Extended essay cover

Candidates must complete this page and then give this cover and their final version of the extended essay to their supervisor.

Candidate session number		
Candidate name		
School name		
Examination session (May or November)	May 2015 — Year	2015

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: **Politics**

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: To what extend does a country's democratic status affect its likelihood of going to war with other democratic states ?

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

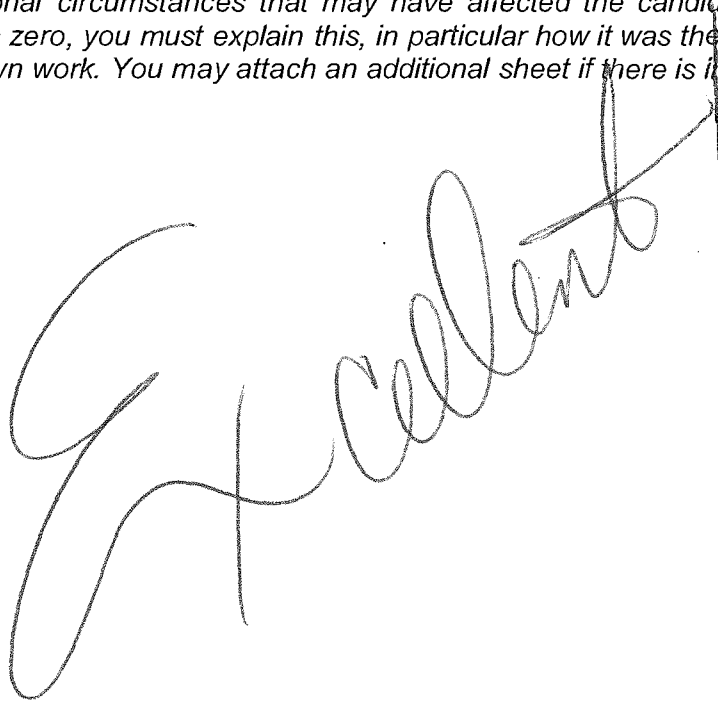This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____ Date: 3/9/15

Supervisor's report and declaration

The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____   _____

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

Excellent

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a mark of zero will be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

As per the section entitled "Responsibilities of the Supervisor" in the EE guide, the recommended number of hours spent with candidates is between 3 and 5 hours. Schools will be contacted when the number of hours is left blank, or where O hours are stated and there lacks an explanation. Schools will also be contacted in the event that number of hours spent is significantly excessive compared to the recommendation.

I spent [6] hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____   Date: __3/9/15__

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number							

Achievement level

Criteria	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3
A research question	2	2		2	
B introduction	1	2		2	
C investigation	3	4		4	
D knowledge and understanding	2	4		4	
E reasoned argument	2	4		4	
F analysis and evaluation	2	4		4	
G use of subject language	4	4		4	
H conclusion	2	2		2	
I formal presentation	2	4		4	
J abstract	2	2		2	
K holistic judgment	2	4		4	
Total out of 36	24				

Name of examiner 1: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Name of examiner 2: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

Name of examiner 3: _____ Examiner number: _____
(CAPITAL letters)

IB Assessment Centre use only: B:

IB Assessment Centre use only: A: _____

EXTENDED ESSAY

Democratic Peace Theory

Research question: To what extend does a country's democratic status affect its likelihood of going to war with other democratic states?

Word Count: 3,998

Abstract

Academics have long debated the idea of democratic peace, that democracies don't go to war with other democracies, for decades. Policymakers have attempted to use this idea to justify democracy promotion in foreign countries. The paper explores the question: **To what extent does a country's democratic status affect its likelihood of going to war with other democratic states?**

This paper does not specifically address whether democracy promotion works. Different causal mechanisms have been identified as causing this, falling into either the categories of democratic norms or democratic political institutions. The four main causal mechanisms that are argued about are transparency, cultural norms of negotiation, selectorate theory, and regime perception. While there are occasions in which exceptions to this apply, such as when England declared war on and bombed Finland, there is still strong evidence found of a far higher likelihood of peace between two democratic countries. The question lies in what exactly causes this.

