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Democracies, Peace and Paralysis

Introduction

The liberal perspective on the relationship between democracy and collective security is inadequate because it generally fails to consider how domestic politics can interfere with a state's ability to ratify and to honour international security commitments. This is a particularly important point in regard to democracies since the domestic structure of such political systems typically serve to constrain the autonomy of the state. I present a theoretical argument in support of these claims. I also highlight the practical significance of the argument through an analysis of how the domestic structure of the major democratic powers may inhibit their ability to participate in a post-cold war collective security system in Europe.

Bosnia stands as a painful reminder that war in Europe is not obsolete. The conflict also has provided sobering evidence of the co-operation problems major powers can face when they attempt to collectively manage an international crisis. For liberal theorists, the major powers' difficulties in the regard must have come as a great surprise.¹ As a group, a number of these scholars had reacted to the end of the cold war by arguing that conditions were ripe for the creation of a viable system of collective security in Europe (Mueller, 1989a; Chalmers, 1990; Flynn and Scheffer, 1990; Goodby, 1991; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991; Mueller, 1991; Zelikow, 1992; Downs, 1994). Of the factors cited in support of this claim, none was more important than the fact that democratically oriented governments currently lead all of the major powers in the region. Citing the impact democracy can have in mediating obstacles to international co-operation, liberal theorists expressed confidence that democratisation on the part of the major powers would establish a domestic political foundation conducive to the multilateral management of European security affairs. Tragically, Bosnia suggests otherwise.

One purpose of the present essay is to demonstrate that the liberal perspective on the relationship between democracy and collective security is inade-

quate because it generally fails to consider how domestic politics can inhibit a state's ability to participate in this type of international regime. The importance of this omission is underscored through a discussion of the complications domestic politics can pose in regard to both the ratification and the implementation of international security commitments. In essence, the analysis contends that it is the relative autonomy of states—and not their democratic character per se—that decisively affects the viability of a collective security system.

To highlight the significance of this point, I then discuss how domestic structure and systemic attributes of the contemporary European states system combine to limit the autonomy of the major democratic states. Conceptually, this portion of the analysis links domestic political support for collective security to the nature of military, economic, and political conditions in the region. On the basis of these considerations, I conclude that the circumstances prevailing in post-cold war Europe are much less conducive to the formation of a collective security system that liberal theorists realise.

In essence the argument maintains that the extraordinarily benign nature of the major powers' security environment will make it difficult to mobilise domestic political support for collective security and that the nature of democratic domestic structures will enable societies to channel their reservations into the policy making process in ways that will serve to constrain the major powers' ability to participate in multilateral management of regional security affairs. Hence, ironically, democratisation on the part of the major powers may actually diminish the prospects of establishing a viable system of collective security in post-cold war Europe.

Anarchy, Democracy and Collective Security

In this section I demonstrate that liberal theorists are unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for the variability democracies exhibit when it comes to participating in collective security systems.² This shortcoming can be attributed to the fact that this perspective generally fails to acknowledge the role domestic politics can play in shaping the preferences and hence the behaviour of states. The omission is important because it ultimately has a significant effect on the conclusions liberal theorists draw about the prospects for collective security. Lacking a fully developed conception of domestic politics, liberal theorists are prone to be overly optimistic about the ability of democracies to participate in this type of international regime.

The liberal perspective on the relationship between democracy and collective security grows out of a broader analysis of the obstacles to international cooperation. According to this approach, the key factor that inhibits states from co-operating is the fear of cheating (Grieco, 1988a: 497). Unlike neorealists,

however, liberal theorists do not attribute this concern to the inherently untrustworthy character of the utility-maximising state; rather the problem is framed as a consequence of certain institutional deficiencies associated with an anarchic political system (Keohane 1983, 1984). Among these, barriers to the exchange of information stand as the most important because turbidity heightens uncertainty which, in turn can inhibit co-operation even on the part of states who are otherwise willing to comply with the terms of an agreement (Keohane, 1984: 92-93).³

To overcome the uncertainty that inhibits co-operation, states must endeavour to reassure one another that they will comply with the terms of an agreement and that they will not exploit the distributional consequences of co-operation in ways that jeopardise the security of others. While liberal theories have tended to focus on the role international regimes can play in this regard, recently some attention has been given to the impact domestic politics can have in terms of the salience of these concerns as well (e.g. Ruggie, 1993). Specifically, some theorists contend that the norms and institutions associated with democratic political systems serve to promote trust and reassurance among states because democratic systems are characterised by a degree of transparency that can ameliorate decision maker concerns about both cheating and relative gains (e.g. Cowhey 1993a; Risse-Kappen, 1995a: 30-31).

