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The Theory of Democratic Peace and Threat Perception

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt's assessment of Hitler as a potential threat to American security in the aftermath of the Munich crisis highlights the role of liberal-democratic norms in shaping the threat perceptions of democratic leaders. A critical factor in Roosevelt's post-Munich expectation of future trouble for the United States was his judgment that Hitler's contempt for democratic processes of accommodation forecasted unlimited aims. Since Roosevelt did not link his perception of threat to regime type, however, this episode also calls into question a central tenet of the theory of democratic peace: the notion that democracies invariably harbor a "presumption of enmity" toward nondemocracies. Nevertheless, the Munich case allows us to see which democratic norms do matter in threat perception and establishes that they are not simply the epiphenomena of state interests. Moreover, Roosevelt's response to the Munich crisis shows that threat can be assessed primarily on the basis of intentions and suggests how democratic predispositions can provide indicators of intent. Finally, in analyzing why some democratic leaders derive diagnostic information about aggressive intentions from such indicators, while others do not, this article explores the connection between different leaders' perceptions and the foreign policy processes of democratic states.

In recent years, the proposition that liberal democracies seldom, if ever, fight one another has been the subject of growing controversy. Some, relying on the techniques of quantitative analysis, dispute the very existence of the democratic peace (Spiro, 1994; Farber and Gowa, 1995; Gowa, 1999; Henderson, 2001). Others, accepting its reality, disagree about how to explain it.

While this debate is unlikely to be resolved any time soon, case studies analyzing the dynamics of particular events can advance it by clarifying some of the issues it raises.[1] By highlighting the role of liberal-democratic norms in shaping the threat perceptions of democratic leaders, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's assessment of German Chancellor Adolf Hitler as a potential threat to American security in the aftermath of the Munich crisis offers such a case. Specifically, it identifies Roosevelt's perception of Hitler's contempt for the processes of accommodation at the heart of

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[1] As Joseph Nye has suggested. Cited in Owen (1994:91; see also Ray, 1995: ch. 4; Doyle, 1994:181; and Elman, 1997).

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democratic politics as a critical factor in his post-Munich expectation of future trouble for the United States.

Although the Munich case supports some aspects of the theory of democratic peace, however, it also calls into question one of its central tenets: the notion that democracies inevitably harbor a "presumption of enmity" toward non-democracies.[2] An analysis of Roosevelt's assessment of the international situation in the aftermath of the Munich crisis shows clearly that it was not the absence of democracy on which he based his expectation of future German aggression. Before Hitler demonstrated his contempt for the norms relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes, Roosevelt did not assume that he would violate those norms simply because he was a dictator. Nor did the president see Germany as threatening the United States—despite his belief that she had the capacity to do so. Rather, he wavered on the question of whether or not it might be possible to induce Hitler to cooperate with the democracies in the interest of peace.

After Munich, these views changed dramatically and Roosevelt concluded that a German-dominated Europe would eventually endanger American security. Hitler's performance during the crisis had raised questions about his political creed and modus operandi that made it impossible for the president to persist in his intermittent optimism about dealing with him on a cooperative basis. Furthermore, it convinced Roosevelt that Hitler's aims were basically unlimited and that, therefore, he could not be satisfied by the diplomatic adjustment of legitimate grievances. However much he had gained at Munich, Hitler was bound to move again.

This perception had immediate consequences for American foreign policy, ending Roosevelt's ambivalence about the proper course to take. Thus, he adopted the policy of aiding the European democracies, a policy to which he steadfastly adhered despite determined challenges from Congress and his own administration (Farnham, 1997: ch. 6). Unlike Hitler, at Munich the democracies had demonstrated their own sincere, perhaps even excessive, devotion to the processes of peaceful accommodation.

The notion that democracies may apply distinctive criteria to threat perception has important implications for international relations theory. First of all, not only does the Munich episode demonstrate that Roosevelt linked his perception of threat to the violation of certain norms of political accommodation, it also shows us which democratic norms matter and establishes that they are not merely the epiphenomena of "the interests of states and the logic of their situations."[3] Secondly, contrary to traditional realist expectations, Roosevelt's response to the Munich crisis shows that states assess threat at least as much on the basis of intentions as capabilities and suggests how democratic predispositions can provide indicators of intent.[4] Third, in analyzing why some leaders derive diagnostic information about aggressive intentions from such indicators, while others do not, this article explores the connection between leaders' perceptions and the foreign policy processes of democratic states. Thus, it may help us to explain how democracies behave toward non-democracies more generally.

In presenting the argument, I outline the principal theoretical explanations of democratic peace, then analyze Roosevelt's perception of the German threat to American security in the aftermath of the Munich crisis. Finally, I discuss the

[2] As Michael Doyle (1986:1161) explains it: "Because non-liberal governments are in a state of aggression with their own people, their foreign relations become for liberals deeply suspect." See also Doyle (1993:33); Owen (1994:89, 96, 103). Bueno do Mesquita and Lalman (1992:156–57) also believe that democracies use regime type to decide whether other states are doves or hawks. See also Starr, 1992:207–13.

[3] As Gowa (1995:515) argues, for example.

[4] Some realists, like Stephen Walt (1987, 1996), have tried to incorporate intentions into their theories, but they do not explain what might be diagnostic of intent. See note 73.

implications of this analysis for theories of both democratic peace and threat perception.

Explaining Democratic Peace

The finding that democracies, while apparently engaging in war no less frequently than other states, seldom if ever fight one another is generally considered robust (Levy, 1989:270; Bremer, 1992; Ray, 1993, 1998; Weart, 1994:299, 1998; Russett and Oneal, 2001). When it comes to explaining it, however, there is considerable disagreement (Hagan, 1994:185–86). Efforts to do so usually focus on the impact of norms, institutions, or both.[5]

Those who make the institutional argument contend that "due to the complexity of the democratic process and the requirement of securing a broad base of support for risky policies, democratic leaders are reluctant to wage wars, except in cases wherein war seems a necessity or when the war aims are seen as justifying the mobilization costs" (Maoz and Russett, 1993:626; see also Gaubatz, 1999:17. But see Schultz, 2001:14–15, who disputes the "assumption that war is systematically less attractive to democratic leaders").[6] Moreover, because democratic leaders are accountable and fear punishment from the voters if a military enterprise fails, or even if they are forced to back down in a crisis, they are better able to signal commitment when they do intend to fight. Recognizing this, other democracies will avoid such conflicts or seek to settle them peacefully (Fearon, 1994:577, 587; Schultz, 1998, 1999; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999a, 1999b; Gaubatz, 1999:20, 110–13; Gelpi and Griesdorf, 2001; Russett and Oneal, 2001:54, 66–67). In other words, democratic institutions can mitigate the security dilemma by reducing the problems of information failure and credible commitment (see Lake and Rothschild, 1996:52; Jervis, 2003:4).

Other proponents of the institutional explanation argue that the need to build support means that preparing for war in a democracy normally requires a good deal of time, during which a diplomatic solution to the conflict may be found. It also means that preparations for war are likely to be quite public, thus reducing the likelihood of surprise attack.[7] All these factors lessen the risk that one democracy will attack another. Thus, "two democratic states—each constrained from going to war and anticipating the other to be so inhibited—likely will settle their conflicts short of war" (Russett, 1993:39).

A second explanation for democratic peace points to mutual acceptance of the norms underlying democratic political processes and institutions. Such norms "emphasize regulated political competition through peaceful means. ... Political conflicts in democracies are resolved through compromise rather than through elimination of opponents" (Maoz and Russett, 1993:625; Dixon, 1994:14; Weart, 1994:306; Shultz, 2001:12–13). William Dixon (1994:15–18) has called this practice "bounded competition": while the clash of values and interests is common in democracies, "so too is the presence of rules, procedures, or guidelines for setting its boundaries." These rest on "contingent consent," meaning that all sides agree to regulate competition and abide by the rules, provided others do so as well. Finally,

[5] Recently, efforts have been made to include all three legs of the Kantian system of peaceful interstate relations in the explanation—economic interdependence and membership in international organizations, as well as democracy. Russett and Oneal present evidence of the efficacy of all three in producing the "democratic" peace (2001:272, 279–81, chs. 4 and 5). See also Weart (1998: ch. 14) on Republican Leagues; Burley (1992) on law among liberal states; and Mansfield et al. (2002) on democracies and commitment to commercial cooperation.

