

***The Games of War***  
***A Gaming Review of War Cause Theories***

*By Matt J. Martin*

War has been around for quite some time now. Typically enough, the scholars of the modern era have theorized a great number of explanations for the causes of war, with varying usefulness. In the Cold-War era, by far the most popular and influential of war cause theories has been the realist paradigm. Here the emphasis has been on power and balance of power. Such things as culture, personality, and values were simply not part of the equation. Rationality was assumed to be the norm. Game theory, a method of fitting international relations into several kinds of matrixes in order to determine the preference structures of the actors involved, can be viewed as the ultimate expression of realism and rational choice theory. It assumed complete rationality of the actors, a consistency of values, and that each actor would be solely interested in maximizing self-utility as determined by Western standards. While game theory has been ridiculed and abandoned by behavioral and personality theorists, it may be that game theory can be adapted to other war cause theories by adjusting its basic assumptions and allowing it to account for varying personalities and value structures. This paper will explore just such a reconciliation. We will review traditional game theory, then move on to review the other war cause theories discussed in the Outbreak of War class and conjecture what sort of adjustments might be made to game theory in order for it to be useful in those circumstances.

### ***A Review of Traditional Gaming***

A game most typically takes the form of a two-by-two matrix, and its most basic type is the Zero-Sum game. In the Zero-Sum game, with an “A” Column player and a “B” row player, what A wins, B loses. Each game ends with one player having +1, and the other -1, the value of 1 having to do with the stakes of the game. Zero-sum games can involve only two players, as there is only a single payoff. Any given situation might involve more than two players, but only by breaking the situation down into two different games, with the winner and each loser.

When fit into a 2x2 Matrix, the Zero-sum game looks like this:

		"A" Column	
		Option 1	Option 2
Option 1	-	-1, +1	+2, -2
"B" Row			
Option 2	+	+3, -3	-4, +4

In this game the sum of each payoff is zero, and there is no point at which the strategies for both players converge. When assigned symbolic variables, the game looks like this:

		"A" - Column	
		Option 1	Option 2
Option 1	-	-1	+2
"B" - Row			
Option 2	+	-3	+4

Option 1	Option 1	Option 2
Option 1	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <span>R</span> <span>+1</span> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <span>T</span> <span>-2</span> </div>
Option 2	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <span>S</span> <span>+3</span> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <span>P</span> <span>-4</span> </div>

Where T for each player is victory, S is defeat, P is deadlock, and R is cooperation. Of course, in the zero-sum game, deadlock is not really deadlock, and victory happens at different points for both players since there can be no gain or loss.

The second and more useful type of game is the Non-Zero Sum game, and preferences define its nature. It can be played out either cooperatively or non-cooperatively, as it may be in both players best interests to cooperate. Such a game might look like this:

**"A" - Column**

		Option 1 (Keep Quiet)	Option 2 (Defect)
<b>"B" - Row</b>	Option 1 (Keep Quiet)	-1 R R	+1 T S
	Option 2 (Defect)	-5 S T	-10 P P

The Prisoner's Dilemma game, as depicted above, is the most often cited reference game and is defined by the preference order:  $T > R > P > S$ . In this game, both players receive a reward if they defect and rat out on their partner when the other player doesn't. If neither player rats out, that is they cooperate, they both get a mild punishment. If both players rat out, however, they both get the maximum punishment. They are highly motivated to defect since they can't really trust each other, and they are both interested in minimizing their punishment and maximizing self-utility. As a result of rational self-interest then, they will probably both get the maximum punishment.

The Chicken game, another standard reference, is defined by the preference order  $T > R > S > P$ . In this game, while both players are motivated to defect since the reward for winning is great, but they are also somewhat motivated to compromise since the consequences for deadlock are far greater than the consequence for losing.

At first glance, then, it appears that game theory is useful in determining the preferences and ultimate actions of actors. Games, in fact, can sometimes accurately predict the reactions of both players to this short-lived crises. There are several major limitations to game theory however, which aren't immediately apparent in an average game. The first is the fundamental assumption that both players, being rational and self-interested, would move only to maximize their short-term utility. If either of the players was a few cards short of deck, the game would be useless as a predictor. The game simply cannot account for irrationality or self-destructive behavior.

The second limitation is the almost invisible Western values perspective which the game naturally uses. In Western society, national leaders want to increase or preserve their power in relation to other nations. If a leader is not interested in power, for example if a leader were more interested in doing God's work rather than preserving power, the game would again be totally useless as a predictor. The leader may not be irrational. That leader may simply have a different system of values which encourages her to move toward different goals the accumulation or preservation of power and self-utility. The game simply does not account for non-power oriented goals.

Finally, the game takes absolutely no consideration of internal or cultural factors which might have a significant impact on the situation. If a leader expected that the hard-line stance, defection in the game, would set off a peoples' revolution, the game would once more be totally useless. A rational, self-interested leader would certainly accept an international defeat if doing otherwise meant a removal from power. Likewise, if a leader considered the threat from without to be a manifestation of rival forces

from within, that leader move against the internal faction rather than the external power. The game simply takes no account of internal power and politics.

So perhaps, on further consideration, game theory may seem to be of very little value in telling us exactly what's going on between and within nations. But, if the game were able to accommodate more circumstances and factors, it may prove to be more accurate and revealing. Let's now see what happens when we approach the game from different perspectives.

### ***Games for War in Theory and Practice***

We will start our review with Geoffrey Blainey. Specifically, with the theories Blainey considers most thoroughly. Blainey reviews and quickly rejects Delinquency theory, Aesthetic War theory, Ignorance/Misunderstanding theory, and Harsh Peace theory. For the purposes of brevity in this essay, we will reject them as well, only to give the following brief reviews: The delinquent theory assumes that nations have a fixed stock of energy which is alternatively channeled into peaceful and warlike pursuits (Blainey, p. 11). The long periods of peace, therefore tended to occur when governments were occupied by bouts of nervous domestic activity and conflict. When enemies at home seem more threatening than enemies abroad, or when trade or industry require all of one's attention, a nation has no time for war. But considering that the European nations were really quite busy right up to WWI, this theory is of no help whatsoever.