Generally, two arguments are advanced in support of this claim. First, democratic political systems are characterised by normative and institutional attributes that constrain a state's ability to pursue an expansionist foreign policy (Snyder, 1991: 49-52; Maoz and Russett, 1993a). Hence, democratic states are prone to adopt defensive strategies that render them less threatening to other members of the international system (Deudney and Ikenberry, 1991/92). In light of this, democracies are hypothesised to be better suited to participate in far-reaching acts of international security co-operation because their predisposition to adopt defensive strategies mediates the relative gains considerations that would otherwise prompt decision makers to worry about the distributional consequences of collaborative undertakings.

This is reinforced by the fact that democracies rarely go to war with one another (Doyle, 1983; Russett, 1993). Given the pacific nature of democratic dyads, it becomes less likely that any unbalanced benefits that might result from a co-operative act will rebound to a state's disadvantage in the realm of security. This should heighten the prospects for co-operation because it will enable decision-makers to adopt a longer-term perspective in which expectations of diffuse reciprocity prevail over shorter-term considerations. In essence, democracy serves to lengthen the shadow of the future by increasing the probability that pacific and co-operative forms of international association will endure.

Second, the norms and institutions associated with democratic political systems promote transparency among states because they facilitate the free

exchange of ideas, thereby encouraging open public policy debates (Van Evera, 1990/91: 27). Hence, democracies are characterised by a degree of openness that should serve to diminish uncertainty about both a state's behaviour and its intentions. As a consequence, democracy should serve to mediate the fear of cheating by increasing the probability that decision makers will be able to detect uncooperative behaviour before a damaging defection can occur (Cowhey, 1993b). In essence, democracies are hypothesised to be better suited to co-operate in the realm of security because their relative openness diminishes the fear of cheating and the derivative risk of exploitation.

In light of these arguments some analysts have concluded that democracies are ideally suited to participate in a collective security system⁴. This claim, however, is premised on more than simply functional considerations. It is also based on the presumption that a common commitment to liberal norms and institutions provides democracies with a shared sense of purpose that will serve to encourage and sustain co-operation. Political homogeneity is thought to facilitate the construction of international institutions because a normative consensus concerning the nature of a desirable international order presumably increases the likelihood that states will be able to reach agreement about the substantive content of a regime. Kupchan and Kupchan (1991: 149), for example, argue that a collective security system composed of democracies 'would not be split ideologically... [hence] disputes over how to react to domestic political changes among Europe's smaller states would...be less likely to emerge.'

This is a particularly important consideration when it comes to collective security because this type of regulatory regime is premised upon the willingness of states to respect the rule of law, to resolve disputes peacefully, and to exhibit solidarity in the face of developments that jeopardise the peace and security of the international community (Chayes and Chayes, 1994: 65-130). Since such commitments are inherent in the norms and institutions associated with democratic political systems, there would appear to be a high degree of compatibility between the requisites of collective security and the dictates of democracy (Burley, 1993: 141-46). In theory, democracies should be better suited to participate in a collective security system than other types of governments because to do so is simply to internationalise an approach to social order already embraced domestically by liberal states and societies (Flynn and Scheffer, 1990: 83).

Seen from this perspective, domestic politics are relevant to an understanding of the problems and possibilities of collective security. For liberal theorists, however, such an analysis need not extend beyond the task of classifying states as either democratic or undemocratic. There is, however, a basic shortcoming associated with this perspective. To wit, liberal theorists are unable to account for the variability democracies sometimes exhibit when it comes to collective security issues.

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In 1919, for example, the chief executives of Britain, France, and the United States drafted an international agreement committing their states to participate in a global collective security system. While the British and French parliaments quickly ratified the treaty, the United States Senate ultimately rejected the agreement over the strenuous objections of President Wilson (Northedge, 1986). Similarly, the United States, Britain and France were able to deploy thousands of ground forces in support of the United Nations' effort to rollback Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. In Japan and Germany, on the other hand, domestic opposition prevented the dispatch of a single soldier to the Gulf even though the chief executives of both states publicly advocated contributing national troops to the UN mission (Bennett, Leggold, and Unger, 1994: 62-70).