[6] Among others who emphasize the importance of structural constraints are Morgan and Campbell (1991:187–211), Morgan and Schwebach (1992: 305–20), Reiter and Stam (2002), and Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman (1992:145–58).

[7] Kenneth Waltz points out, however, that strong countries often have the capacity to intervene in the affairs of others without extensive preparation. Personal communication.

while the form of these regulatory processes may vary from society to society, they are all "nonviolent and noncoercive."

When two democracies have a conflict of interest, each is able to bring these norms to bear and expects the other to do so as well. Thus, "the *culture, perceptions, and practices* that permit compromise and the peaceful resolution of conflicts without the threat of violence within countries come to apply across national boundaries toward other democratic countries" (Dixon, 1994:15–18; emphasis in original).

Focusing on the positive consequences for relations among democracies, this version of the normative argument for the democratic peace has little to say about the relationship between democracies and non-democracies. As noted earlier, however, some proponents of the normative argument go further and insist that liberal democracies are not only peacefully inclined toward one another, but also anticipate enmity between themselves and non-democracies. According to Michael Doyle, "The very constitutional restraint, shared commercial interests, and international respect for individual rights that promote peace among liberal societies can exacerbate conflicts in relations between liberal and non-liberal societies" (1983:324; emphasis removed). Since "the legitimacy of state actions rests on the fact that it respects and effectively represents morally autonomous individuals … states that coerce their citizens lack moral legitimacy." This in turn breeds liberal suspicion of illiberal states such that "extreme lack of public respect or trust is one of the major features that distinguish relations between liberal and nonliberal societies from relations among liberal societies" (325, 326).

This emphasis on "principled liberal commitment to self-determination" as the "normative foundation" of democratic peace may lead to a prediction of greater hostility between democracies and those who flout that norm than would an emphasis on the democratic political culture of bounded competition and compromise.[8] Examining the reasons for Roosevelt's assessment of Hitler before and after the Munich crisis can help us not only to better understand that aspect of the normative explanation but also to shed light on the possibility of cooperation between democracies and non-democracies.

Norms and institutions, then, are the principal explanations for the apparently peaceful relations among democracies. Once regarded as competing, a more recent trend is to view them as complementary. Thus, Russett and Oneal (2001:53; see also Ray, 1995:43) argue: "It is more helpful to think of peace among democracies as 'overdetermined,' explainable by several related but conceptually distinct and reinforcing, perhaps sequential, causal mechanisms." It remains important, however, to investigate the relationships among these causal mechanisms. One way of doing this is by using historical case studies to "establish … that the considerations identified in one variant or another of the [democratic peace] theory actually were important motivators of individual and state behavior" (Hermann and Kegley, 1991:512–15; Russett, 1993:41, 1996:175; Weart, 1994: 299–300). Roosevelt's decision-making during and after the Munich crisis does, in fact, tell us a good deal about the possible role of several such factors in the calculations of democratic leaders.

The Munich Crisis

The Munich crisis unfolded in late September 1938 as the British and French attempted to deal with German pressure on Czechoslovakia while avoiding war and preserving at least the appearance of honoring their commitments to the latter. It ended with the signing of the Munich agreement on September 30.

[8] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for this insight.

The crisis was triggered by the escalation of Hitler's claims on Czechoslovakia from autonomy for the Sudeten Germans, to which the Czechs had already agreed, to outright cession of the Sudetenland to Germany. Rather than accede, Czechoslovakia turned to France and Britain. In response, the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, offered to conduct negotiations with Hitler.[9]

On September 15, Chamberlain met the Fuehrer at Berchtesgaden only to hear him repeat his demand for the cession of the Sudeten provinces. The British Prime Minister then undertook to persuade the French, and pressure the Czechs, to agree. Having succeeded in both aims, he met Hitler again at Godesberg on September 22 only to discover that the Fuehrer was now also requiring the cession of territory in which Germans were a minority and insisting that all transfers be carried out by October 1. Britain and France balked at this development, and by September 25 it began to look as though they might actually fight (Divine, 1969: 20). At this point President Roosevelt chose to intervene, first with an appeal to keep negotiating, and then with a message to Hitler alone proposing to expand the talks into a conference of all the parties. Following a further intervention by Mussolini, Hitler issued invitations to Britain, France, and Italy to meet at Munich on September 29 and 30.

The outcome of this conference, as Robert Divine has noted, "marked the climax of appeasement." Hitler promised "not to seek an additional foot of territory in Europe, [and] Britain and France agreed that Germany should occupy the Sudeten area in four stages. ... The Czechs agreed to the terms on the morning of September 30, and thus became the sacrificial victims of the worldwide demand for peace at any price." At this point, the democracies having found a way to give Hitler what he wanted without putting him to the trouble of fighting for it, the crisis ended (Divine, 1965:54).

Roosevelt's Perception of the German Threat

Although it did not at first appear to be so, Munich marked a significant turning point in pre–World War II American foreign policy. Prior to the crisis, Roosevelt had responded to increasingly ominous international developments with growing attention to the situation abroad and an intensified search for a solution to the problems it posed. Thus, he alternated between schemes to thwart the dictators, such as blockade and embargo, and plans to socialize them. His ambivalence about Hitler's intentions during this period is reflected in his sporadic efforts to engage him in activities requiring mutual cooperation. Just as Roosevelt's fears were expressed in his flirtation with the idea of isolating the dictators with some kind of collective action, his hopes were reflected in his peace moves.[10]

After Munich, however, both the president's assessment of the threat America faced and the measures he was willing to contemplate to meet it underwent a qualitative change. Thus, in a meeting with key members of his administration on November 14, 1938, he

> pointed out that the recrudescence of German power at Munich had completely reoriented our own international relations; that for the first time since the Holy Alliance in 1818 the United States now faced the possibility of an attack on the Atlantic side in both the Northern and the Southern Hemispheres. He said that this demanded our providing immediately a huge air force ....[11]

[9] This discussion of the crisis is based on Taylor (1979:7–11), Offner (1969:259–68), and Divine (1965:51–55, 1969:20–21).

[10] For an analysis of Roosevelt's policies during this period see Farnham (1997: ch. 3).

[11] "Meeting at the White House, Dictated by Mr. Oliphant, November 14, 1938," Morgenthau Diary, vol. 150, p. 338, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (cited hereafter as FDRL). This is one of two first-hand accounts of the November 14 White House meeting. The other is that of General H. H. Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, "November 15, 1938, Memorandum for the Chief of Staff," PPF1-P, Box 118, Special Conferences Folder, FDRL.

a. Evaluating German Capabilities

On the capability side of the equation, the Munich crisis convinced Roosevelt that air power would dominate in any future conflict (Farnham, 1997:146–50). This made Germany's lead seem even more formidable and magnified the risk that she might prevail in a European war. Moreover, Roosevelt feared that the ensuing shift in the balance of power would endanger the United States not only through Germany's acquisition of the European democracies' resources but also through the disappearance of the buffer they provided (150–52).