Aesthetic theory argues that great ideas keep the peace. Specifically, "...the culture, the customs, laws and manners, which had evolved in Europe and had found strong and influential expression in the great philosophical, literary, and artistic works of the eighteenth century," (Blainey, p. 14) were responsible for a long period of peace. Considering, however, that art and science flourished in Europe in the nineteenth century and the years before WWI, we have to wonder about the validity of this argument.

Also, aesthetic ideas strong enough to halt international war should, in theory, have the same effect on civil violence. Yet as the era of international peace in the nineteenth century—which this theory was created to explain—is peppered by serious civil wars, we can ultimately determine that this theory is of very little practical value.

The harsh peace theory holds that the peace of a post-war era will largely depend on the harshness of the agreement which ended the war. This theory argues that a peace agreement which leaves one of the parties in decent economic and strategic shape will foster good will among the parties and result in a long period of post-war peace. It continues to argue that the harsh armistice will antagonize a defeated nation into quick aggressive behavior. It is noted that the harsh Treaty of Versailles which ended the First World War led quickly to a second, and even more devastating world war. But as there are countless examples of very generous treaties resulting in a very short period of peace, this theory contributes little to our understanding of the general causes of war.

Next is the idea that ignorance or misunderstanding between nations will cause war. In this case, such things as railways, canals, trade, and universal languages will contribute to greater international understanding and thus reduce the risk of war. Many languages, international organizations, monetary units, and transportation systems have been proposed or developed with exactly this thought in mind. In fact, these sorts of ideas and movements were at a high point just prior to WWI. Clearly, misunderstanding contributed very little to outbreak of war.

Blainey does an admirable job of discrediting these rather simple-minded theories, calling principally on the fact that they fail to explain the behavior of nations over time. As there is no persistent pattern of war and peace in the world, these patterned theories are inadequate to the task of explaining or predicting war. For a true explanation, Blainey argues, one must analyze some of the neglected clues which seem to be abundant in most pre-war periods. The first of these clues is the optimism of leaders on the eve of war.

Consistently, leaders and citizens alike have expected the coming war to be short and affordable. Particularly, on the eve of WWI, leaders on all sides expected the “boys to be home by Christmas.” The fighting might last three, or possibly six months. Few European leaders could therefore foresee the intense magnitude of the coming tragedy. They had no idea they were about to engage in the costliest and bloodiest war in all their long histories. Furthermore, both alliances expected victory. So even if the war was brutal, the prize would be worth it.

Confidence was further bolstered by a belief that the home nation possess the finest—or at least competitive—military minds and assets, and could therefore expect to maintain a strategic parity. Both alliances had poured great amounts of resources into preparations for war, both in terms of honing their men into the finest military officers, and in terms of honing their industrials into great war machines. The Germans, for example, expected their new submarines to knock a critical blow in the supply lines of the British. The British, on the other hand, expected their massive navy to deny German cities precious raw materials and place unbearable strains on her credit and finances. All nations involved, with the possible exception of Austria-Hungry, expected that their alliance would be able to out-muscle the other alliance in what would without doubt be a very short-lived conflict.

The short-war concept seemed heartily fixed in the European mind, and Blainey is convinced that this was a significant cause of war, rather than an example of ironic but irrelevant foolishness. Furthermore, each nation involved seemed to have its own reason for this optimism. England believed that the war would place unprecedented strain on the economies of the nations involved, and an economic crises would fall upon England’s enemies first, thereby forcing them to surrender. Germany placed her faith in the decisiveness of modern military technology, an area where Germany believed herself to be the master. Both these beliefs have a very subjective, imprecise nature about them. Neither can be seen as clear-cut indicators of strategic superiority. These

kinds of arguments and intuitions which led leaders and citizens to expect victory, also encouraged them to believe that the war would be short. This belief in a short war was therefore a product of an abundant supply of conscious superiority (Blainey, p. 41).

So to see how optimism can be factored into a game, let's first look at a traditional game of the eve of WWI:

### Triple-Alliance

		Appeasement	Defend, Use Force
Duel-Alliance	Back Down	<p>Crisis Resolution</p> <p>R</p> <p>R</p>	<p>Order Restored</p> <p>T</p> <p>S</p> <p>Loose Face, Credability</p>
	Maintain the hard line	<p>Loose Credibility</p> <p>S</p> <p>T</p> <p>Victory</p>	<p>War</p> <p>P</p> <p>P</p> <p>War</p>

According to this game, the preference structure for both sides is:  $T > R > S > P$ . Both sides would prefer victory, and they both would like to avoid war. But as they are both motivated to defect, they are driven to war. At first glance, it seems as if this game is accurate since it correctly predicts war. But it doesn't really tell us what's going on. This game assumes that both players understand the coastlines of war and the consequences involved. This means that they would have to understand that the war was bound to be incredibly long, drawn out, and bloody—something they clearly hadn't ex-

pected. It also assumes that they are full of pride and would act to avoid embarrassment. That may or may not be valid assumptions, especially when considering the optimism of both sides on the eve of war. Regardless, one or more of the nations may have genuinely been interested in the welfare of its citizens—something which just doesn't come out in the game.

If, on the other hand, this game could take the optimism of the pre-war period into account, it might better explain why the actors behaved they way they did even though they clearly knew the potential for a major war involving all powers. Such a game might look like this:

**Triple-Alliance**

		Appeasement	Defend, Use Force
<b>Duel-Alliance</b>	Back Down	Crisis Resolution R R	Order Restored T S Loose Face, Credability
	Maintain the hard line	Loose Credibility S T Victory	Unendurable Econ. Cost War (Which is bound to end quickly) P P War (Which isn't so bad, you know) Decisive Mil. Tech.

With this simple adjustment, we can see a tremendous difference in preferences. War, which in the previous model was naturally understood to be something of mutual

anxiety, now can be seen as the actors saw it then. The Germans expected war to end quickly, due to their decisive military technology and prowess. The English expected the war to end quickly due to the German economic inferiority. Both sides never imagined the nightmare they were about to unleash upon themselves. In fact, they viewed war as a perfectly reasonable option given the current circumstances. Given this adjustment, perhaps a more accurate preference structure would look like this:  $T > P > R > S$ . Here war is preferred to any kind of compromise.