Cross-national variations such as these have yet to be systematically accounted for by liberal theorists. While these scholars can explain why democracies should be predisposed to co-operate in the realm of security, they presently lack a theoretically-based explanation for the variability democracies sometimes exhibit in regard to both the ratification of collective security commitments and their ability to make material contributions to multilateral enforcement efforts.

The aforementioned cases also raise intriguing questions about whether certain types of democratic political systems may be better suited than others to participate in multilateral institutions (see Cowhey, 1993a). Liberal theorists are unable to explore this possibility, however, because their conception of democracy fails to draw any meaningful distinctions in regard to the norms and institutions associated with different democratic political systems. This is somewhat ironic considering the emphasis the liberal perspective attaches to these very factors as a key to understanding the interests, preferences, and behaviour of states (Risse-Kappen, 1995a: 25). It also would seem to be an especially important consideration when it comes to the subject of collective security.

Liberal theorists argue that democracy mediates the problem of co-operation under anarchy by diminishing decision maker concerns about cheating and relative gains. This is, in part, a consequence of the fact that liberal norms and institutions are thought to bias democracies toward the adoption of defensive security strategies. If this is the case, however, it does not necessarily bode well for the prospects of collective security. Indeed, to the extent that military interventions are required to enforce the regime, the efficacy of a collective security system actually may be jeopardised by the constraints democracies presumably face when it comes to the use of force (Morgan, n.d: 15-22; Spiezio, 1995: ch. 4).

Obviously there is no reason to assume that all democratic states are similarly constrained in this regard. This is an empirical question that can be addressed only through an analysis of the norms and institutions characterising each democratic political system. Unfortunately, liberal theorists eschew this type of analysis in favour of a broader and more general claim about the relationship

between democracy and international co-operation. While this tack is appropriate for some analytic purposes, its utility in the case of collective security is questionable.

Ultimately, the efficacy of a collective security system will hinge on the credibility of the members' commitment to respond to any and all acts of aggression and their willingness to resort to force if deterrence fails. If domestic norms and institutions undermine the ability of states to make or honour international commitments, the prospects for collective security will suffer just as much as they would because of the effects of anarchy. Here again, domestic politics matter because domestic political arrangements affect the ability of domestic groups and coalitions to participate in the policy making process (Snyder, 1991; Risse-Kappen, 1991; Checkel, 1993). To the extent that the preferences of domestic actors diverge when it comes to the use of force, domestic norms and institutions may decisively affect a state's ability to participate in a collective security system by shaping the relative political influence of contending domestic political actors. Liberal theorists have been surprisingly indifferent to this issue perhaps because their preoccupation with transparency has blinded them to the complications and obstacles that can arise from the process of democratic politics.

Domestic Structures and Collective Security

A domestic structures' perspective can address these shortcomings by drawing attention to the normative frameworks and institutional arenas wherein states makes policy choices.⁵ In this section I support this claim by highlighting the value of an analytic framework that links domestic politics and collective security through the concept of state autonomy.⁶ The discussion begins with a brief discussion of the distinction features of a collective security regime which reveals the critical role domestic factors can play in regard to both the formation and performance of this institution.

Conceptually, a collective security system can best be characterised as a regime designed to limit the frequency of international conflict through a legally binding and automatic commitment to oppose any and all acts of aggression.⁷ The rationale underlying the formation of the regime, of course, is that such a free-standing commitment will promote international peace and security by deterring would-be aggressors and by reassuring states in general (Claude, 1962: 110).

Obviously, the viability of a collective security system ultimately hinges upon the willingness of states to support the regime. From a practical standpoint, two forms of support are essential. First, states must be willing to make a binding commitment to oppose any and all acts of aggression. Second, states

also must be willing to make a material contribution to multilateral enforcement efforts whenever a member of the institution is attacked. As the following discussion makes clear, domestic politics holds clear implications for the ability of states to provide both forms of support.

Collective security regimes typically are established on the basis of a formal treaty that specifies the jurisdictional scope of the system, the contributions states are expected to make in furthering the institution's objectives, and the decision making procedures to be followed in the event the multilateral enforcement efforts become necessary.⁸ Typically, the formation of a collective security system also entails the establishment of a standing international organisation to help administer the regime.