Nevertheless, Roosevelt's belief that Germany now posed a security threat cannot be explained solely by his understanding of German capabilities. After all, before the Munich crisis, he had assumed neither that merely having the ability to attack America would lead Germany to use it,[12] nor that her military advantage would necessarily prevent her from cooperating with the democracies in the cause of peace. Even after the Anschluss in March 1938, despite his amazement at the reports of the Fuehrer's bizarre behavior, Roosevelt did not altogether abandon the notion of dealing with him on the basis of a common acceptance of international norms.[13]

b. Reevaluating German Intentions

The dramatic demonstration of Hitler at his worst finally overcame Roosevelt's characteristic openness to differences in manner and political style,[14] as well as any lingering hope that Germany might yet be induced to cooperate. The Fuehrer's behavior at Munich added up to a disturbing portrait of a man whose demands were unreasonable, whose methods were gratuitously offensive, and who respected neither the rights nor the interests of others.[15]

Although there had been intimations of this early in the crisis,[16] the Godesberg meeting graphically demonstrated the impossibility of working with Hitler—even on the basis of near capitulation. As Ambassador Bullitt saw it, Hitler's terms for Czechoslovakia were "virtually those imposed on a defeated German Army for evacuation of northern France."[17] Moreover, Hitler's refusal to cooperate manifested itself in an unyielding response to Roosevelt's first peace appeal,[18] as well as a "completely and definitely unsatisfactory" reply to Prime Minister

[12] Roosevelt had suspected at least since April 1938 that Germany had the technological capability to threaten the United States, even spinning elaborate scenarios for the press as to how she might do so. See, for example, "Press Conference in the White House, April 20, 1938, 2:20 P.M.," "Press Conference in the White House, April 21, 1938, 9:00 P.M." (Schewe, 1979: vol. V., #1031, 1034).

[13] For example, while in April Roosevelt described Hitler's performance during the take-over of Austria in terms that left his listener with the impression that the president "seemed to think you could do very little with such a man," a month later he was assuring Secretary of the Interior Ickes that it would be safe to ship helium to Germany on the basis of Hitler's assurance that it would not be used for military purposes (Ickes, 1954:344, 393; Kinsella, 1978:109).

[14] Roosevelt's tolerance of diversity was deeply ingrained. See, e.g., Adolf Berle's remarks quoted in Schlesinger (1989:23).

[15] As French Premier Daladier observed to Ambassador Bullitt, "Hitler at the present time would accept nothing except the absolute humiliation of every nation on earth. He desired by such humiliation to make his wish law in Europe" (Bullitt to Hull, September 27, 1938, United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers* [hereafter FRUS], vol. 1, 1938:686).

[16] See, e.g., Wilson to Hull, September 18, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:612–14), and Bullitt to Hull, September 19, 1938 (615–18).

[17] Bullitt to Hull, September 25, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:648–49). The American minister to Czechoslovakia, Carr, likened them to "demands of victorious nations over vanquished." Carr to Hull and Kennedy to Hull, September 24, 1938 (642–44); Carr to Hull, September 25 and 27, 1938 (649–50, 679); and Bullitt to Hull, September 26, 1938 (668).

[18] According to Ickes (1954:477–78), Hitler's September 26 speech conveyed the impression that he "had made his demands and he would not abandon them by one jot or tittle." For Roosevelt's own view of the matter, see below.

Chamberlain's conciliatory notes. Hitler's response was, in Carr's words, "entirely uncompromising."[19]

Not only did the Fuehrer regard his demands as absolute, he was more than willing to go to war to satisfy them, transforming what had seemed a frightening possibility before Godesberg into near reality.[20] Worse yet, his bellicosity was utterly gratuitous. As Carr pointed out,

> …a peaceful settlement with the Praha Government conceding substantially all Sudeten demands … could have been concluded had Germany shown a sincere desire to have such an agreement made and had contributed to it.… There has at no time during the past year … been any condition in this country that could not have been dealt with by peaceful means. … ("Carr to Hull, September 28"; *FRUS* (1938),1:690–91)

Hitler's refusal to compromise in any way led Roosevelt to conclude that war would be his fault alone,[21] and this, in turn, had considerable influence on Roosevelt's emotional response to him. That is, in addition to numerous negative cognitions, the experience of Munich generated in Roosevelt and others a host of unpleasant emotions. Hitler's behavior provoked anger and extreme dislike,[22] feelings that quite possibly reinforced Roosevelt's newfound belief that he could not be relied on to cooperate with other states in the interests of peace.[23]

Thus, for Roosevelt and others, the implications of Hitler's intransigence were clear, as Assistant Secretary of State George Messersmith was quick to spell out:

> The Germany with which certain arrangements could have been made under Streseman and Bruning is a different Germany from the one we have to deal with under Hitler today in many ways. And arrangements which were then possible, and which would have been constructive, are today impossible until there is a regime of law and order in Germany. ("Messersmith to Hull, September 29, 1938"; Schewe, 1979, 7:1319a)

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[19] Kennedy to Hull, September 27, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:673). See also Bullitt to Hull on the same date (673–74); Carr to Hull, September 24, 1938 (643). Hitler's refusal to compromise was, of course, thrown into high relief by the strenuous efforts at accommodation made by the other participants.

[20] For pre-Godesberg reports of Hitler's willingness to go to war see Kennedy to Hull, September 17, 1938, Wilson to Hull, September 18, 1938, and Bullitt to Hull, September 19, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:609–18). For opinion after Godesberg, see the telephone call from Bullitt on September 23, 1938, "Memorandum to Roosevelt, September 23, 1938" (Schewe, 1979, 7,#1294), and Bullitt to Hull, transmitting Daladier's view of the matter on September 27, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:686–88). Roosevelt's awareness of Hitler's intentions in this regard both before and after Godesberg is shown in his conversation with British ambassador Lindsay on September 19 and his reaction on the 27th to a report that Hitler intended to march that night. See note 22.

[21] "If war now comes the responsibility for creating it … may be placed directly upon Hitler and his advisers," Carr to Hull, September 28, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:690–91). Roosevelt's recognition that Hitler was the sole obstacle to a peaceful settlement is suggested by the fact that his second appeal was directed to him alone. See Welles's remarks in a telephone conversation with Bullitt on September 27 (676).

[22] Roosevelt compared the emotional impact of Hitler's tirade on September 26 to that of Chamberlain's speech of the following day and showed "real anger" during the drafting of his second message when he heard that Germany might march that night, "forcing a war to no purpose" (Alsop and Kintner, 1940:10–11). See also Berle, (1973:188) and Murray (1946:95).

[23] This is shown by the president's highly negative reaction to Ambassador Kennedy's speech of October 19 which suggested that "instead of hammering away at what are regarded as irreconcilables," the democracies and dictatorships "could advantageously bend their energies toward solving their common problems by an attempt to re-establish good relations on a world basis." Roosevelt not only responded with a radio address designed to undo the damage the speech had caused but also bypassed Kennedy as a channel of communication with the British from that point forward (quoted in Cole, 1983:289–90). According to Koskoff (1974:159), Roosevelt revised the draft of his speech prepared by Berle and Moffat to make it stronger. See also Hull (1948:596).

c. Threat Perception

Abandoning all hope of cooperating with Hitler is not, however, the same as perceiving a threat to American security. Thus, the fact that Roosevelt's observation of Hitler's behavior during the crisis provoked a sense of threat must still be explained. Certainly, Munich by no means altered everyone's understanding of German intentions. Some had long believed that Hitler's ambitions knew no bounds and that he was fundamentally untrustworthy. Messersmith, for one, had often advanced the view of German intentions that Roosevelt adopted only in the wake of the crisis,[24] while others required considerably more evidence than Hitler's behavior at Munich to reach that conclusion.[25]

Unlike that of his advisers, however, Roosevelt's assessment of Hitler's intentions was linked to a judgment about process.[26] Applying an essentially democratic political standard,[27] he took Hitler's extreme disregard for the values and procedures associated with political accommodation to be a sign of unlimited aims which could never be satisfied by normal diplomatic means. Sooner or later, Germany was bound to threaten the United States.