### ***The Death Watch and Scapegoat Games***

Blainey's principle alternative to inadequate war cause theories is the Death Watch theory. To sum up the theory quite succinctly, "The death of a king was often the herald of war." (Blainey, p. 68) As seen by Blainey, the question of who should sit in a vacant throne has, and can be, a vital cause of war. The death of a king can lead to the heirs fighting among themselves. When one of the heirs is losing, that heir will invariably seek outside aid. Combine this with an asset-laden state just begging to be divided up, and you can see how a death watch can create a very war-prone environment.

There are some factors which make a state more susceptible to death watch wars when the king dies. Particularly, when a long-reigning monarch is succeeded by seemingly weak heir, the country can be vulnerable to attack. This is especially the case when alliances are personal between the old monarch and other nations. The death of this monarch can weaken or even dissolve such alliances. Furthermore, at home the new monarch can not always be certain of the loyalty of his own administrators and generals. The new monarch is therefore usually the target of foreign and civil attack rather than the instigator.

The attacker usually took the form of a nation which had previously not considered itself strong enough to attack the old monarch. Particularly this was the case when the death of the old monarch had blurred the pecking order to the point where moder-

ately powerful rivals would become confident of their own bargaining position. These kinds of wars are characterized by the same kind of over-optimism discussed in the previous section. When the new monarch was judged to be too weak to resist the intrusion of a rival monarch, those rivals would conclude that either they could challenge the new monarch without risk of war, or if war broke out, the victory would be swift and easy. The hopes and expectations of the rivals would invariably be exaggerated to the point where the conflict could be resolved only when the expectations were lowered to realistic levels.

A rival monarch, when faced with the decision of whether to challenge the new, apparently weak monarch, would typically assume that the new monarch would not put up much of a fuss and would be easily dispatched with. The rival's decision matrix might look something like this:

### **Consequences of the New Monarch's Meager Resistance**

		War	Simple Plunder
<b>Rival Challenge</b>	<p>Quick Victory and Assumption of Greater Power</p>	<p>A Small Gain</p>	
	T	R	

As you can see, when a rival assumes that the new monarch is incapable of offering any significant resistance, the choice is fairly simple.  $T > R$ . There is nothing in this rival's thought process which might serve as a deterrent factor. Even if the new monarch controls the same military might as the old monarch, it's easy enough for the rival to rationalize that this new monarch either lacks the will to use such power of the com-

manders of military forces might not be entirely loyal. Either way, in the mind of the rival the new monarch will be no match.

The rival can be a threat from within just as easily as an external threat. All too often in fact, the two can be linked. Concerning the threat from within and its link to the external conflict, history demonstrates that revolution is often a prelude to international war. Of course, many wars do not begin with civil strife, and civil strife does not always mean war is imminent. But, as Blainey points out, the number of wars heralded by civil unrest in one of the nations involved is truly astonishing and can certainly be no coincidence. This can be the result of one of two factors. Firstly, when a monarchical rival perceived the approach of defeat either from the new monarch or another rival, that rival may seek outside assistance to help win the conflict. When an outside power gets involved in an internal struggle for power, circumstances conducive to war can certainly materialize very quickly.

The second possible factor is that an outside power, one that may have been at odds with the old monarch or regime for sometime, sees an opportunity to plunder and takes it. This weakness can certainly be the result of a new untried monarch, or a civil disturbance which weakens the governments ability to govern. In fact, we can think of civil death watch in almost exactly the same terms as monarchical death watch. When a rival believes a nation to be weak due to civil unrest, that rival might be very tempted to move in, even at the risk of war, and takes what it may have been wanting for some time. These types of wars therefore have the same kinds of dynamics as the monarchical conflicts described above.

Scapegoat theory, which argues that war is sometimes turned to by leaders to solve internal problems, rides on the heels of death watch theory for many theorists. At first glance, it appears that scapegoat theory might have a great deal of merit to it, and Blainey points out that totalitarian regimes are very quick to blame all the nation's internal problems on external powers in order to stir up savage patriotism. In fact, it's

been suggested that an authoritarian regime simply could not function or endure without taunting or fingering an outside scapegoat.

The lure and the danger of scapegoat theory is that it can be adapted to nearly any situation. It can fuel conspiracy theories to argue that the leaders of nations, in order to unite the people and preserve their rulership, will provoke an unnecessary war with their neighbors. Likewise it can be used by universal theorists who argue, for instance, that authoritarian regimes are naturally war-prone and democratic nations are naturally more peaceful.

Scapegoat theory can also lead to the belief that war is naturally entertaining to all men, equally appealing to walruses and carpenters, or statesmen and laborers alike. In this view, any frustration can be vented against an external enemy, and social tensions can be eased indefinitely. From there it is no great leap to conclude that war is a psychological outlet, and that its causes are to be found primarily in the dark caverns of the human sub-consciousness. Since war obviously destroys more than it creates, and since it is one of the few enduring elements of history, it must serve an instinctive, pan-human function. In this case, the question is not how to avoid war, for clearly we are all instinctively drawn to war and so to deny it would be to deny ourselves. The question is how can we prevent war from destroying us all. To this, the psychologists have very little to say.