A high degree of formalisation appears to be necessary in the case of a collective security regime because of the nature of the public goods it is designed to produce (i.e. deterrence, defence and reassurance).⁹ Deterrence theorists maintain that commitment, capabilities, and credibility are the essential ingredients of an actor's ability to exert influence in international politics (Schelling, 1966: 35-91). Within the context of a collective security regime, therefore, a formal treaty stands as a highly visible manifestation of the solemnity states attached to their commitment to oppose aggression. A permanent international organisation, on the other hand, serves to strengthen the retaliatory capabilities associated with the regime by facilitating the members' ability to undertake timely defensive efforts should deterrence fail. In essence, formalisation appears to be a natural consequence of the regime's deterrent foundation and the concomitant need to buttress both the credibility of the members' commitment to oppose aggression and their actual capacity to do so.

For our purposes, however, the significance of formalisation stems from the fact that treaties need to be ratified domestically before they enter into force. This can have important consequences for the prospects of collective security because, in theory, ratification procedures provide domestic political actors with important opportunities to assert their preferences in regard to the terms of a prospective agreement. While the practical significance of this factor is an open empirical question, the need for treaty ratification suggests, at a minimum, that domestic politics are unavoidably implicated in the process of creating a collective security regime.

Robert Putnam (1988) has suggested that we can investigate the relationship between domestic politics and the ratification of international commitments most profitably by examining the domestic structure of a country's political system. Domestic structures matter in this context because they constitute the rules and arenas whereby executive branch decision-makers relate to, and interact with, other domestic actors. Analytically, Putnam conceives of these norms and institutions as defining the 'autonomy' officials possess when it comes to making and honouring international commitments. On the basis of this conceptual-

isation, Putnam (1988, 448) hypothesises that 'the greater the autonomy of central decision-makers... the greater the likelihood of achieving international agreement'.

Theoretically, the concept of state autonomy enables us to link domestic politics and collective security because this factor explicitly focuses upon the ability of states to ratify the binding security commitments that stand at the core of the regime. In essence, Putnam's framework suggests that the prospects for creating a collective security system will vary along with the relative autonomy of the states that are slated to participate in the institution. Specifically, states characterised by a greater degree of central decision maker autonomy should be better positioned to participate in a collective security regime, *ceteris paribus*, than states whose chief executives are more highly constrained by domestic norms and institutions.¹⁰ In terms of the present discussion this suggests that if the relative autonomy of democratic states vary, some democracies may be better suited to participate in a collective security system than other democracies.

The concept of state autonomy also is relevant to the efficacy of a collective security system. The viability of the regime ultimately is premised upon the willingness of states to use force (i.e. wage war) whenever a member is attacked. Thus, like any military operation, the success of a multilateral enforcement mission will depend upon the availability of three key assets: manpower, money, and material (Durch 1993, 59-76).¹¹ In the current debate over collective security, however, relatively little attention has been devoted to either the operational dimension of multilateral enforcement efforts or the impact that domestic politics may have upon the ability of states to contribute to such missions. This appears to be a consequence of an often unspoken assumption that chief executives are 'able to mobilise whatever domestic resources, institutional or material, are necessary to achieve vital foreign-policy objectives' (Moravcsik 1993, 10). Given this conceptualisation of state-society relations, the question of domestic constraints can be safely disregarded.

This assumption is problematic, however, especially in the case of democracies. Recent research indicates that democratisation tends to enhance the role domestic factors play in regard to both the formulation and implementation of a state's security policy (Bennett, Leggold and Unger 1994; Katzenstein and Okawara, 1993; Barnett, 1990; Kupchan, 1988). This is in part a consequence of the fact that within the context of a liberal-capitalist framework 'the state must negotiate with domestic actors for access to [the] societally controlled resources' it needs to pursue a given strategy (Barnett 1990, 535). Hence, democracies may be especially prone to domestic political struggles when the state attempts to mobilise the manpower, money, and/or material needed to support the multilateral enforcement tasks associated with a collective security regime.

The concept of state autonomy draws attention to the political norms and institutions that affect a chief executive's ability to extract resources from socie-

ty and commit resources to public policy purposes. For reasons outlined above, we would expect to find that the greater the relative autonomy of the state the greater the latitude of central decision-makers to make material contributions to multilateral enforcement efforts. Here again, if democracies vary along this dimension of state autonomy, we should expect to find important differences in the ability of democracies to contribute to the military capabilities of the regime.