Roosevelt's concern about the extent of Hitler's will to dominate grew with the crisis itself. In a letter to Ambassador Phillips on September 15, he alluded to the inevitability of future conflict even should Chamberlain's endeavors prove successful, and on the 19th he developed a similar theme for British ambassador Lindsay, observing that "even if Czechoslovakia did acquiesce in the demands made, … [h]e was sure that other demands would follow elsewhere."[28]

After the crisis, following a brief spell of relief and optimism he shared with the rest of the world,[29] Roosevelt returned to this negative evaluation, his conviction strengthened by the behavior he had recently observed at Munich.[30] As his remarks to Ickes indicate, by October 9th Roosevelt had come to expect German moves directed at satisfying her appetite for colonies, and he predicted to Lane on October 10th that "the expansion of Germany may well come into conflict with Italian interests in Yugoslavia." Moreover, Lord Elibank, who visited Roosevelt at

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[24] See, e.g., memos from Messersmith on October 11, 1937, and February 11, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1937:140–45; vol. 1, 1938:17–24).

[25] See the judgment Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle rendered after the Germans marched into Prague in 1939; see note 49. As Robert Jervis points out, this caution was not unreasonable.

> Common sense indicated that while Hitler was an evil tyrant, he would be content with regaining Germany's pre-1914 position. Indeed, until he took over the non-German portions of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, all his behavior could be explained by his drive for this (1986–87:151)

[26] Clearly, it was not based on Hitler's bizarre behavior during the crisis (Ickes, 1954:477, 480). Roosevelt had been aware of the Fuehrer's propensity for such behavior well before Munich. See, for example, his remarks to Arthur Sweetzer about Hitler's performance at a meeting with the Austrian Chancellor in March 1938 (Kinsella, 1978:109), and to the Senate Military Affairs Committee on the same subject, "Conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee in the White House, January 1, 1939, 12:45 P.M." (Schewe, 1979, 8, # 1565).

[27] As Robert Jervis (2003:18) has observed, "Compromise, consideration for the interests of others, respect for law, and a shunning of violence [within] this context all are values that underpin democracy and are reciprocally cultivated by it."

[28] "Roosevelt to Phillips, September 15, 1938" (Schewe, 1979, 7, #1277); Lindsay to Halifax, September 20, 1938 (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, vol. 7, 1951:627 [hereafter cited as DBFP]). For evidence of this point of view within the administration see Ickes (1954; September 16 or 17 and September 30, 1938, 468–69, 480); Messersmith's memorandum of September 29 and Bullitt's letter of October 3, "Bullitt to Hull, October 3, 1938" (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:704–07, 711–12).

[29] On this point see Farnham (1997:138–42).

[30] Most of his advisers, with the notable exception of Kennedy, agreed. See "George S. Messersmith, Assistant Secretary of State, to Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, September 29, 1938" (Schewe, 1979, 7, #1319a); "Morgenthau to Roosevelt, October 17, 1938" (#1358); "Biddle to Roosevelt, October 6 and 15, 1938" (#1328, #1355); "Pell to Roosevelt, October 21, 1938" (#1366); "Bowers to Roosevelt, October 24, 1938" (#1368); "Kennedy to Hull, October 12, 1938" (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:722); and Joseph Davies, quoted in Kinsella (1978:125).

Hyde Park from October 16th to the 24th, has stated unequivocally that "to Roosevelt's mind, it was by that time a *certainty* that Germany definitely intended to launch another war upon civilization."[31]

In the coming months Roosevelt remained convinced of these aggressive aims, telling the Senate Military Affairs Committee on January 31, 1939, that in the years after the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact by Germany, Italy, and Japan, "that pact has been strengthened almost every month, not only by aggression but by a better understanding between the three of them. There exists today, without any question … what amounts to an offensive and defensive alliance."[32]

Most importantly, Roosevelt now believed that Hitler's will to dominate would ultimately threaten the United States. While he had considered that possibility earlier, the experience of the Munich crisis gave his fears an immediacy that had previously been lacking. As Roosevelt observed to the American minister to Portugal, Pell, on November 12, 1938, "The dictator threat is a good deal closer to the United States and the American Continent than it was before," and this, as he had already pointed out in a press conference on October 14, required a "complete restudy of American national defense."[33]

d. Explaining Roosevelt's Perception of Threat

The logic connecting Hitler's violation of democratic norms of accommodation to Roosevelt's perception of threat is straightforward. First of all, he saw the Fuehrer's refusal to respect such norms as a test of his commitment to political settlement, and concluded that, absent such commitment, there was little possibility of working with him. Second, Roosevelt viewed Hitler's willingness to violate the norm of bounded competition as in itself a sign of unlimited aims.[34] The proof of adherence to international standards of conduct, of whether or not states would, as Kant stipulated, "adjust themselves to the constraints of public law" (Raymond, 1994:37), was to be found in the practice of the democratic processes of peaceful settlement and bounded competition. To Roosevelt these signaled both limited aims and pacific intent.[35]

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[31] "Roosevelt to Arthur Bliss Lane, Minister to Yugoslavia, October 10, 1938" (Schewe, 1979, 7, #1335; Elibank, 1955:364). Official American policy was apparently based on similar assumptions. See Halifax to Mallet, January 24, 1939, Mallet to Halifax, January 27, 1939 (*DBFP,* Series 3, vol. 4, 5, 27) and Lukasiewicz (1970:168). Roosevelt also received a number of reports during this period expressing the opinion that the Germans were irrevocably bent on domination. Even Kennedy eventually came around to this view, which he conveyed to the president on his return home in December. See Kaufmann (1963:664–65); Beschloss (1980:181–82, 184, 185); and Farley (1948:158). For a range of opinion along similar lines see Moffat Memorandum, December 22, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:735–36); "Herbert C. Pell, Minister to Portugal, to Roosevelt, February 11, 1939" (Schewe, 1979, 7, #1588); "Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., Ambassador to Poland, to Roosevelt, March 11, 1939" (#1634); Butler (1960:227); and Kinsella (1978:130–31).

[32] "Conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee:" 4. See also Senator Warren Austin's impression of Roosevelt's remarks to this group. Interview with Joseph Alsop on December 8, 1939 (Alsop Papers). Other evidence of Roosevelt's views can be found in the Alsop interview with Secretary of the Navy Edison, in which the Secretary stated that "about the time of the new year," Roosevelt told him "'I have it in mind that we are not going to get through the summer without seeing the world in a hell of a lot of trouble.'" For similar remarks by the president throughout this period see Farley (1948:162–63 [December 28, 1938]); Kilpatrick (1952: 181–83 [January 14, 1939]); Ickes (1954:571, 576 [January 28 and February 7, 1939]); and Roosevelt's own press conference on February 18, *PPA* 8: 140.

[33] Roosevelt to Pell, November 12, 1938 (Roosevelt, 1938:2, 826); Press Conference, October 14, 1938, #491 (Roosevelt, 1972). The challenge to American security that Roosevelt perceived in the aftermath of the Munich crisis had three aspects. First, he feared that the United States might find itself facing the dictators isolated and alone. Secondly, he saw Latin America as the target of military as well as economic and political threats, and finally, he believed that the physical security of the United States itself was in jeopardy (Farnham, 1997: ch. 5). Reynolds (1982: 40–41) describes Roosevelt's post-Munich perception of the German threat in similar terms.

[34] Acceptance of bounded competition almost by definition means that a state's aims are limited. Agreeing to play by the rules signifies acceptance that you may not get everything you want.

[35] As Mousseau (1995:213) has pointed out, "compromise is more than just a method of conflict resolution. Compromise indicates a substantive willingness of a state to moderate international demands."