The first three proposed causal mechanisms, transparency, cultural norms of negotiation ingrained in democracies, and selectorate theory, all have individual problems, but more than that, all of them apply to a democracy's relationship with all other states, not just other democracies, so if either of the first three had a significant effect on international relations, there would be a significant decrease in all wars that democracies engage in with all types of regimes, and democracies would be less warlike in general, something the paper finds no evidence of. The last causal mechanism, regime perception, that policymakers and the public in democracies view other democratic states as more trustworthy and non-democratic states as less trustworthy, avoids the problem of being expected to cause democracies to be less warlike and has studies indicating that regime perception has some effect on policymakers and the public.

Word count: 300

1

Table of Contents

As academia began to realize that the Soviet Union was not a permanent presence, the field of international relations began to change. In the bipolar world of the Soviet Union and the United States, foreign policy of nation-states consisted of allying themselves with one of the two superpowers or charting a course of neutrality between the two. But once the Soviets fell, a new international world emerged, that diplomat, and academics weren't sure how to survive in, a more nuanced, complex world, in conflicts had ramifications beyond the Kremlin and the Pentagon. Old theories were dug up as this new international order was realized to explain what the future might hold. One of those was something called democratic peace theory (Ayoubi) .

The idea that democracies are inherently less likely to go to war was first developed over two hundred years ago by Immanuel Kant, in his theory of perpetual peace (Stahl), and was vaguely alluded to even before that, by Alexander Hamilton in Federalist #6 (White). The theory was fully articulated in the 1980s as claiming that based on empirical proof, democracies do not make war on each other. The mainstream version of this is dyadic peace- the idea that two democracies are less likely to go to war with each other. This is based around the claim that no democracy has ever gone to war with another and the statistical proof (White, Tomz).

The debate on this issue falls between three camps, the theory's proponents, also called liberal peace proponents, the theory's opponents, called realists, who believe that the government of a nation is irrelevant to its tendency to wage war, and a third group of people who believe that democracies are actually more likely to go to war. For obvious reasons, few who fall into the third group attain positions of power within democracies, as people are not surprisingly averse to voting for a candidate who claims that the baser sentiments of the common man make democracy a flawed system, so among those setting foreign policy, the debate has mainly been between the first two camps. The idea has come under increasing scrutiny recently as there is speculation that, in Barack Obama, the US may have elected the first president since Wilson to disbelieve the democratic peace theory (Tomz). The paper

3

explores the question of "What is the effect of a country's democratic status on its likelihood of going to war with other democratic states?" This paper does not examine whether the idea of democracy promotion, the course taken by Obama's immediate predecessors Bush and Clinton, is possible or advisable, but it does examine, among other things, what the effects of such a policy would be if it were to succeed in its immediate goals of democracy promotion.

Perhaps the most important thing in examining this phenomenon is the definition accorded to democracy. Too narrow a definition ensures that nothing qualifies as a democracy, and the democratic peace theory is theoretically true, but can never be observed. Too broad a definition ensures that anything short of a totalitarian autocracy is accorded the same status, and the theory fails every time war ever occurs. For this paper, I will rely on several works to define democratic governments, particularly the work of Dr. Spencer Weart. To define democracy, then, take the broader concept of the republic, with the traditional dictionary definition of "in a republic, political decisions are made by a body of citizens who hold equal rights." Not all republics qualify as democracies- political scientists split them into two categories of oligarchies (a form of government that can exist outside republics as well) and democracies. To be a democracy, Weart requires at least two thirds of the adult male population to be eligible in practice to participate in the government, while in an oligarchy, less than one third of the adult male population is eligible in practice to participate in the government, with the rule falling to a small band of entrenched elites, in cases such as South Africa, in which a small body of whites ruled a government in a nation that was majority black. The few republics that fall between these two metrics, extremely rare throughout history, are somewhere in between the two statuses. It is important to note that the participation of women in government is completely irrelevant in determining democratic status, a view that goes without dispute among scholars. Thus, technically speaking, a nation that has a slave caste can still be considered a democracy if the slaves comprise a small enough amount of the total population (Weart).