As this discussion indicates, there are compelling theoretical reasons to investigate the impact domestic politics may have in regard to both the formation and the efficacy of a collective security system. An analysis of the domestic structures of the major powers slated to participate in the regime would be especially valuable. While collective security systems are premised on the goal of universal membership, the viability of a collective security system depends primarily upon the support of the major powers (Jervis, 1985; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991; Miller, 1992). After all, it is the major powers who provide the bulk of the military capabilities that provide the institution with its credibility as a deterrent to aggression. Conceptually the major powers can be regarded as a 'privileged group' capable of providing collective goods even when other states opt to free ride (see Olson, 1965: 49-50; Snidal, 1985: 598-612). Since the support of the major powers can be regarded as a necessary and perhaps a sufficient condition for the success of a collective security regime, focusing upon the domestic structure of these particular states would provide important insights into the prospects for collective security in any given historical period.

The Systemic Environment

The preceding analysis suggests that in order to properly assess the prospects of establishing a collective security system in post-cold war Europe, we would need to examine the domestic structure of each of the major powers slated to participate in the regime. Unfortunately, such an undertaking is beyond the scope of the present study. Instead, the analysis concludes by offering some observations about the circumstances currently prevailing in Europe and the impact these factors may have upon the major powers' ability to mobilise domestic political support for collective security.¹²

The major powers of post-cold war Europe are more secure from external attack than states have ever been in the history of the European states system. There are three basic reasons underlying this claim: the advent of nuclear weapons; the declining economic utility of territorial expansion; and the spread of democracy among the major powers themselves. Revolutionary changes in the nature of both military technology and economic production have combined to dramatically lower the expected utility of aggression. Democratisa-

tion, on the other hand, serves to pacify and stabilise the way states relate to and interact with one another. Taken together, these factors have diminished the probability of major power war to its lowest point in the history of international politics.

The nuclearisation of the European states system increases stability at the level of the major powers by lowering the expected utility of war between and among these states. Given the destructiveness of nuclear weapons technology, the potential costs of conflict will almost always outweigh the potential benefits. This should, in turn, breed cautious and conservative foreign policy behaviours on the part of the major powers that significantly diminish the likelihood of war between and among them (Jervis, 1989: 23-29).

In essence, nuclear weapons have created a military environment in Europe characterised by defence-dominance. This refers to a world in which 'it is easier to protect and to hold than it is to move forward, destroy and take' (Jervis, 1978: 187). Under these circumstances there is little to be gained and much to be lost by initiating conflict. Hence from the standpoint of the major powers the expected utility of war has diminished significantly. Indeed Kenneth Waltz (1990: 740) contends that 'the probability of major power war among states that have nuclear weapons approaches zero'.

Fundamental changes in the nature of economic production also serve to enhance the security of the major powers in post-cold war Europe. This conclusion stems from the fact that states stand to gain relatively little from territorial expansion within the context of a post-industrial economy (Gilpin 1981: 219-33; Rosecrance, 1986: 123-33; Mueller, 1989b: 221-23; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991: 150; Jervis, 1991-1992: 48-50). Hence there are few economic incentives for a major power to pursue an expansionist foreign policy that would threaten the political independence and/or territorial integrity of other major powers in the region.

Conceptually this argument hinges upon the 'cumulativity of power resources' (Hopf, 1991: 477-78). If an aggressor can realise significant economic and/or military benefits from seizing control of another state's territory, then the probability of war will increase. Conversely, if the ease with which power resources can be extracted is low, then governments become more likely to refrain from territorial expansion. The cumulativity of power resources varies along with the nature of the factors of production (i.e. land, labour and capital) that underlie a state's military and economic capabilities in a given era.

Historically states have been encouraged to expand because of the critical role that territorial control has played in regard to the productivity, wealth and power of an economy. This was especially the case when agriculture constituted the predominant form of economic production (Gilpin, 1981: 110-15). The industrial revolution coupled with the gradual emergence of an integrated world economy, however, slowly began to weaken the linkage between territo-

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rial control and economic strength (Kaysen, 1990: 53-57). As Robert Gilpin (1981: 132-33) points out these developments held out the possibility that 'through specialisation and international trade an efficient state could gain more than through territorial expansion and conquests'. Such opportunities have become even more pronounced as economies move into a post-industrial era where information stands as the key to productivity, wealth and political power (Rosenau, 1990). Moreover this emerging mode of production makes it relatively more difficult for an aggressor to exploit the fruits of territorial expansion. The logic underlying this claim is summarised by Stephen Van Evera.