Hitler, however, had throughout the crisis repeatedly shown that he had no respect for the legitimate interests of others, no desire to settle disputes peacefully, and no regard for the rules of the game.[36] He had even categorically refused Roosevelt's own appeal to find a peaceful solution in a manner the latter found "truculent and unyielding."[37] Thus, Munich demonstrated unequivocally that Hitler lacked all respect for the principles at the heart of Roosevelt's own belief system, principles to which he had repeatedly asserted his dedication during the crisis.[38]

In the crisis aftermath, Roosevelt took pains to point out the relevance of such processes to the conduct of international politics.[39] Moreover, in his first post-Munich State of the Union address, a speech notable for its strong sense of threat, Roosevelt went further in linking the systematic violation of these processes of accommodation to the threat of war, observing that "no nation can be safe in its will to peace so long as any other single powerful nation refuses to settle its grievances at the council table." Acknowledging the existence of truly awesome capabilities for destruction, Roosevelt nevertheless seemed to emphasize that the threat to security stemmed primarily from the refusal of powerful states to play by the rules and cooperate with others.[40]

The Role of Norms

The violation of norms as a catalyst of threat perception has been described by Raymond Cohen in his work on the link between perception of such behavior and the expectation of future aggressiveness:

> The crucial inference, central to the appraisal of threat, is found in the recurrent argument that the opponent had in some way betrayed a trust or undertaken an illegitimate and unpermissable action—that he had somehow infringed a norm of behavior—and that, as a consequence of this, he had ceased to be bound by existing restraints and was to be considered as bent on a policy of aggressive domination gravely damaging to the interests of the observing actor. (Cohen, 1979:165–71) [41]

Similarly, Roosevelt's observation of Hitler's behavior during the crisis did not merely result in a generalized uneasiness about the future. Instead, it led him specifically to expect the systematic violation of the processes on which the peaceful adjustment of differences depends. This, in turn, forecast unlimited aims and, ultimately, a threat to the security of the United States. The application of a political norm laid bare for Roosevelt a direct connection between the violation of that norm and the probability of future aggression.

Note, however, that, contrary to Cohen's formulation, Roosevelt did not rely primarily on the traditional rules of the international game for his standard.[42]

[36] As we have seen, Roosevelt was particularly troubled by Hitler's violation of the norm mandating compromise and his disregard of the prohibition against coercion which is a necessary condition of bounded competition. One indication of this is that as the crisis wore on, Roosevelt's attitudes toward Britain, France, and Germany varied according to his perception of their willingness to compromise. Increasingly, he used this as a standard in assigning blame for what seemed to be an inexorable slide toward war (Farnham, 1997:196–98).

[37] Ickes's account of Roosevelt's description to the Cabinet the following day (1954:478).

[38] See, e.g., "President Roosevelt to the German Chancellor (Hitler), September 26, 1938" (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:658).

[39] See, e.g., "Radio Address to the Herald Tribune Forum, October 26, 1938" (Roosevelt, 1938:564).

[40] "Address Delivered by President Roosevelt to the Congress, January 4, 1939" (United States Department of State, 1943:449). See also "Radio Address to the Herald-Tribune Forum, October 26, 1938" (Roosevelt, 1938: 564).

[41] A recent discussion of the role of norms in international politics before and during World War II also emphasizes their role in signaling intentions. In particular, "Violating prohibitions was an indicator of the nature of one's ambitions" (Legro, 1997:54–55).

[42] Cohen derives the following international rules of the game from his case studies of threat perception: "recognition of sovereignty and the legitimacy and territorial integrity of a state, … the maintenance of the status

While he occasionally invoked purely international norms,[43] he did not particularly emphasize them in his post-Munich assessment of threat.[44] Moreover, prior to Munich, despite Hitler's repeated violations of such rules (e.g., the remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936 and the Anschluss in March 1938), Roosevelt continued to hope that he might be induced to cooperate in the international arena. Nor did similar violations by Mussolini (e.g., the attack on Ethiopia in 1936 and the invasion of Albania in April 1939) lead the president to conclude that the Italian dictator would be impossible to work with, let alone that he was a potential threat.[45]

The norms Roosevelt invoked also differed from those realists would apply. While they too may see failure to accommodate as a reason for suspicion,[46] their definition of accommodation has little in common with one based on a "democratic culture of conflict resolution" (Raymond, 1994:27), which emphasizes "important procedural norms," such as "reciprocal responsiveness, mutual adjustment, and joint gains," and in which "the balance of power is replaced with reciprocal exchange" (Chan, 1997:76; Mousseau, 1998:227; see also, above).[47] Moreover, democracies value such processes for their own sake, treating them as, in some sense, ends.

For realists, on the other hand, these processes are not ends but means having no intrinsic importance, to be employed only so long as they are useful. As Jervis has observed, "the links between the states' restraint and their immediate self-interest are direct" (1983:173). Moreover, while for democracies bounded competition entails a principled belief that there are some things that should not be done even to gain an advantage, realists accept bounded competition only as a strategic maneuver. Trust is limited and provisional, and the use of coercion or force is acceptable provided it is cost-effective.

Thus, a key difference between realist and democratic thinking hinges on *how* things are done. Moreover, this democratic emphasis on process is what links procedural norms of accommodation to threat perception. What triggered Roosevelt's sense of threat at Munich was not simply that Germany made demands on Czechoslovakia but how those demands were made and how Hitler treated the other interested parties.[48]

Realists, on the other hand, look at rather different processes to assess intent. For example, they may, as Roosevelt himself sometimes did, attend to willingness to make deals or the capacity for keeping promises. Indeed, in March 1939, many realists were able finally to see Hitler as a threat on precisely such grounds.[49] At the

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quo in a given area, … adherence to procedures of consultation in the affairs of direct concern to a state, … the right to national self-determination, … honoring bilateral agreements, … and adherence to certain recognized standards of international conduct." These "incorporate a broad range of normative concepts" and are not "restricted to the precepts of international law" (1979:165, 180–81).

[43] For example, in discussing the requirements for good relations among nations, he cited "a due regard for the sanctity of treaties, avoidance of policies which arouse fear and distress, and the self-restraint to refuse strident ambitions." "Radio Address to the Herald Tribune Forum, October 26, 1938" (564).

[44] Some British and American officials did base their perception of threat on the violation of such norms when Hitler marched into Prague in March 1939. See Cohen (1979:171–72) for British reactions; and Farnham (1997:202, n. 111) for the reactions of Berle and Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles.

[45] Quite the contrary. See note 54.

[46] I thank Jack Snyder for this point.

[47] As Raymond notes, "Politics is seen as a non-zero sum game," and "compromise, the use of persuasion rather than coercion, and a reliance on legal procedures to resolve disputes are the primary means for dealing with conflict. Everyone is believed to lose if politics degenerates into conflict" (1994:27).

[48] As Jervis argues, "perceptions of threat are often determined less by *what* the other does than by *how* the other does it" (Jervis, Lebow, and Stein, 1985:14–15). On this point, see also Stromberg's observation: "What Munich really exposed was not that Germany wanted Czechoslovakia and could get it but that Hitler's arrogance and greed were such as to preclude a gentlemanly transfer of power" (Stromberg, 1963: n 123).

[49] Thus, after the Germans took over the whole of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Berle bemoaned the fact that "Hitler had given his word, as a part of Munich, not to violate the integrity of the Czech Republic, and now, only a few months later, the whole thing had gone by the board. How, therefore, could anybody deal with a country on that

time of Munich, however, failing to apply democratic procedural norms such as those used by Roosevelt, they also failed to understand that Hitler was unlikely to be bound by the limits to which he had ostensibly agreed. For democracies the expectation that agreements will be honored is justified by a shared commitment to the rules of bounded competition. This allows them to conclude that those who break the rules will also flout agreements. Forecasting unlimited aims, such violations suggest that, ultimately, promises will not be kept and deals will not be honored.[50] Realists, believing that rules will in any case be obeyed only if it is in a state's interest to do so, lack this additional piece of diagnostic information, and must wait until promises are actually broken and deals violated.