4

A more difficult issue is how to treat graft, corruption, bribery, fraud, cronyism, and political machines, a largely subjective standard. Even in one of the older democracies of the world, the United States, several recent elections (1960, 2000, and 2004) have raised questions (White). Mexico, widely considered a democratic country, has had instances of corruption, as recently as the Baja California regional elections. Therefore, a country is defined for the purposes of this paper as democratic if the level of corruption in elections is not enough to tip the balance to the party that would otherwise be the loser for two elections in a row. Weart also offers a broad standard for what can be the constitutional underpinnings of a government qualifying as democratic. Whether the chief executive is elected by a popular vote or some variation thereof, by the legislature in a parliamentary system, or even in countries that function without a chief executive, merely a legislature, the specific constitutional method is irrelevant.

Another slightly less complicated definition essential to the theory is war. Technically speaking, democratic peace theory is measured not in the number of wars, but in the number of dyadic conflicts- in other words, the number of times two states have a declaration of war on each other (White). This is done regardless of whether a third state has entered on the side of one of the states against another state, which would be counted as a separate dyadic conflict. During the Gulf War, 34 countries made common cause with the coalition to free Kuwait against Iraq (White). As a practical matter, most of the coalition forces traveled and fought together in a military coalition, but to political science, that qualified as 34 belligerent dyads- France against Iraq, the US against Iraq, and so on. World War II provides another example- while widely considered a single war, it was 189 dyadic conflicts (White). There are academics who judge democratic peace theory based on wars rather than dyads, but this essay, and the sources used for it, measure conflict by dyads, or two items with a relationship. This is an especially important distinction in conflicts such as World War II- countries such as Finland, which will be discussed later in this paper, fought against countries like Britain. Measuring wars as multiple dyadic conflicts

5

allows us to weight wars like the two world wars higher on the list than conflicts than, say the

Salvadoran-Honduran soccer war, which lasted all of a hundred hours.. Counting wars in dyadic conflicts

does mean that when looking at aggregate count of conflicts in a given time period, it will be far higher

than if simple wars were measured. Measuring in dyadic conflicts does mean that it makes little

difference how much blood is spilled.

When examining the statistics for democratic peace theory, the results examined are

convincing. Between 1946 and 1986, a time with the most democracies and thus the most crucial

examination of the theory that democracies do not make war on each other, there were 45 states that

had a democratic regime; 109 that did not. There were thus 6,876 state dyads (e.g., Bolivia-Chile), of

which 990 were between democratic regimes, or democratic-democratic, none of which went to war.

Thirty-two nondemocratic dyads engaged in war, and according to Rudolph Rummel:

...[T]he probability of any dyad engaging in war between 1946 and 1986 was 32/6876 = .0047;

of not engaging in war is .9953. The probability of the 990 dyads not engaging in war in this

period can be found. It is, using binomial theorem, .9953 to the 990th power = .0099, or

rounded off .01. This is highly significant. The odds of this lack of war between democracies

being by chance is close to 100 to 1 Even if there are indeed exceptions to this rule, the

statistical result is still extremely clear- democracies are by far less likely to go to war with each

other. When examining in the 40-year period with the highest probability of a democratic-

democratic dyadic conflict, statistics indicate that a conflict within two democratic dyads is still

unlikely.

That said, very little is absolute in the world of international relations. There are several wars

that are often used to disprove democratic peace theory. One is the war between the democratic Allies

and the democratic Finland during World War II. After the Soviets invaded Finland, the Finns held them

at the border in a bloody winter war, then negotiated what both sides knew was just a temporary

ceasefire. Finland turned to the British, but given the climate, the British were unable to help the Finns, much less annoy the Soviets, so the Finns turned to the Germans, who happily supplied weapons long enough to hold off the Russians. After the danger on the Finnish front had passed, the Finnish army began marching with the Germans deeper into Russia. The allied powers had all declared war on Finland, but enraged by this, Churchill ordered fighting on the Finnish front, which was accomplished through a series of bombings and airstrikes that devastated parts of the Finnish countryside (Rummel). By any reasonable standard, this was a war between each of the Allied powers and Finland. The obvious giveaway might be the declaration of war, but the Royal Air Force lacked any subtlety in this regard as well. Casualties, both civilian and military, can be traced to this war, more than twenty years after Finland became a fully functioning democracy, with elected leaders and democratic checks (White).