Today's high-technology post-industrial economies depend increasingly on free access to technology and social information. This access requires a free domestic press and access to foreign publication, foreign travel, personal computers and photocopiers. But the police measures needed to subdue a conquered society require that these technologies and practices be forbidden, because they also carry subversive ideas. Thus, critical elements of the economic fabric must now be ripped out to maintain control over conquered politics. As a result...control adds little to national power (Van Evera, 199-1991: 14-15).

These fundamental changes in the nature of economic development serve to diminish the attractiveness of territorial expansion on the part of the major powers in post-cold war Europe. In essence the non-cumulativity of power resources in contemporary Europe heightens the security of the major powers by lowering the economic incentives to seize and control territory.

In combination the nuclearisation and post-industrialisation of the European states system will serve to stabilise and pacify major power relations because under these circumstances 'the great powers gain neither more secure borders nor increased wealth by adding more territory' (Goldgeiger and McFaul, 1992: 484). Hence these factors minimise the likelihood of the major powers becoming involved in territorially-based disputes. This is important because, historically, territorial issues have been at the centre of many of the conflicts that have occurred between and among the major powers (Holsti, 1991).

The prospects for peace and security in Europe also are heightened by the fact that all of the major powers currently are led by democratically-oriented governments. This is an encouraging development because democracies rarely go to war with one another (Russett, 1993). Moreover democracies are also unlikely to engage in acts of coercive diplomacy vis-à-vis one another (Maoz and Abdolali, 1989: 21-23). Hence in terms of their social relations, democracies tend to act as if they are members of a pluralistic security community (Deutsch, 1988: 272-73). In this type of environment the security of each state

is enhanced because 'fears of attack *by one another* are virtually nonexistent' (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 27).¹³

The historical record on the democratic peace bodes well for the security of the major powers in the post-cold war era. Democracy is firmly established in the United States, Britain, France, and Germany. Russia, of course, is a new-comer to this tradition; at present it can best be characterised as a 'weakly institutionalised liberal regime' (Snyder, 1989: 6). In light of previous historical experience, one would expect democratisation on the part of the major powers to stabilise and pacify the nature of their bilateral and multilateral interactions. This should serve to further diminish the likelihood of major power conflict in Europe.

Taken together nuclearisation, post-industrialisation and democratisation have rendered the major powers of contemporary Europe more secure from external attack than states have ever been in the history of the interstate system. Indeed the probability of major power war in Europe would appear to be at its lowest point since the sixteenth century. While this is a welcome development, it also poses a dilemma for the major powers when it comes to participating in a collective security system. The factors cited above will serve to diminish the likelihood of major power conflict in Europe regardless of whether a collective security system is established in the region. Hence the security of the major powers is not contingent on the existence of the regime. To the contrary their security is underwritten by a combination of technological and political developments that stand independent of any institutional arrangement.

This also suggests that a collective security system is unlikely to enhance the security of the major powers to any significant degree. Given the disincentives to war that presently exist on the part of the major powers, the security guarantees associated with the regime would contribute little, if anything, to the prevention of major power conflict. Seen from this perspective, a collective security system constitutes an additional layer of insurance that the major powers of contemporary Europe simply do not need in order to be secure.

While a collective security system would yield only marginal benefits to the major powers, the regime would significantly expand the scope of the major powers' security commitments and responsibilities. As noted above, collective security systems depend heavily on major power co-operation. In practice it is the major powers that provide a disproportionate share of the military capabilities that underwrite the institution's security guarantees. Hence by participating in a collective security system, the major powers would become jointly responsible for managing security problems on a continental-wide scale. Depending upon the level of regional instability, the costs associated with this task could add significantly to the defence burdens the major powers must bear.

From a rational choice perspective, a collective security system under current conditions confronts the major powers with the law of diminishing returns.

To wit, each additional increment of managerial effort on their part is unlikely to yield an equivalent increase in the level of their own national security. In essence, to participate in a post-cold war collective security system, the major powers must be prepared to bear a disproportionate share of the costs of an institution that will not significantly enhance the security of their own vital national interests.