Despite this ease of perversion, scapegoat theory can still be somewhat useful in determining roughly why a national leader might be vulnerable to hard-line inclinations, and its easy to see how unstable internal practices can lead directly to unstable external situations. This can be seen especially in pre-WWI Europe. Nearly every nation that was ultimately involved in the conflict had significant internal problems before the conflict. In Russia, for example, riots and strikes were a daily occurrence. Many historians have suggested that the Russian leaders' desire to quell these disturbances was a major influence on their decision to go to war. Similar descriptions can be made of

Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, etc., around that same time period. But whether these internal crises were a direct cause of war, or merely the by-product of whatever it was that really did cause the war, is very difficult to say. As Blainey writes: "Scapegoat theories appear to be acts of faith rather than reasoned arguments... Those who partly explain wars as the search for a scapegoat rarely offer evidence for their interpretation." (Blainey, p. 81)

The ultimate test of scapegoat theory is this: If a nation truly intends to use an external conflict to solve an internal problem, does it act on this intention? Meaning, does it focus its efforts on fighting a war and rallying the people, or does it attack its own citizens in an attempt to quiet the disturbances? In the nations with the highest levels of internal disturbance, you would expect the leaders to be jumping into the first external conflict which presents itself in hopes of finding a scapegoat. But this is rarely the case. Nations with a full-blown civil war, in fact, focus much more intently on the actions of its own citizens, and much less on external threats. Indeed, it is typically the nations with relatively mild internal turmoil's to which scapegoat theory is applied. Self-disintegrated nations can not be viewed as instigators of great internal violence. It is usually the other way around. Nations experiencing so much civil unrest that the survival of the government is at stake often find themselves under attack by outside powers who see an historic opportunity to destroy and rival nation at relatively little cost. When nations are exploding from within, they are viewed as weak, unable to defend themselves, and ripe for the plucking.

This previous discussion on realism and game theory, brings one important point to the forefront. That point being that when considering the actions and policies of a nation, it is in fact the actions and policies of individuals in control of nations that we are actually paying attention to. We have seen slightly how the will of the people can be important in so far as the people will either support or fail to support their leaders. If they support their leaders, than the leaders decisions will determine the ultimate

fate of the nation. If the people fail to support their leaders, it usually means that a new leader—one who the people will support—is about to take control. As it is the actions and decisions of individuals that is of interest to us, the qualities and characteristics of those individuals will end up being as or more important than any national attribute. We can now move on to a review of psychological and personality approaches to war cause theories.

### ***Theories and Games of Psychology and Culture***

Realism, as it stands, completely fails to take personality into account. To the realist, WWI was the result of unstable, multi-polar relationships between nations whose balance of power mechanisms had failed. Stability of the system is a result of the distribution of power, since all actors will attempt to gain more power where they perceive their adversaries to be weak. This is all fine and well, but it leaves out a lot of subtle details and hence, it doesn't completely describe what's really going on among and between these actors. A realist, while she would certainly consider naval arms race between Britain and Germany as a destabilizing set of events for example, would never consider Kaiser Wilhelm's extreme paranoid neurosis which compelled him to consider his nation's naval inferiority to be a personal insult by the British against his own honor. Likewise while the realist would consider the democracy of France to be less aggressive and wanting for war than the authoritarian Austria-Hungary, that realist would never pause to consider the "Oliver North" type actions of Paleologue, the French ambassador to Russia, who more or less convinced Russia to militarily challenge Germany through an unauthorized promise of French support. These kinds of subtleties escape the realist and lend much credit to personality theory.

The case of Colonel Alfred Redl, when considered against the backdrop of pre-war Europe, is an excellent example. You have an individual, who had very little to do with the balance of power, and yet whose personality had a great deal with building the

kinds of internal and external tensions which led to war. As an intelligence pioneer, Redl nearly single-handedly escalated the intelligence war between Austria-Hungary and Russia. As a result of his treason, fueled by his passions and perversions, he manufactured a spy witch hunt which had the direct result of making the Imperial Government much more paranoid and distrustful of their Russian neighbor. Redl's ultimate exposure as the most infamous of spies, again precipitated by aspects of his personality that had nothing to do with the balance of power, created such scandal and policy backlash in the Empire that Austria-Hungary's intelligence bureau just prior to WWI was so pre-occupied with its own internal problems, that it could not see the Russian forest for the Russian trees.

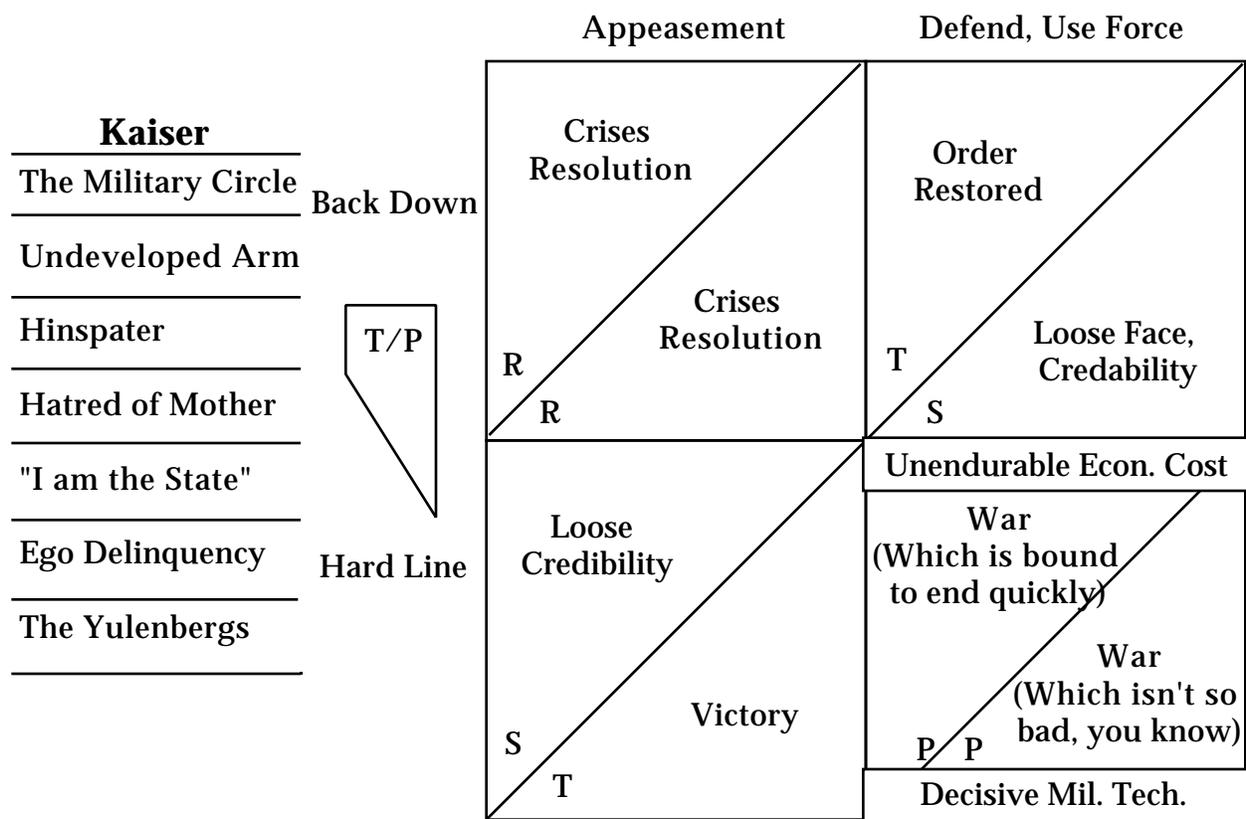
In order to effectively predict the potential for war based on personality, we must first determine exactly who is in a position to have significant influence on the behavior of nations, then determine what personality idiosyncrasies those people might possess which would lead them to make less than rational decisions. This should prove to be no simple task. In a democracy, for example, you would expect that such power would lie in the hands of publicly-elected officials. We can see from the case of the British Foreign Office, however, that may not necessarily be the case. In terms of foreign policy, the real power might just as easily rest with non-elected officials as elected officials. If that's the case then we need to determine who in those non-elected circles is really calling the shots, and analyze that person's unique mental characteristics. By determining exactly what that person's hidden agenda is, we might more effectively determine the likely preferences and ultimate actions that nation will take.