The Israeli-Lebanese wars are perhaps the other most-oft cited exception to the democratic peace theory (White). If one counts Israel as a functioning democracy (even among those who believe in the democratic peace theory, there is a lot of debate over this point) then their civil wars with Lebanon, which involved massive amounts of civilian casualties (and with a nation certified consistently by the European Union election observers as democratic) are a second exception to this nonetheless strong correlation (White).

Because democratic peace theory is a (perceived) empirical phenomenon, rather than a theory based on a certain form of causation, there are a large number of causal mechanisms proposed by authors for why this actually occurs. These causal mechanisms fall into two basic categories: democratic political institutions, and democratic norms. The difficulty in all of these is identifying a causal mechanism that is exclusive to two democracies- in other words, a proposed theory that would say why a democracy is less likely to go to war only with another democracy without having an effect on whether a democracy is likely to go to war at all.

One of the mechanisms identified for democratic peace theory is selectorate theory, a democratic political institution theory, most vocally advocated by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. Mesquita identifies three groups of people within politics: the nominal selectorate, all those who have the ability to have a say in the government, the real selectorate, all those who exercise that ability, and the winning coalition, those whose support translates into victory (Tomz). Leaders who want to maintain power (which, for Mesquita's purposes, is all of them) want a small winning coalition and a large selectorate, because in the event of betrayal by any members of the winning coalition, there are ready replacements available in the selectorate (Tomz). It is easy enough to use the large amount of goods from the selectorate to buy off the winning coalition, and should thus fail for certain parts of the winning coalition, replacing them is easy enough because there are so many willing volunteers in the selectorate. This is essentially positing that an autocracy provides maximum stability (Tomz). A monarchy is a worse system for such a leader, because while the winning coalition is small, so is the selectorate (mostly the nobles and members of the extended royal dynasty) so if a challenger were to succeed in ousting an incumbent, because the proportion of selectorate members who are in the winning coalition is large, they can be assured that of remaining in the winning coalition if power changes hands. Least stable of all is a system with a large winning coalition and a larger electorate- a democracy, in other words. Because the winning coalition is so large, it is extremely hard to use private goods to buy the loyalty of the winning coalition, making it extremely easy for ambitious newcomers to take down the one in power (Tomz).

When applied, as intended, to diplomatic matters, this means that democratic leaders have far more to lose than their autocratic counterparts if a war is lost. While autocrats may have a vague preference for victory, they lack a passion for it, according to selectorate theory, since their job is not dependent on it. Democratically elected leaders will thus fight extremely hard to win a war. The theory predicts that democracies would not attack each other, but would prefer to attack autocratic states,

thus, democratic leaders prefer not to attack other democracies because those democracies will try

harder than autocracies (Stahl).

The biggest problem with this theory is the inherent implication any state will not try as hard as

possible and do everything to win a war. The military is intended, by definition, as a force that fights to

the death. The other major problem with this is that autocrats can take a huge penalty for losing a war.

When the Nazi Herman Goring was captured, he handed the American troops an autographed photo

that read "War is like a football game: whoever loses gives his opponent his hand, and all is forgiven."

Several weeks later, at Nuremburg, Goring and the rest of the Nazi winning coalition was dead.

Nuremburg, which predates the idea of selectorate theory, should alone be enough to disprove it. While

the Nuremburg trials were novel in serving justice to leaders of autocracies, the idea that losing carries

massive risks was not. Throughout history, autocrats have paid very large prices for their wars.

Napoleon, once the conqueror of Europe, started a war with the Russians at the wrong time in the

wrong place, and despite his tiny winning coalition and massive selectorate, he lost everything when the

war with Russia ended. The other major problem with selectorate theory is that by Bueno de Mesquita's

argument, democratic leaders fearing a loss in office should be far more reluctant to start wars with all

countries, not just other democratic ones, but there is no statistical evidence to indicate that

democracies are generally more peaceful, and they fight wars in general just as often as their non-

democratic counterparts (Stahl).

The second proposed causal mechanism relies on cultural norms, a democratic norm theory.

This theory claims that democracy relies on cultural practices such as negotiation and causes

compromise and peaceful reconciliation to be so ingrained into the culture that the population prefer to

use diplomacy to solve problems and accommodate enemies rather than use open confrontation (Pugh).