Implications for the Theory of Democratic Peace

a. Presumption of Enmity

The Munich episode calls into question the notion that democracies inevitably harbor a "presumption of enmity" for non-democracies. Roosevelt's expectation, that all parties to the dispute, Hitler included, would adopt democratic norms of conflict resolution in their negotiations,[51] demonstrates that not all democratic leaders assume that non-democracies will flout these norms. While these leaders may see non-democracies as unjust at home, they do not therefore necessarily regard them as enemies. Contrary to the arguments of a number of analysts,[52] some democracies require more evidence than regime type to perceive another state as threatening.

The notion that there may not be an automatic presumption of enmity toward autocracies is supported not only by Roosevelt's pre-Munich attitudes toward Hitler, but also by his apparent failure to apply a regime test to other dictators like Mussolini and Stalin. During the Munich crisis, in fact, Roosevelt began to differentiate between Hitler and Mussolini in a way he had not previously done.[53] Particularly after Godesberg, he assigned blame for the imminence of war to Hitler, while at the same time energetically trying to persuade Mussolini to intervene in the interests of peace, and he continued to differentiate between the two dictators for some time thereafter.[54]

What is more, Roosevelt also regarded Stalin differently. As Alexander George has noted, Roosevelt thought Russian totalitarianism less dangerous than the German variety because the Soviet Union had not "sought world conquest through military aggression." Moreover, his belief in the possibility of gaining "Stalin's trust" and establishing "mutual confidence" was based on a perception that Stalin was "a

basis?" (Berle Papers, Memos 1938–1944, Box 55, March 16, 1939, FDRL). See also Berle (1973:201). Note that even realists did not rely primarily on capability to make the assessment of threat.

[50] T. W. Mason's characterization of the "political dimension" of Hitler's strategy suggests the effectiveness of these norms in penetrating to the heart of his policy: "The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich was dynamic in character, limitless in its aims to achieve domination and entirely lacking a conception of an 'ultimate status quo'" (quoted in Posen, 1984:179).

[51] See above and Roosevelt's two appeals to Hitler during the crisis—especially the first. The second appeal, written after Godesberg, is both more insistent and less optimistic. Roosevelt to Hitler, September 26, 1938 (*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938:657–58); President Roosevelt to the German Chancellor (Hitler), September 27, 1938 (684–85).

[52] See Risse-Kappen (1995:507), for example. See also Owen (1994:88–89, 96).

[53] There is ample evidence that Roosevelt was at least as anxious to induce Hitler to cooperate in the interest of peace during the years from 1936 to 1938 as he was to involve Mussolini (see Farnham, 1997: ch. 3).

[54] In an interview with the Italian ambassador, Prince Colonna, in April 1939, Roosevelt supported the British effort to separate Italy and Germany. Later that month, and again in May, he made additional appeals to Mussolini to distance himself from Hitler. Not until Italy invaded France in June 1940 did Roosevelt finally abandon his belief that Mussolini was somehow different from Hitler and might yet be induced to cooperate in the interests of peace. On this point, see Dallek (1979:183–84, 220–21, 228).

fellow 'politician' with whom 'arrangements' [could] be made through personal diplomacy."[55]

What counted with Roosevelt in judging enmity, then, was not the presence or absence of democratic institutions but a disposition to adhere to democratic norms of conflict resolution. Clearly, at least some democratic leaders regard the correlation between regime type and an acceptance of the norms of peaceful accommodation as less than perfect.

b. Explaining Democratic Attitudes Toward Non-Democracies

How is this departure from democratic peace theory to be explained? For one thing, some analysts argue that the theory does not predict such perfection in the first place (Maoz, 1997:185).[56] As Spencer Weart observes (1998:15, 80), "leaders will tend to act toward their foreign counterparts in the way they are accustomed to act toward rival domestic political leaders."[57] Moreover, it is no simple matter to convince democratic leaders that their opposite numbers may not be inclined to employ the same negotiating standards (198–99).[58]

Thus, while Roosevelt's behavior violates the presumption of automatic enmity, it does accord with the prediction that democratic leaders will attempt to export their domestic norms to the international arena. In fact, not only did Roosevelt himself do this,[59] but he also seemed to believe that such norms had already taken root in that arena.[60]

Well before the Munich crisis, democracies had tried to reproduce their own norms of conflict resolution internationally, despite the existence of states that failed to practice such norms domestically. Organizations such as the League of Nations had democratic institutions (parliaments, responsible bureaucracies) and embodied "norms of dispute resolution integral to the democratic process."[61] Moreover,

[55] Alexander George, "Roosevelt's Image of the Soviet Union," unpublished supplement to a lecture, undated. Roosevelt was not the only democratic leader to hold this view. As Deborah Larson notes, "Truman perceived Stalin as just another machine politician, like his mentor in Missouri politics, Boss Pendergast" (1985:177–78, 197). Melvin Leffler has also noted the ability of American leaders to disregard the clearly illiberal domestic behavior of dictators (1995:188).

[56] Others who also hold this view are Cohen (1995:215–16) and Kacowicz (1997:336, 358, 368–69). For an argument that democratic peace theory does not predict that all non-democracies are aggressive see Dassel (1997:407–8, 436–37).

[57] Joffe also observes that democracies "'view the world as an extension of their domestic politics." The procedural norms that govern conflict resolution in daily life are externalized. "What functions at home is assumed to be viable abroad" (cited in Raymond, 1994:27; see also Mousseau, 1995: 211).

[58] Weart explains this in terms of the need for consistency: "We tend to take what we have found to work in one situation and apply it in other, repeating accustomed behaviors. Only emphatic experience can convince us that we must change our approach—and then we change as little as possible" (1998:77). This tendency has at times led democratic leaders into what Weart labels "the appeasement trap." That is, they "imagine that authoritarian leaders are like themselves and can be conciliated," while authoritarians think that "republican leaders are like themselves and conciliate only when they are too weak to fight." When the latter belatedly realize that the authoritarian leaders do not share their values, "they switch to a far more belligerent approach" (196–97). Note that for Roosevelt, unlike his French and British counterparts, the Munich crisis seems to have provided the "emphatic experience" that allowed him to escape this trap.

[59] "Whatever may be the differences in the controversies at issue and however difficult of pacific settlement they may be, I am persuaded that there is no problem so difficult or so pressing for solution that it cannot be justly solved by the resort to reason rather than by the resort to force" ("Roosevelt to Hitler, September 25, 1938," 658).

[60] During the crisis, for example, he admonished Hitler, "It is imperative that peoples everywhere recall that every civilized nation of the world voluntarily assumed the solemn obligations of the Kellog-Briand Pact of 1928 to solve controversies only by pacific methods. In addition, most nations are parties to other bindiing treaties obligating them to preserve peace. Furthermore, all countries have today available for such peaceful solution of difficulties which may arise, treaties of arbitration and conciliation to which they are parties" ("Roosevelt to Hitler, September 27, 1938," 658).

[61] The phrase is Dixon's (1993:42). As Kenneth Waltz has described the diffusion of such norms, "democracy in foreign as in domestic affairs is seen to be the only form of government that provides a promise of decent policy. The conviction gathered strength throughout the nineteenth century. It found its early expression among Liberals and especially Radicals and Socialists, its efflorescence in the Peace Movement at the turn of the century, its supposed partial fulfillment in the two Hague Peace Conferences, and its culmination in England in the Union of Democratic Control and generally in the policies and prophecies of Woodrow Wilson and the establishment of the League of Nations" (1967:10).

adherence to such norms was expected of all states regardless of regime type. The international community was apparently assumed to extend beyond the purview of purely democratic states, and the democratic norms of bounded competition and contingent consent were thought to apply to non-democracies as well. Thus, we must question the assumption that there is inevitably "a dualism in a democracy's foreign conduct with one set of norms characterizing its relations with other democracies and another set applying to those with non-democracies" (Chan, 1997:77).

c. Relations Among Democracies

This finding does not, of course, disconfirm the role played by joint democracy in the peaceful relations among democratic states. Rather, Roosevelt's use of democratic norms as a standard for judging threat suggests one way they may contribute to democratic peace. If democracies take unwillingness to use democratic processes of accommodation to mean a low value on peaceful settlement and unlimited aims, then they should also take other democracies' use of such norms as indicating a high value on peaceful settlement and limited aims. Moreover, while non-democracies are merely given the benefit of the doubt about this until they behave otherwise, democracies will be automatically assumed to use such norms, and, as is the case when democracies evaluate non-democracies, the influence of shared procedural norms on expectations about behavior can lead to inferences about intent which, in turn, influence threat perception.