In order to place these personality considerations into a game-type matrix, we'll have to set forward a number of things. Not the least of which are the cultural, and as Mosse so eloquently points out, sexual values that individual will likely subscribe to as a result of heritage and upbringing. In the case of Czar Nicholas for example, we can determine based on his culture and upbringing, that he will have many archetypal mas-

culine values on his list of motivations. This might include such things as the relationship between nationalism and sexual respectability, the ideals of manliness, the place of women, etc. We might also include the cultural perspective on war and the military. In the case of Franz-Joseph of Austria-Hungary, we can quickly see that his purely military upbringing, which resulted in extreme emotional and sexual repression, an inability to understand any non-military cultural values, and a great emotional attachment to his military advisors and comrades, led to him being unable to resist the pressures of the military and instigating an unnecessary war.

The following game attempts to take such personality issues into consideration in the case of Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm.

### Triple-Alliance



When we identify the significant personality idiosyncrasies of the Kaiser with the preference structure, a number of things become immediately apparent. We can use the

two social affiliations here to identify a cultural value structure for the Kaiser. His very close association with the military circle means that he would have a very strong sense of honor whose defense sometimes calls for such acts of violence as dueling. Likewise he would put his faith in a very rigid, hierarchical sense of order, interaction and status. He would be bound to a nearly immutable set of rules and codes of behavior. He would have a mania for control, favor drastic solutions, and be intensely intolerant of diversity and independent thought. Along similar lines, his association with the Yulenburgs would give him an ultra-conservative, elitist, ultra-masculine set of values.

We can see from the rest of the list of idiosyncrasies that he would not be prone to consider the general welfare of the people when making his decisions. His self-centered "I am the state" thought process means that we would consider any transgression against, or perceived inferiority of, his state to be a personal attack against his own honor. That bastard Hinspater would have beat any compassion or appreciation for the human condition out of him. His ego delinquency and the insecurity of his undeveloped arm would mean that he would be incapable of handling the perception of threat with any semblance of reason or proportionality. Finally his hatred of his mother, combined with the other ultra-masculine values of his world, would lead to misogyny and a complete intolerance of anything perceived as feminine or weak.

When considering this laundry list of neurosis, what you end up with is a preference profile which we, according to our Western perspectives, would consider that of a raving lunatic, incapable of making what we would consider to be rational decisions. In reality, this individual had a rationality all his own. The decisions he made were entirely consistent with his values and the self-utilities he desired to maximize. Within his own perspective, he behaved with uncanny rationality. But without considering this personal perspective, a normal game would be incapable of taking that into account.

By adapting the game in the manner depicted above, we can determine that the Kaiser would have a preference structure quite unlike that predicted by the traditional

game. His pre-war preference structure would look like this:  $P > T > R > S$ . The Kaiser, in fact, preferred war to any sort of compromise and was unwilling to take any actions which might resemble cooperation with the antagonizing power of the Triple-Alliance. From within his own highly-divergent value structure, war would appear as a reasonable first resort since it maximized all the valued he cherished. As a result of this, the downward-pointing arrow on the game above indicates that he would act as a first course with the hard line in hopes of instigating a war.

I find personality theory, especially when used as part of an adjusted game matrix, to be highly provocative and certainly a useful tool when analyzing any international scenario. Of course, it requires a great deal of work as you not only have to figure out exactly who is likely to make the decisions, but you have to compile a psychological profile and determine the values and preferences of that individual based on psychological idiosyncrasies. A daunting, if certainly worthwhile task.

### ***The Enemy Within***

So far we have discussed the nature of state interactions in both from both the realist and the death watch perspectives. We've also reviewed the insights to be gained by understanding the psychology of pertinent decision makers when considering war. We can now move on to the internal construction of the states themselves, in order to determine what impact the nature of internal dynamics can have on external relations.

The idea is simple—that wars are caused as much by the things that happen within states as by the international environment. This would require an analysis of the internal workings of a nation with the intent to discover how those workings influenced foreign policy. This can be accomplished with one of two perspectives in mind. First, that there are good and bad countries, with the bad countries being by and large responsible for war and international conflict. What determines whether a country is good or bad is its ideology. Authoritarian states, government bent on expansion and

conquest, who repress the self-governing instincts of their people, are bad countries prone to start wars. These strong states require external conflicts to maintain their stability. Hence war is often a goal for them rather than something to be avoided.

The good countries are the democratic countries. These are nations with representative government, determined through reasonably free, popular elections. Since the governors are elected, they are held directly accountable to the people. Since they are held accountable to the people, they will naturally heed the peace-loving instincts of those people. It is assumed then, that democratic nations will naturally, as a permanent goal, avoid war if at all possible. And in those rare occasions when they do become involved in conflicts, they will always attempt to resolve those conflicts as soon as possible, on the lowest level of violence possible, even if it means stopping short of total victory. Peace is the median state which must be return immediately.