One of the problems with this is that culture has been proven quite frequently to change incredibly

frequently even in a democracy. The idea that democratic peace is based on innate tendencies of

9

tolerance and a desire for peace within democratic societies was disputed in an experiment known as the Third Wave. After a high school history teacher found his students unable to comprehend how Germans could have rallied to the National Socialist party in the Third Reich, he devised an experiment in which his students would build up a fascist class system called the Third Wave, to prove his point about how alarmingly easy the rise of such a system was. The results frightened him so much that he cut the experiment off early. The experiment is often cited as an example of the problem of using cultural norms to justify democratic peace theory- national culture does not fundamentally differ from one country to another in terms of susceptibility to desire for war, and democratic societies are not immune to fascism (Kaplan). The same problem as previously mentioned with the selectorate theory applies to cultural norms. There is no evidence to suggest that democracies are in general more peaceful than autocracies, and yet if the causal mechanism were true, that negotiation is inherently ingrained in democracies, then this same ingrained culture of negotiation would apply to the relationship of these democracies with non-democratic states, causing democracies to be more peaceful in general rather than simply more peaceful amongst themselves.

The third causal mechanism relies on transparency, falling into the category of democratic political institutions. Because democratic societies require free and open debate for their elections, the theory goes, it is far harder for them to bluff. Stephen Van Evera postulates that the probability of war is greatly increased by states' misunderstanding of international conditions and the intentions of others(Pugh). James Fearon extends this argument to claim that since democratic leaders are held accountable by the public for their foreign policy, their ability to bluff is greatly reduced. Autocratic leaders, on the other hand, can bluff with impunity, since, without the transparency of a democratic state's decision-making process, they can keep things secret. Thus, it is far easier to misinterpret the intentions of a non-democratic state than an autocratic one (Pugh). There are two main problems with this idea (Pugh). The first is that democratic states historically demonstrate no hesitation to keep

documents classified. During the televised Kennedy-Nixon debates in the 1960 election, Kennedy

attacked the Eisenhower administration for "losing" Cuba to communism, and suggested that the US

equip a force of Cuban exiles for an invasion of Cuba (Tomz). Without batting an eye, Nixon, having

privately pushed for such an invasion and knowing that preparations were being made at that moment,

but also realizing the loss of any element of surprise should such a move be divulged, responded such a

move would be dangerously irresponsible as well as a violation of five separate treaties and the UN

Charter (Pugh). The same problem as previously mentioned applies here as well- transparency in foreign

policy should apply to democracies who could potentially wage war on autocracies, and show a

significant decrease in democracies going to war at all, because laws of national security classifications

do not change whether the country being discussed is classified as a democracy or not, but again, there

is absolutely no statistical evidence for the claim that democracies go to war less frequently with

anyone, a decrease that should occur were this particular causal mechanism to be true.

A fourth causal mechanism, falling within the democratic norms category, is perception of

autocracies by democracies, or regime perception. Simply stated, democratic states believe that other

such states will act rationally and legally, while they instinctively distrust the motives of non-democratic

states. As John Owen puts it (with the word "liberals" referring to states of liberal political systems, not

exactly defined as democracy but the same for the purposes of democratic peace theory) "liberals view

foreign states with prejudice. Prima facie, they believe that, irrespective of physical capability, liberal

states are safe and illiberal states potentially dangerous. The basis of this belief is the premise that

states whose governments respect their citizens' autonomy will behave rationally and responsibly, while

coercive governments may not (Owen)". This perception, at the very least, has been proven to have

some effect- in Michael Tomz's study with Stanford University, administered to British and American

citizens, he found results that indicate the truth of Owen's theory. When subjects were asked if they

would support a strike against a hypothetical country known to be developing nuclear weapons,

subjects were far less fearful and far less inclined to support a hypothetical democracy in the situation than a form of hypothetical autocracy (Tomz). In the British study, for example, 34.2% of those in the survey favored military strikes against autocracies, but only 20.9% when the potentially nuclear country was a democracy, with a 95% confidence interval, the results of the study are statistically significant, causing a drop in support of over 13 points. Within the US study, there was a difference of 11% for military strikes between democracies and autocracies. The effect was found across all sectors of society, but was strongest in those sectors of society with the highest political participation, that is, those that tend to be setting policy for a country- those over 35, with college degrees, and a high interest in politics. In fact, in the British study, the effect made an 18% difference among British elites, and 15.5% difference among American elites (Tomz.)