Thus, one reason democracies do not fight one another may be that they do not see each other as threats. Even if they have serious conflicts,[62] democracies do not normally fear each other because they expect to be able to settle their disputes peacefully and because they assume limited aims. Certainly, such expectations would go a long way toward mitigating the security dilemma between democracies and reducing the likelihood of hostile spirals.[63]

These expectations are likely reinforced by other characteristics of democracies that reduce information failures and improve the ability to make credible commitments. As Jervis (2003:4) has observed, "By having a relatively free flow of intelligence and encouraging debate, democracies are less likely to make egregious errors in estimating what courses of action will maintain the peace." Moreover, "democracies can more effectively commit themselves and telegraph their intentions, and so avoid both unnecessary spirals of conflict and wars that stem from others' incorrect beliefs that the democracy is bluffing."

d. The Reality of Democratic Norms

Roosevelt's reassessment of Hitler on the basis of his behavior at Munich establishes that adherence to democratic norms of accommodation and peaceful settlement amounts to more than the simple reflection "of the interests of states and the logic of their situations." Joanne Gowa argues that "the interest of states in a peaceful resolution of armed disputes would follow from the relative price of that option: bargaining is less costly than war" (Gowa, 1995:515).[64] Moreover, with Henry Farber she contends that the norms argument is further damaged by the absence of any "measures of norms or their effectiveness that are independent of interests" (Farber and Gowa, 1995:126).

[62] As Risse-Kappen points out, nothing in the democratic peace argument presupposes that liberal states do not have conflicts of interest (1995:504).

[63] This may be one answer to Risse-Kappen's question as to "why the uncertainty that drives the security dilemma is far less relevant when democracies deal with each other" (1995:497).

[64] The work of Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman carries this implication as well, but it also supports the notion that democratic institutions make war costly for democracies (1992: ch. 5).

The Munich case, however, offers precisely such a test. Roosevelt was an outside observer who believed his country's interests were not directly involved in the dispute. Yet he used democratic norms of peaceful accommodation to decide who was likely to threaten the United States in the future and who was deserving of American support. Moreover, he made two interventions in the crisis which he had previously avoided at least partly because he feared domestic repercussions (see Farnham, 1997: ch. 4). Given the isolationist climate of opinion in the United States, the judgments Roosevelt based on those norms, because they forecast greater United States involvement in European problems, were clearly opposed to his own political interests, as were the policies that followed from them.

e. New Puzzles

While the Munich case illuminates some aspects of the democratic peace argument, it raises questions about others. Most damaging to the normative explanation of the democratic peace is the evidence this case provides that not everyone in a democracy uses the same standard to assess threat. Even within the Roosevelt administration, one finds several different approaches to threat perception.

Some, like Secretaries Morgenthau and Ickes, actually did use regime type to evaluate Germany, and clearly presumed enmity. Ickes (1954:276, 382), for example, wrote in his diary on December 18, 1937, "There are two irreconcilable systems of government in the world today that are fighting for supremacy. On the one side is fascism and on the other is democracy." In an entry of May 1, 1938, he drew the obvious conclusion: "My theory is that if the democratic theory of government is fighting for its life, we will have to fight for it sooner or later."[65] Others, like Messersmith, perceived a threat to the United States in Germany's violation of international norms of law and order,[66] while still others used some variant of a realist standard. Thus, after Munich, Adolf Berle wrote that Hitler's moves east would result in a "reconstituted great Germany, plus the old Austro-Hungarian region. … Were the actor anyone other than Hitler … we should regard this as merely reconstituting the old system, undoing the obviously unsound work of Versailles and generally following the line of historical logic" (Memo from Adolf Berle to the President, Sept. 1, 1938, PSF, State Department, Berle Folder, Box 93. See also above).

We must ask, then, why some democratic leaders use adherence to democratic norms of conflict resolution as a standard by which to assess threat while others do not and what this means for the democratic peace argument.[67] While this question cannot be answered by a single case study, examining alternative explanations of Roosevelt's use of these norms can generate some useful hypotheses.

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[65] For Morgenthau's views see "Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, to Roosevelt, Hyde Park, October 17, 1938" (Schewe, 1979, 7, #1358; see also Blum, 1959:524–27).

[66] "We are witnessing in at least three of the major dictatorships a reversion to the doctrine of force and of might and to an entirely different international morality than that which has slowly and painfully been built up in the last centuries. This resurrected law of force is to replace present international law and practice and a whole new system of public and private morals based on the doctrine of might and force is to be imposed on the world. … To the informed and observing there is no escape from the conclusion that the United States are the ultimate object of attack of the powers grouped in this new system of force and lawlessness" (Messersmith to Hull, October 11, 1937 [*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1937:140–41]).

[67] Some do not see such differences as a problem. Owen (1994:99), for example, points out that not everyone in a liberal democracy holds a liberal democratic ideology, while Hermann and Kegley see researchers who fail to explore the possibility that perceptions of democratic constraints may differ as coming "dangerously close to reifying democratic states as unitary actors with motives and images similar to particular types of people" (1991:514). Weart (1998:242) observes that not all groups in democratic societies necessarily respect democratic norms of accommodation. Thus, "authoritarian subcultures" such as "colonial bureaucracies, the military, secret agencies, sometimes business corporations" may exist even in "established republics." As a consequence, "[i]n international affairs we must attend not just to overall political culture but to the characteristics of the people making key decisions on the scene."

Such alternative explanations can be found in theories dealing with the impact of different kinds of leaders on the foreign policy process. For example, one explanation of why some leaders rely on democratic norms while others do not focuses on personality. Thus, Hermann and Kegley argue that some personality types are more responsive to constraints in the political environment than others (Hermann and Kegley, 1991:521). Accordingly, Roosevelt's use of democratic norms to evaluate Hitler might merely have reflected his personal style. As Roosevelt himself observed to Averill Harriman, he was "by nature a compromiser" (Harriman and Abel, 1975:4; Hull, 1948:592).[68]

A more general explanation of Roosevelt's behavior would focus on the relationship of certain decision-makers to the political process. As I have argued elsewhere, some decision-makers are particularly attuned to the demands of the political context in which effective action normally requires a "sufficient consensus" that depends, in turn, on acceptability (Farnham, 1997: ch. 2). To be truly effective, a decision must be at least minimally acceptable—even to the losers (Diesing, 1962:214; George, 1980:1, 3; see also Hilsman, 1967:547), and where there is substantial disagreement, procedures of accommodation affording the interests of all sides a modicum of respect are a condition of acceptability.[69]

Such awareness of the constraints of the political context may predispose political decision-makers to rely on norms of accommodation to guide their behavior. Moreover, they are likely to be particularly sensitive to both their use and their violation, internationally as well as domestically.

Thus, the use of democratic norms of accommodation to assess threat may be a function of an individual's relationship to the political process. In the Munich case, for example, those who used other indicators to assess threat were not obliged as part of their job description to consider democratic norms regularly. Realist and international systems arguments were advanced for the most part by decision-makers in the State Department and the diplomatic corps, while more ideological, regime-based arguments were offered by liberals who were appointed officials like Ickes and Morgenthau.[70]

Political leaders may also be more likely to refer to these norms at least partly because they have been socialized to do so. As Dixon observes, "although the norm of bounded competition pervades all segments of democratic society, it is likely to be more firmly rooted in politicians and political elites than elsewhere" because they are primarily the ones who carry out the competition of various interests in society and thus have the most "opportunity to act in accordance with the norm and to benefit from its operation" (Dixon, 1994:16; Owen, 1994:96–97; see also Russett, 1993:39).

