importance of his path-breaking work and his careful guidance to this study (and my own personal development). Chapter 4 presents the Cold War period's systemic conditioning and evolved political landscape in a general theory of the diffusion of insecurity and the consequential syndrome of *arrested development* by bringing the theoretical reflections and re-conceptualizations of the first three chapters together and applying them to the empirical world of the latter twentieth century. The chapter discusses how these precepts are relevant to and how they can reinvigorate conflict diffusion research. The theory and its derived hypotheses are operationalized for the latter chapters' empirical verifications.

The research specific to this project began in the spring of 1989. The research presented here is only a very small portion of the actual research conducted. As in the other visual media of photography and film, most of the "frames shot" have fallen on the cutting room floor. This "additional footage" is consistently supportive of the theory and conclusions, but the image they present is more obscure. A great deal of time was spent learning the terrain of the data bases used in the analyses so they might be used appropriately and responsibly. In the final analysis, the evidence is generally consistent with expectations and consistently supportive of the theoretical propositions. It is equally evident that a lot more work could be done in conflict diffusion research, and I hope that it will be.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the real human subjects of this research and the deplorable conditions of life that many of them face on an everyday basis. This study began with an academic interest in the largely abstract effects of the Cold War on society and development in the United States but quickly became immersed in the details of the Third World War, its vast devastation and its enormous toll of human suffering and lost opportunities. "They" will very likely

continue to bear the most extreme costs until “we” learn how to properly manage system, process, and conflict dynamics and turn our collective, coordinated attention to speeding their recovery. The more-fortunate must seize the initiative to help the less-fortunate recover from the devastation of the Third World War just as they helped the European states recover from the devastation of the Second World War; not only for moral or ethical reasons (even though these alone should be compelling, but are not), but for the very practical reasons that I will discuss later in this book. Until then, we will continue to witness the most abominable waste of human lives, livelihoods, resources, and potential imaginable.

It is customary to thank, individually, the scholars and friends who helped make the project successful. Heartfelt thanks also go to Bill Reisinger, Bob Boynton, and Jerry Sorokin for sticking with me through some turbulent years at The University of Iowa. I also like to thank Pat James, David Carment, and Donna Ramsey for giving me intellectual boosts along the way. Donna’s importance to the successful completion of the project can not be overstated. Her belief in me and her confidence in my achievements pushed me through when I was too weary from the strain to believe in myself. My deepest appreciation is reserved to acknowledge the powerful influences of Edward Azar, Kenneth Boulding, and Muzafer Sherif, all distinguished peace scholars who have since departed.

Equally important is the recognition of special contributions by special people. For me, these recognitions chronicle the sacrifices I have had to make along the way; long, arduous, personal journeys tend toward isolation and solitude. I am forever indebted to Susan Alexander for introducing me to the passion and for infusing me with the dream, such a very long time ago. My family offered unqualified support and provided me with an anchor, never expecting me to explain myself or justify my preoccupation with reflection. My regrets go to those with whom I have lost contact because of my devotion to this work. An eternal place in my heart goes to Peggy Dozark who elevated my spirit when the burdens borne were of great consequence.

I have tried very hard to be truthful, consistent, and accurate in the pages that follow; all have been reviewed by trusted colleagues and so I am comfortable that no major blunders are painfully evident. All mistakes are my own, of course.

For the past ten years or more, my thoughts have been haunted by the millions of tortured souls who are the real population of this study. Perhaps now those very personal spectres can rest in peace and I can get on with the art of living.

Notes

1. The URL address for the Center for Systemic Peace website is as follows: <http://members.aol.com/CSPmgm>

2. “Duck and Cover” is the one film I recall most vividly from the menage of U.S.

Department of Defense propaganda films we were exposed to in elementary schools in the 1950s, an entire generation traumatized at an early age by the spectre of instantaneous, horrific nuclear annihilation. The most accessible reference work to this genre of film is the 1982 documentary collage titled, *Atomic Cafe*. (Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, and Pierce Rafferty, producers. Distributed by The Archives Project. Video cassette.)

3. In fact, I would argue that much of the stylized, institutional complexity of the major- and super-powers has resulted from their attempts to cope with and counteract the negative effects of protracted conflict and warfare. These organizational responses and institutionalized and ritualized coping mechanisms (standard operating procedures) become most visible when an establishment actor confronts an ad hoc challenger, such as when the British soldiers and Hessian mercenaries confronted the American rebels during the U.S. Revolutionary War or, more recently, when the U.S. military confronted the Viet Cong guerrillas. Rationality is conditioned by conventions; unconventional tactics can disrupt the application of superior force. Institutionalization adds a certain measure of momentum and intransigence to the political process that often makes it difficult for leaders to recognize, respond, and adapt to altered or changing circumstances. Graham Allison (1971) is well-known for his exposition of institutional influences affecting decision-making processes, yet these distortions are rarely considered in quantitative studies of war. The “correlates of war” may be better considered as the “correlates of Western-stylized responses to serious conflict between independent states.” The accepted parameters for the resort to force, military necessity, social control, and *raison d'état* can be changed by convention as well, as we are witnessing in the twentieth century.

4. I am uncomfortable using the conventional designation of “Third World” in political analysis; I would prefer to use a qualified term such as ‘third world’ so as to draw attention to this discomfort. The ‘third world’ is not an exact place in an imagined global hierarchy (a euphemism for “global ghetto”); it represents a unique perspective on global conditioning and the locus of much of the world’s magnificent and under-appreciated diversity. For the sake of textual simplicity, I will, reluctantly, revert to using the standard term, Third World, in the chapters’ text.

5. The idea of the reversibility of societal development should be juxtaposed to a phenomenon generally known as the “phoenix factor.” (See Organski and Kugler 1980) The phoenix factor refers to a society’s ability to recover quickly from the material devastation of war (and, possibly, even improve its material circumstances beyond what would have been extrapolated from pre-war rates of growth). The social forms explanation of this phenomenon would point to the difference between the material structures of society and its social structures. If the social capital and societal structures remain largely intact (or they are supplemented by the intact social capacity of third parties), the reconstruction of the material structures of a prior-developed society is simply a matter of time, effort, and resources. Any improvement in their material circumstances are probably a factor of war-stimulated innovation, motivation, and renewal. In any case, the phoenix factor does not appear relevant to Third World wars for reasons I will explain later in this text.