The salience of this fact is compounded by the domestic political structures that currently characterise the major powers of Europe. To participate in a collective security system, states will need to generate and sustain domestic political support. As noted previously, this type of public diplomacy is an essential task within the context of a democratic country. Hence the state must be capable of justifying its extractive demands by explaining how and why specific policy choices will enhance the nation's security. It is at this juncture that contemporary systemic and domestic conditions combine to diminish the prospects for collective security in post-cold war Europe. Put simply, the extraordinarily benign nature of the major powers' security environment will make it difficult for these governments to convince their respective publics that they should actively support the regime. Since the cause and effect relationships linking the security system are so tenuous under present circumstances, it becomes less likely that states will be able to convince domestic actors that participation in the regime is worthwhile.

This is not to suggest to suggest that domestic factors will necessarily lead the major powers to boycott a collective security system, as the United States did in regard to the League of Nations. Rather, the argument simply suggest that society will be reluctant to authorise the state to expend the manpower, money and material resources needed to honour the security commitments that lie at the core of the regime. In practice, however, this will vitiate the concept of collective security and jeopardise the political viability of the system.

The argument also implies that if formed, a collective security system is likely to be plagued by repeated acts of involuntary defection on the part of the major powers. Robert Putnam (1988: 438) coined this term to refer to a situation in which domestic political constraints prevent a government from honouring its international commitments. In the present context, involuntary defection would constitute a buck-passing strategy whereby the citizens of one country seek to pass along the costs of collective security to other states and societies. In practice, of course, buck-passing is synonymous with the free rider problem.

Christensen and Snyder (1990) argue that the incentive to adopt a buck-passing strategy will vary along with the severity of a state's security predicament. To wit, 'the less the vulnerability of states, the greater is the tendency to pass the buck' (Christensen and Snyder, 1990: 145). Conceptually, the authors link the vulnerability of states to two factors located at the systemic level of analysis: the polarity of the international system and the nature of military technology. On

the basis of this analytic framework, Christensen and Snyder (1990: 147) contend that states are most likely to pursue a buck-passing strategy under conditions of multipolarity and defence-dominance.

Both conditions characterise post-cold war Europe. As noted previously, nuclear weapons technology promotes defence-dominance because of the prohibitive costs associated with this type of major power warfare (Jervis, 1978: 206:11). Moreover the dissolution of the Soviet Union has weakened the geopolitical foundations of the bipolar structure that characterised the European states systems during the cold war. While a true multipolar structure has yet to emerge in Europe the trend in this direction is unmistakable (Waltz, 1993; Kegley and Raymond, 1993). Hence the systemic conditions are ripe for the major powers to opt for a buck-passing strategy.

Of equal importance, however, is the fact that each of the major powers are characterised by domestic political structures that afford societal group and coalitions unprecedented opportunities to influence the policy making process in the realm of security. Under present circumstances, it would not be surprising if members of society exploit the opportunities democracy presents to demand that their respective governments attend to an array of domestic problems rather than expend resources in the name of an international institution that does little to enhance the security of their own country. If this is the case then, ironically, democratisation on the part of the major powers actually will have served to diminish the prospects of establishing a viable collective security system in post-cold Europe.

Conclusion

Democracies rarely fight one another, but this does not necessarily mean that democracies are ideally suited to co-operate in the multilateral management of international security affairs. The present essay has attempted to underscore this point by highlighting the complications democracy can pose when it come to the ratification and implementation of collective security commitments. This study, however, has done little more than scratch the surface of this issue. Before we jump to conclusions about the (in)ability of democracies to engage in far-reaching acts of international security co-operation, scholars need to investigate a considerably broader range of cases.

Such an effort could make a very valuable contribution to our understanding of the future of world politics. We have entered an era that is unprecedented in the history of the interstate system. Never before have so many of the world's major powers been characterised by liberal norms and institutions at the level of their domestic political systems. There are, of course, compelling reasons to believe that this development will significantly improve the prospects for global

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peace and prosperity. We would be remiss, however, if we did not acknowledge that democratic systems are characterised by a degree of parochialism and self-centredness on the part of individuals that leads to an inherent tension among the members of a liberal society. It would be surprising to find that such problems do not exist at the level of international relations as well.