There is, moreover, evidence that democratic norms and procedures facilitate the selection of political leaders likely to pay attention to processes of accommodation. Thus, Hermann and Kegley propose that "a constant push emanates from democratic culture and institutions for the election of leaders who respect and respond to democratic values."[71]

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[68] Judge Rosenman also remarked on Roosevelt's great "capacity for compromise" (1976:360; see also Davis, 1971:625).

[69] This explanation differs from Hermann and Kegley's personality-based account of the responsive leader whose responsiveness is based on a desire for self-validation rather than a desire for effective political action. While in both theories the leaders are responsive, their motivations are different (1991:522).

[70] This suggests the intriguing possibility that the choice of indicators of threat may be at least partly a function of role. See Weart, note 67 above.

[71] Hermann and Kegley (1991:522–23). Of course, this correlation between role and use of democratic norms in threat perception is not perfect. British Prime Minister Chamberlain, for example, though in a position of political leadership, certainly did not employ such indicators. Perhaps personality variables will ultimately be found useful in accounting for these kinds of differences among political leaders with similar roles.

A political orientation could also explain Roosevelt's failure to adopt a presumption of enmity toward non-democracies. As a political decision-maker, focused on process rather than ideology, he would have been inclined to be pragmatic about the effects of regime type until behavior proved otherwise. Certainly, there is ample testimony, including his own, that Roosevelt was anything but an ideologue (see, for example, Schlesinger, 1969:650–54). Thus, although he clearly saw "the world through a liberal lens" (the phrase is Owen's [1994:98]), Roosevelt may not have looked to ideology or formal institutions for proof that others did the same, relying instead on behavior as the crucial test.

Implications for Theories About Threat Perception

a. Realist Theories

Realism holds that capability is by far the most reliable indicator of threat. Given the anarchic structure of the international system, states must assume that those who can do harm, will (Waltz, 1979:116–20). The theory of democratic peace challenges this assumption and obliges realists to explain cases supporting that challenge (Owen, 1994:121). Roosevelt's decision-making in the aftermath of the Munich crisis is surely one of these, and it is a difficult case because, despite his clear awareness of the importance of geopolitical considerations, especially relative capabilities, the critical element in his diagnosis of a German threat was an assessment of hostile intent.[72] Furthermore, not only Roosevelt, but virtually everyone in his administration treated intent as the critical factor in judging German threat, though some used different standards for assessing it. Thus, the Munich case confirms that while awareness of a capacity to do harm may be a necessary condition of threat perception, it is far from a sufficient one.[73]

b. Democratic Peace Theory

Democratic peace theory implies that, for democracies, regime type should be a strong indicator of threat. Indeed, John Owen would "bring ideology back in" by showing that democracies "assess threat through an ideological prism" (1994:186). The Munich case supports this approach, but not exactly as democratic peace theorists would predict. Not only does Roosevelt's behavior call into question any automatic presumption of enmity for non-democracies, it also suggests that insofar as regime type affects the calculations of decision-makers, what matters most in threat assessment may not be the regime type of the potential opponent but that of the state making the assessment.[74] That is, a decision-maker's regime type may foster predispositions that affect the inferences he or she draws from the evidence.

A number of theories dealing with threat perception highlight the effect of predispositions on the interpretation of evidence (Pruitt, 1965; Knorr, 1976; these theories are also discussed in Cohen, 1979:611) and, in fact, this seems the likely mechanism by which democratic norms affect the threat perception of democratic

[72] Again, this may have been a reflection of the type of decision-maker Roosevelt was. For political decision-makers information about capabilities alone may not be sufficient to conclude that security will be threatened. Their orientation toward achieving their goals through political accommodation may make them slow to assume that possessing a capability to apply force automatically forecasts its use, leading them instead to seek additional information about intentions.

[73] Perhaps for that reason, some realists, like Stephen Walt, have incorporated into their theories the notion that states assess threat according to their perceptions of aggressive intent. Walt, however, does not deal satisfactorily with the question of what forecasts aggressive intent. Moreover, except for the role of ideology under the conditions of uncertainty about reputation that follow revolution, he downplays the relevance of ideological factors in assessing intent. Thus, his theory cannot explain Roosevelt's use of adherence to democratic norms as a test of intentions (1987:25–26, 181; 1996:19, 30; Owen, 1997:186, n. 123).

[74] Cf. Patrick Morgan's conclusion that to understand deterrence one must take into account the nature of the government that practices it (1985: 136–52). Even Walt allows that a revolutionary state may use its own ideology "to predict how others will behave" (1996:30).

leaders. Roosevelt's deep commitment to democratic norms of accommodation, for example, may have predisposed him to see threat when confronted with Hilter's disdain for them.[75] Therefore, although democratic leaders do not necessarily harbor a presumption of enmity for non-democracies, their norm-based predispositions may lead them to assess threat differently from non-democratic leaders.

c. Cohen's Theory of Threat Perception

Roosevelt's behavior during the Munich period also supports Raymond Cohen's theory that a violation of the rules of the game can be the basis for threat perception. It suggests, however, the need to broaden the theory by extending the notion of the "rules" beyond purely international norms to include processual norms of accommodation derived from domestic political beliefs. At Munich, Roosevelt projected a standard from the domestic game onto the international game, which he then used to make an inference about how that game would be played.

Conclusion

The Munich case, then, suggests several ways in which the theory of democratic peace can be used to flesh out theories of threat perception. At least for democracies, it provides greater specificity about what is likely to trigger it. For example, Walt argues that assessments of aggressive intent may be important in perceiving threat, but gives no indication of how decision-makers decide what forecasts such intentions. Cohen is more specific, pointing to the violation of international norms as the crucial factor in diagnosing intent, while Knorr cites predispositions as key. Democratic peace theory, however, suggests that, for democracies at least, domestic political norms may be crucial, and answers the question of which predispositions matter.

In a number of ways, then, Roosevelt's decision-making during and after the Munich crisis lends support to a normative explanation of the democratic peace. Not only does it offer evidence that democratic norms can play a part in threat perception—a crucial stage in decision-making about war and peace—it also confirms that many democracies expect their norms of conflict resolution to apply in the international arena as well, and shows that democratic leaders' concern with norms cannot always be attributed to self-interest.

The Roosevelt case also shows that not all democratic leaders consider regime type sufficient to diagnose threat. Rather, some leaders judge more broadly on the basis of observing adherence to the processes of accommodation that signal limited aims. Moreover, this way of identifying potential threats may go some way toward explaining why democracies fight some non-democracies, but not others.

As fruitful as examining this case has been in providing theoretical insights, however, more work is needed to demonstrate that these findings have wider application. Several paths of further research might be appropriate. One obvious project would be to flesh out the comparison between Roosevelt's perceptions of Hitler and other non-democratic leaders of the period such as Mussolini and Stalin. Another might be to compare his assessment of Hitler at Munich with assessments of earlier German moves in the Rhineland and Austria.[76] Looking at Roosevelt's perceptions of the Japanese in the years before Pearl Harbor might also be instructive. Finally, a particularly interesting research project would be to pursue the suggestion made earlier that differences in the threat perceptions of democratic

[75] Knorr (1976:113) views ideology as a source of distortion that can override experience. This could apply to some cases of a presumption of enmity of democracies for non-democracies (or presumption of friendship for democracies, for that matter). However, Roosevelt's experience shows that, if used as aids in evaluating experience, some predispositions with ideological roots may be useful in detecting threat.

[76] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for these suggestions.

leaders may be at least in part a function of their roles. This could be done not only with respect to Munich but also as part of a wider comparative study of threat perception. Certainly, before we can make more sophisticated generalizations about the foreign policies of democratic states, we need to understand what differences of this sort are likely to exist among democratic leaders and how they may affect their decisions.

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