This leads to one of the most controversial aspects of democratic peace theory: the idea of the democratic crusade, or as Owen puts it, liberal war. This is perhaps exemplified in World War I, when Woodrow Wilson spoke of making the world "safe for democracy" and "A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations." The idea of democratic crusades also may have played a part in the Iraq War of 2003, according to some scholars, with President Bush infamously calling the war a "crusade." Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister and closest US ally during the war, also used similar rhetoric, both for the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan (Weart).

This causal mechanism, unlike other proposed causal mechanisms, has empirical evidence justifying not just democratic peace theory in general, but, thanks to Tomz's work, empirical evidence justifying this specific causal mechanism. It also lacks the problem that other proposed causal mechanisms have. Because it is about how both the general public and policymakers view countries with similar government types as inherently more trustworthy, the expected results are a decline in the probability of democracies going to war with other democracies WITHOUT any corresponding decline in democracies going to war in general, results which correspond almost perfectly to Tomz's.

Despite Jack Levy's famous quote that democratic peace theory is "the closest thing we have to an empirical law in the study of international relations," there is no such thing as an empirical law in international relations. There are numerous historical exceptions to this, and even were there none, the idea that a foreign leader is incapable of declaring war on another foreign leader when both are democratic is not the case- if only to buck the trend, a democratically elected leader could do just that. However, these results are not by accident- Rummel's statistical analysis proves that the idea the odds that democracies go to war this infrequently with each other has a probability of close to 100:1.The only theory that explains why such an empirical effect could occur between democracies without any decline in democracies going to war in general is the idea of regime perception- that both the public at large and policymakers believe that other democratic states will act rationally, and that non-democratic states will act aggressively and are not to be trusted. By the idea of regime perception, wars would be extremely unlikely between two democracies with no real decrease between democracies and non-democracies, and these are exactly the results that Tomz found. As US policymakers, particularly the current administration, rethink, and in some cases, outright reject, the foreign policy of their predecessors in relation to democracy promotion, current research provides evidence that in this case, the ways of the Bush and Clinton administration did have merit to their ideas of democracies being far less likely to go to war with each other.

This study relies very heavily on a few sources. The student has bitten off more than he can chew. His themes (rather than he quotes) could only be established if all other considerations than the democratic status of nations could be held constant, which is palpably absurd.

Bibliography

White, Matthew. "War Between Democracies." War Between Democracies. N.p., 6 June 2006. Web. 1 Jan. 2014.

Stahl, Greta. N.p.. Web. 1 Feb 2014. <http://sdiencyclopedia.wikispaces.com/Democratic Peace Theory>.

Ray, James Lee. "DOES DEMOCRACY CAUSE PEACE?." Vanderbilt University. 27 Jan 1998: n. page. Print. <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ray.htm>.

Kaplan, Fred. "Why Elections Won't Bring Democracy to Iraq." Slate Magazine. Slate, 15 Dec. 2005. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.

Saladin El Ayoubi, . N.p.. Web. 1 Jan 2014. <http://www.irsam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/MIR-2012-El-Ayoubi.pdf>.

Weart, Spencer. "From Never at War: Why Democracies Will Not Fight One Another, by Spencer R. Weart."hawaii.edu. University of Hawaii, 1 Apr 2002. Web. 1 Feb 2014. <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/WEART.CHAP.HTM>.

Owen, J.M. Liberal Peace, Liberal War (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1997)

Tomz, Michael . "An Experimental Investigation of the Democratic Peace." . N.p., n.d. Web. 1 May 2014. http://ilar.ucsd.edu/assets/001/503050.pdf

Rummel, Rudolph. "Democracies Don't Fight Democracies." Source. Mount Holyoke, 1 June 1999. Web. 9 Feb. 2014. https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/rummel.htm

Pugh, Jeff. ""Democratic Peace Theory: A Review and Evaluation"." . Center for Mediation, Peace, and Resolution of Conflict,, 1 Apr. 2005. Web. 8 Apr. 2014. http://www.cemproc.org/democraticpeaceCWPS.pdf