If analyzing the world from within the above perspective, the answer for maintain a more peaceful world is very clear: make all states democracies. The common people will invariable be naturally peace-loving. It only remains then to make the entire world accountable to the people, and global peace will shortly follow. If any nations of the world are allowed to maintain authoritarian regimes, those regimes will continue to view war as a mean of preserving their power. To them war will play the role of perfectly acceptable alternative to internal instability and the loss of power. This is particularly the case where class issues are concerned. In an aristocratic society for example, where the bourgeoisie have not yet taken over, the aristocrats will feel that their loosing power will spell out the end of the values they have always cherished. Their very way of life would be lost forever. War is certainly not too large a price to pay for their preservation.

While this mode of analysis is perhaps a bit useful when forced to make sweeping generalizations on the nature of peace between democracies and authoritarian regimes (as Francis Fukiyama is so fond of doing), it is a very blunt instrument and not all

that useful when doing in-depth analysis. The simple fact that the democracies of Europe rushed to war almost as quickly as the empires indicates that type of government alone is not useful when determining war cause behavior. Clearly there's a lot more going on then this simple viewpoint can explain.

The second route to take when considering the impact of internal dynamics on the international environment is much more subtle and sophisticated than the first. It assumes that nations will follow their own internal logic based on internal structures and the distribution of power within the government. While the Emperor of Austria-Hungary for example, may hold the ultimate decision when it comes to going to war, he certainly was not all-powerful when it came to manipulating the circumstances which demanded either war or piece. As he had the Magyars to contend with, along with three different armies and a whole host of internal ethnic and nationalism problems, he was left with a very incomplete set of options and often had to choose only the least bad of several horrible options. While the Emperors administration was in Vienna, his legislation and taxation were in Budapest. He was faced with the rapid and threatening expansion of Serbia, yet he had to purchase Hungarian willingness to support war for any war effort to be effective. It was a problem of having too many nationalities within your own borders.

Germany also had a great varieties of internal problems to deal with which could have encouraged them toward war. For example, she felt great class pressures bearing down on the imperial order. As a result she decided to limit the growth of the Army and keep it a primarily rural one. By limiting the size of the Army, the governors of Germany felt they could keep down the number of urban bourgeoisie men entering the officer corps, thus preserving their aristocratic values in the ruling elite. By keeping the Army rural, they felt they were better able to minimize the influence of the Democratic Socialist movement—primarily an urban, industrial movement—on their enlisted ranks. Since Germany at that time was industrializing at a very fast rate, with hoards of people

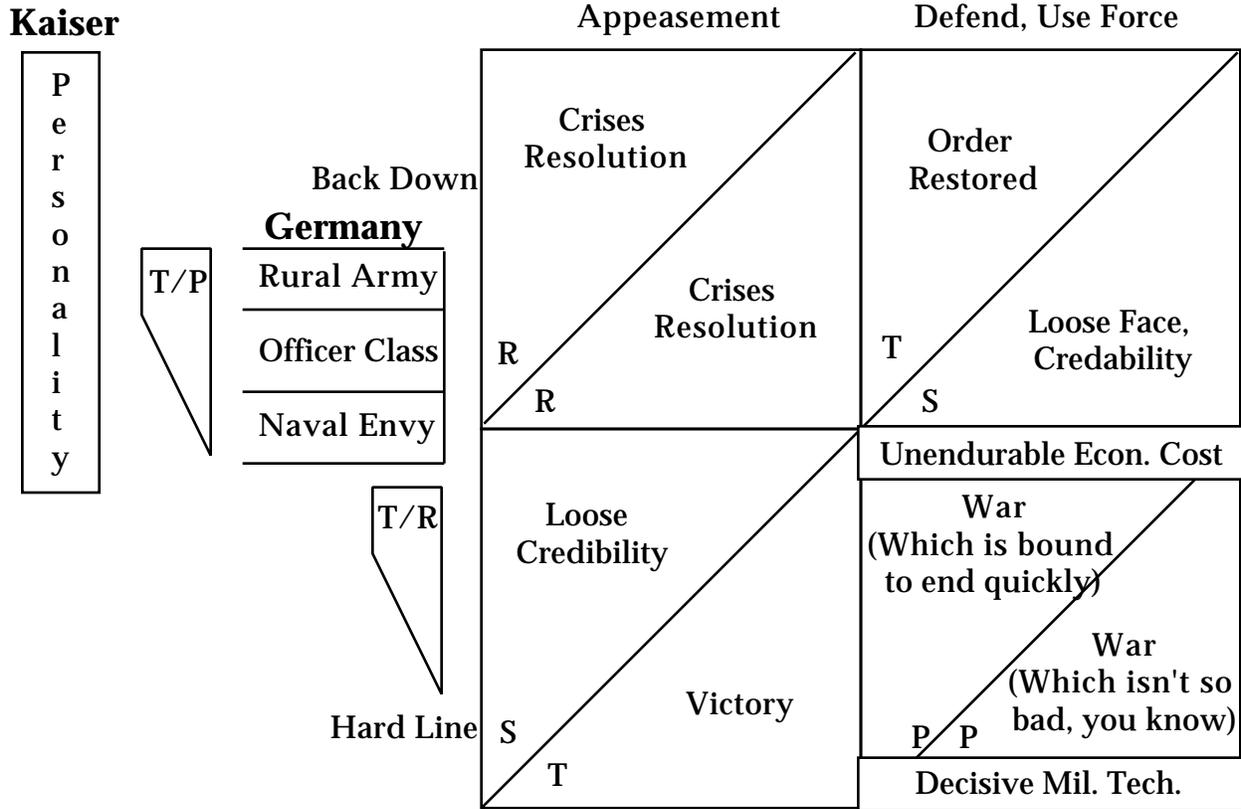
migrating from the country to the city while the number of aristocratic families was steadily decreasing, meant that Germany had to keep her army from growing. This fact combined with the Kaiser's infatuation with naval power resulting in a naval arms race with England for quite sometime before WWI.