Notes

- ^{1.} Neoliberal institutionalism is a recent offshoot of the liberal perspective on world politics that emphasises the role international institutions play in shaping the behaviour of states and mediating the effects of anarchy (Keohane, 1989). It can be distinguished from other variants of the liberal perspective such as trade liberalism, a liberal transactions approach, and democratic liberalism (Nye, 1988; Grieco, 1988a). The latter emphasises the impact democratisation can have in promoting international peace and co-operation whereas trade liberalism and the transaction approach stress the beneficial effects of transnational commercial and cultural exchanges. Unlike neoliberal institutionalism, most variants of liberalism have long acknowledged the importance of domestic factors as it relates to world politics. As noted below, however, some neoliberal institutionalists do draw on the insights associated with democratic liberalism to buttress their argument about the viability of collective security in the post-cold war era.
- ^{2.} This portion of the analysis draws heavily on Spiezio (1997).
- ^{3.} Uncertainty is hypothesised to be a central concern of states because this factor makes it difficult for rational decision-makers to estimate the costs and benefits of co-operation. In regard to the problem of cheating, for example, decision-makers first must try to forecast the consequences that will result if another state does in fact cheat. States also must try to determine whether their monitoring capabilities will enable them to detect defections in a timely fashion (Stein, 1985). Uncertainty also underlies the so-called relative gains problem (Grieco, 1988a; Powell, 1994). Here, decision-makers must try to estimate both the distributional consequences of a collaborative act and how this may effect the relative position of states over time.
- ^{4.} Indeed, Flynn and Scheffer (1990: 83) maintain that 'the members of any workable collective security system must be democracies.'
- ^{5.} A useful introduction to this perspective can be found in Katzenstein (1978) and Ikenberry, Lake, and Mastanduno (1988).
- ^{6.} Adhering to the precedent set in previous research on this subject my definition of the state is limited to the chief executive and his/her central foreign policy advisors. While this conceptualisation obviously is open to a number of objections, it is adequate for the purpose of the present essay. For a discussion of this point see, Krasner (1978) and Ikenberry, Lake, and Mastanduno (1989).
- ^{7.} Recently, some theorists have suggested that the concept of collective security be broadened to include institutional arrangements (e.g. concerts) that do not obligate states to use force in response to an act of aggression (e.g. Jervis, 1985: 78; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991; Downs, 1994). As Zelikow (1992) and Betts (1992: 15-16) point out, however, this approach vitiates the concept by eliminating the element of automicity that differentiates collective security from other types of international security institutions. The present study adheres to the classical definition of collective security.
- ^{8.} Prominent example would include the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Charter of United Nations, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, and the North Atlantic Treaty. Even the Concert of Europe, cited by many scholars (e.g. Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991) as the exemplar of an informal collective security system, was based upon a formal treaty. The Quadruple alliance signed by Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia on November 15, 1815 committed the major powers to collective defence in the event of renewed French aggression (see Gulick, 1955: 280-91; Webster, 1950).

9. Lisa Martin (1993: 95-96) would add that formalisation also is required to offset the incentives states face to cheat when dealing with collaborative problems.
10. Putnam (1988: 436) employs the concept of ratification to refer to 'any [domestic] decision-process... that is required to endorse or implement a Level I [i.e. international] agreement, whether formally or informally'. This broad conceptualisation, however, conflates two analytically distinct challenges states may face in regard to domestic politics and international co-operation. Since a state's ability to gain domestic political support for a proposed international commitment is not synonymous with a state's ability to secure the domestic resources needed to implement an agreement, I find it useful to maintain a distinction between ratification and implementation. I use the term ratification to refer simply to the process whereby domestic actors formally endorse a proposed treaty; implementation refers to a state's ability to mobilise the societal resources needed to fulfil its international obligations.
11. In the twentieth century, multilateral military responses to an act of international aggression have been formally authorised by a collective security institution on only two occasions. While the Korean War and Operation Desert Storm may not be representative of the contingencies a collective security system would face in the future, these cases do highlight the operational complexities that can be associated with such an undertaking. Recent experience also suggests that the costs associated with multilateral military missions are not trivial. In 1993, for example, the UN budgeted approximately three billion dollars to support eighteen peacekeeping missions involving the deployment of over seventy-seven thousand personnel (The defense Monitor (1994, 'Policing World Trouble Spots: United States or United Nations?').
12. This portion of the analysis draws heavily from Spiezio (1995).
13. Two basic explanations for the pacific nature of democratic dyads have been advanced. The normative model attributes democratic peace to the political culture of democracy. The structural model emphasises the institutional constraints that make it difficult for a democratic government to use force as a foreign policy instrument. For a discussion of the models, see Maoz and Russett (1993a).