The democratic powers, on the other hand, had internal power distribution problems of an entirely different type which helped drive them to war. This problem was principally the detached and independent nature of their the diplomatic and foreign offices. While the officials who ran the domestic economies and governments of these two democracies were elected and hence held accountable to the people, the diplomats and government who handled foreign policy were not. In the French case, the diplomats and foreign agents all worked more or less independent of each other and the government. They were empowered to seek out the problems they perceived as being most important, and solving those problems in whatever manner they saw fit. This led to a situation where the foreign policy as the country was being created and implemented by many individuals who were not held accountable to the people in any way, shape, or form. The most significant blunder resulting from this structure was the aforementioned "Oliver North" situation where Paleologue was making war support promises to Russia which the rest of the government knew absolutely nothing about.

In the case of England, while the foreign office functioned as a more or less cohesive unit, that unit as a whole operated almost completely independently of any foreign controls. This again resulting in dangerous foreign policy making with no government oversight at all.

Clearly the second, case-specific model for reviewing the internal circumstances of nations which created or influenced external policy is much more useful, and can be integrated into our accumulating game of state interaction very easily. Such an integration might look like this:

## Triple-Alliance



Here we can see that after the Kaiser's personality idiosyncrasies have already biases his decision making, those decisions are further filtered through the lens of internal issues before they can finally affect Germany's interaction with external powers. These decisions will then be influenced by concerns of keeping the army as rural as possible so as to minimize the influence of socialism, keeping the officer class as aristocratic as possible, and desiring naval superiority to England. This has the effect of introducing a desire to compromise within Germany policy-making as these factors would undoubtedly have left them feeling not quite as militarily prepared as they would have liked. It seems to me this type of analysis, further woven in the previously-described methods, can only make the game more accurate and true to reality.

### ***Knowing What to Know***

Now, let us address what these actors know, and what they think they know, when they are making their decisions. This is, of course, the issue of intelligence. It's often been suggested that if leaders are making bad decisions, the information they are using to arrive at these decisions must play a very large role. If there is a problem with intelligence, it can come in exactly three forms. The first is the possibility that the intelligence gathering is simply insufficient, and that decision-makers simply don't have enough information at their disposal to make the right choice. At first this seems like a real possibility. The evidence suggests, however, that in the pre-WWI era, the intelligence was more than adequate to give decision-makers a real feel for the strategic situation. They know the force strengths, equipment, and basic deployment structure of adversarial forces, and probably had a very clear picture of who held the strategic advantage in any given region. They player knew what the game was, and they knew the stakes involved.

The second possibility is that, even though they had the right information, that information did not filter its way to the top decision-making levels in an effective manner. Again, the evidence suggest that this was not the case. Intelligence was a top priority for all the players involved, and the intelligence data was likely sent straight to the top in a very timely and efficient manner, with very competent interpretation.

The final and most reasonable possibility concerning the inadequacy of intelligence in the pre-war period, is that the cognition of the data itself was faulty. In this instance, there is absolutely nothing wrong with the data itself, either in terms of quantity or quality. The problem is the way the decision-makers interpret the data. Ultimately, the years before WWI, the leaders believed what they wanted to believe, and the actively practiced selective cognition. Those pieces of information which tended to support their they absorbed and used with great zeal. Those pieces of information which tended to contradict their pre-established perspectives, they simply discarded. Whether

these pre-established thought paradigms were the result of national stereotypes, a belief in the short war, or no understanding of the values or motives of the adversary, the real problems with intelligence can be chalked to the stuff in the heads of leaders, rather than flaws in any of the data.

Considering the interpretation of intelligence, the threat of war brings exactly five possible courses of action the adversary may be considering. First is the possibility that the adversary will start a war, and there is absolutely nothing we can do about it. If this is the conclusion of the decision-makers, they will naturally do nothing to try to prevent the war and will make whatever preparations they feel necessary regardless of whatever impact this might have on international tensions.

The second possibility is that the potential for war depends on several conditions, which leads to the expectation that the adversary will issue an ultimatum before initiating hostilities. In that happens, not to worry. War can be staved off through negotiations and concessions.

The third possibility is that adversary is bluffing and has no intentions of invading at all. In this case, call the bluff.

The fourth possibility is that the adversary doesn't intend to attack, and is merely protecting her borders in the event of escalation. In this case, simply avoid provoking your adversary and everything will be all right.

The fifth and final possibility is that the enemy is preparing for a preventative, pre-emptive attack as a sort of self-defense. In this case, you must either convince your adversary that you have no intentions of attacking, and that they should take moves to ease the tension. If such convincing is impossible, then you must launch your own pre-emptive strike while you still have a chance.

A decision-maker will evaluate all the available intelligence information, and then make a decision based more on selective cognition than the evidence itself. These

possibilities can be worked easily enough into the game by simply adding the following preference matrix to it:

1—P
2—R
3—T
4—R
5—R/P

Here item one represents the first possibility, and would drive the decision-maker toward preference P and war. The second possibility corresponds to R and compromise, the third to T and hard line victory, and fourth to R, and the fifth to R or P depending the perceived possibility of convincing your adversary you have no intention of attacking. As these determinations will be based far more on the biases of the decision-maker rather than on the evidence itself, the prediction of state actions can be determined based on both the psychological factors and the internal issues faced by the decision-maker. Adding the perceived adversary intentions based intelligence interpretations can only make our game that much more accurate.

### ***The Failure or Absence of Crises Management***

When it comes down to the wire, in time of crises and intense pressure the decision-maker could opt for something not predicted by our game as it stands so far. This is due to one very important reason. In times of crises, leaders tend to make bad decisions. As the pressure increase and the stakes increase, and the time allowed to make the decision decreases, decision-makers tend to experience five degradations in their decision-making ability. The first is the simple fact that as the time permitted to make

the decision decreased, the probability for error increases. This is due to the simple fact that as the human brain is placed under increasing time restraints, it tends to overlook or simply forget some of the many options before it. Decisions become hurried and options become confused.

The second phenomenon is a regression to primitive response. Leaders, when placed under severe stress, tend to lose all rationality and react solely out of instinct. Carefully pre-planned options can be completely discarded in favor of a reactionary decision that seems to feel right at the time. This can cause decision-makers to make some very bad decisions indeed.

The third phenomenon is the inability to discriminate between trivial and important items. When under severe stress, a decision-maker can become totally pre-occupied with minute details that might have very little effect on the ultimate outcome.

The fourth phenomenon is a greatly reduced tolerance for ambiguity. Unless a piece of new information is explicitly clear in its meaning, the decision-maker will tend to discard it in favor of more clear-cut information.

The fifth and final phenomenon is a greatly increased rigidity in decision-making, with decreased willingness to compromise or be flexible. As the stress increases, leaders tend to pick a desired outcome and simply deny any attempts by the adversary to end the conflict on terms of compromise.

The susceptibility of an individual to these five phenomena in times of crises varies greatly from person to person, and without a very intimate study of the decision-maker in question it is simply not possible to predict how any individual might react under great stress. While those who espouse crises management theory believe that, with the proper structures in place the chance for error in crises can be all but removed, not even the most elaborate of structure can remove the simple fact that the human brain will respond to intense pressure in unpredictable ways. Even if the crisis is manageable, the final outcome will ultimately depend on the stability of the decision-maker

in times of crises. These kinds of structures and phenomenon cannot be realistically worked into our game, so it remains for the psychologists to determine if a leader can handle the pressure or not.

### ***Systemic War and the Critical Weaknesses of Nations***

Finally, we can review the nature of international systems as they relate to the causes of war. Schroeder describes WWI as “Gallopig Gertie”—meaning that a war-prone Europe in the years before WWI can be described as system with engineering flaws. The system, with its balance of power relations between the European nations, was designed to function a certain way given normal environmental circumstances, and could do so indefinitely without fear of collapse. When unanticipated factors present themselves, however, the minute structural weakness sown into the fabric of the system can become critical, and a single, tiny mishap can bring down the whole thing. In other words, the collapse of the system and the onset of war is not due to anything dramatic or obvious, but by a series of minute and seemingly insignificant policy changes. These minute changes eventually compound with each other and force the weak link to fail, bringing the entire rest of the system with it.

In the case of WWI, the weak link was clearly Austria-Hungary. She was a power under internal siege, with only one friend in all of Europe—Germany. Britain, whose historic role in the system was to act as a balancing agent for Austria-Hungary’s insecurities, made the ultimate war-causing blunder by eventually gravitating toward an alliance with France and Russia. As a result, Austria-Hungary ultimately felt she had nowhere to turn but to war. From this perspective then, Britain caused the war.

Additionally, the consideration of technological instabilities is important here. In pre-WWI Europe we might consider the technologies which helped inspire the naval arms race. For example, both the screw propeller and the compartmentalized double hull made it possible to build war ships of unlimited size. This combined with the fact

that battleship building requires a very robust steel industry which was certainly in the economic interests and aspirations of several of the nations involved meant that there was absolutely nothing stopping Germany's strong desire to out-navy Britain. They were able to just keep building and building.

There is certainly something to be said for this type of systems perspective, as it points toward some clues which might otherwise be overlooked. By analyzing the minute policy changes from a systemic point of view, one might make discoveries not made during our game analysis. But this type of systems analysis would not serve adequately as a replacement for the cumulative approach we've discussed so far. It should be turned to only after all other types of analysis have been explored in order to pick up any clues lost along the way. Since it requires the consideration of tens, if not hundreds of seemingly independent factors, it would be very difficult to integrate this type of systems theory directly into the game. It serves quite nicely, however, as augmentation to the game.

There is another type of systems analysis brought to us by David Kaiser—that being the consideration of the relationship between the leaders and the led. For perhaps the first time in history, the years before WWI saw the impact of public opinion on foreign policy. This can be easily seen in the behaviors and concerns of Germany. The need to maintain the confidence of the nation was ultimately institutionalized by the government's obligations to the national legislatures, whose composition mirrored the growing diversity of the society (Kaiser, p. 275). While the Kaiser certainly wasn't elected, he still had to maintain a working majority within the elected parliament in order to carry on the essential business of government. The government of Germany could not rely solely on the support of only one or two leading social groups, they needed a coalition. All the other powers of Europe had similar limitations.

This means that every group had now to deal with the demands of many seemingly irreconcilable social groups and try to maintain order. Many of these groups,

particularly in the case of Austria-Hungary, demanded revolutionary changes to the very order of society. The governments had to at least appear they were listening to these demands, even if they left reality more or less untouched. More often than not, a hard-line stance toward the external adversaries was used as the primary tactic for providing this impression. Ultimately, when the systemic relationships between the leaders and the led are considered, they can be viewed as one more driving motivation to dance on the thin line between war and peace.

Incorporating this type of systems analysis into our game would be almost as difficult as incorporating the previous variety of systems analysis, as it would require the consideration of hundreds of factors. These factors would include that functions of elected parliaments in relation to the rest of the government, the types and strength of groups involved in that relationship, and the pressures placed on the governments by the interaction of groups with legislators. As in the previous type of systems analysis, this method should be used after the game is iterated in order to catch any clues we may have overlooked.

### ***Conclusion: The Life You Save Could Be Your Own***

In the final analysis it seems quite clear, that while game theory as created and expressed by realism is very limited and of not much value in truly understanding the causes of war, it is not an entirely stagnate form of analysis. By integrating into a game considerations from death watch, personality theory, internal issues, and the optimistic beliefs of war, game theory can come quite a bit closer to accurately describing and predicating the behaviors between and among nations which ultimately cause war. Eventually, if this process were to be further refined, it may be possible to integrate aspects of intelligence interpretation and systems theory into the game to make it more complete. For the time being however, we can conclude that we should not abandon hope for game theory. As a method of combining many useful theories into a single,

useable product, it may ultimately prove to have no match in the theoretical world. And if we can come that much closer to understanding the causes of war to the point where we are able to accurately predict the kinds of circumstances which could lead to its outbreak, we may be doing ourselves a great service indeed.