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Why Wars Widen: A Theory of Predation and Balancing,

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“evidence of balance of power behavior in Latin America in the post–Cold War period.” Get the point?

The editors try to salvage something from this muddle by some fanciful ad hoc theorizing, in particular pressing us to accept the notion of “soft balancing,” which basically translates into arguing that almost any opposition to a country’s policies or actions constitutes balancing behavior. The most vigorous effort to salvage balance-of-power theory from history’s dustbin is Christopher Layne’s unapologetic realism, which, while finding little empirical evidence for balancing, nevertheless boldly predicts that it is “a pretty safe bet” that the United States “will not be able to escape the fates of previous contenders for hegemony.” This is a bet based on faith, not fact. The other believer is Robert Ross, who contends that “balance of power politics has been especially pronounced in East Asia.” What is extraordinary about Ross’s essay is that it ignores the implications of China’s economic growth, its integration into the world economic system, and its escalating interdependence with those against whom it is presumably balancing.

Overall, this is a book of missed opportunities. Perhaps the most important is its failure to come to grips with the subjective dimension of global politics. Authors repeatedly and positively invoke Stephen Walt’s modification of balance-of-power theory with the addition of threat perception but fail to recognize its importance in directing our attention to the centrality of ideas and perceptions. There are hints, however, as when Lemke discusses the key role of the “distribution of attitudes” and Wirtz alludes to “divergence in

perception.” Only Rhodes captures the critical role played by the social construction and reconstruction of ideas in the declining relevance of balance of power. In an essay that deserves greater attention than it will receive in this volume, Rhodes succinctly captures the degree to which balance of power has been made obsolete by the disappearance of trinitarian warfare. In the end, we conclude with him that it “is simply ludicrous” to assume that “every state lives in fear of the imperial ambitions of every other state in the present age.”

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Haldi, Stacy Bergstrom. *Why Wars Widen: A Theory of Predation and Balancing*. London: Frank Cass, 2003. 198pp. \$114.95

Why Wars Widen is a theoretical and empirical analysis of why neutral states choose to enter an ongoing great-power war. Most international-relations scholarship neglects this question, choosing instead to explain the origins of war. Haldi, of both the Naval War College and Gettysburg College, opens her book with the observation that states entering an ongoing conflict “may have interests and policies entirely distinct from those of the initial combatants.” The book seeks to reveal these interests. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the argument that neutrals are most likely to widen great-power wars in eras of low political cost, when war is limited and less threatening to state survival. Moreover, when political cost is low, widening a war is likely to occur for predatory reasons or to acquire strategic assets that will

enhance national power. In contrast, neutrals are less likely to widen wars when the political cost of war is high. In these eras, when wars threaten a state's survival, neutrals will tend to use ongoing wars to balance against an adverse shift in the distribution of power, but only after all other balancing options have been exhausted. The remaining chapters test this argument against alternative explanations, alliances and offense dominance, and offer predictions for the likelihood of war widening in the contemporary international system. Haldi's study encompasses great-power wars between 1700 and 1973, with a focus on the Seven Years' War, the French Revolutionary War, the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, and World War I. Additional cases of great-power wars susceptible to widening are included in an appendix. Prior to the Napoleonic Wars, the political cost of war was low, Haldi argues, because armies were costly to maintain and soldiers were not expendable. Thus predatory-war widening became more frequent in this era. However, political and social changes that occurred alongside the French Revolutionary War and the Napoleonic Wars reduced these costs, allowing France to introduce an era of unlimited wars that sought the enemy's total destruction. From that point forward, Haldi maintains, the political cost of war was high and balancing-war widening tended to be more prevalent. Perhaps the greatest strength of this analysis is that each case study examines the motivations of states that entered ongoing wars, as well as those that could have but did not. The author concludes that the war-widening theory explains each incidence of widening much better than the competing

theories can and may even lend insight into the likelihood of contemporary war widening.

The greatest appeal of this work is its attempt to delve into the largely neglected area of international-relations theory. However, it suffers from two serious flaws. First, it attempts to cover a lot of material succinctly, resulting in insufficiently explained references to history and theory, including the concept of great-power war, which is central to the author's argument. A deeper analysis of the alternative theories of alliances and offense dominance would also have been more satisfying. This deficiency makes the work most appropriate for graduate students and researchers already familiar with the terrain. The subject matter is interesting, but the author could have attracted a broader audience if she had analyzed her work in greater depth. Second, the contemporary relevance of Haldi's policy implications is unconvincing. Her conclusions drawn from European great-power wars are not clearly applicable to the contemporary international system, simply because the threat of such wars, let alone war widening, is negligible. Moreover, because future occurrences of great-power war widening will probably include at least one nuclear power, nuclear weapons should definitely be considered more systematically if Haldi's predictions are to carry any weight. These concerns might have possibly been overcome by including an analysis of the Korean or Vietnam wars—two cases found in the appendix—or perhaps an even more contemporary conflict like the 1991 Persian Gulf war. Despite these limitations, serious students of interstate warfare will find this

work a useful entry into the question of why wars widen.

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Roberts, Paul. *The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 386pp. \$26

By 2025 world energy demand is expected to increase by 54 percent. Oil and natural gas consumption is expected to increase 57 and 68 percent, respectively, by then. Total energy consumption in 2025 for China, India, and South Korea is predicted to equal that of the United States. What do these figures really tell us about today's energy economy? The answers can be found in *The End of Oil*, in which Paul Roberts superbly navigates the complex topic of energy and explains how energy has become the currency of political and economic power. Roberts's argument centers on three key points: "that energy is the single most important resource, that our current energy economy is failing, and that the shape of the next energy economy is being decided right now—with or without our input." The author's hope is that *The End of Oil* will provide nonexperts with a way to begin to think about energy.

The End of Oil is broken down into three parts. Part 1 explains how and why energy has become central to human existence. Part 2 examines the mechanics of the energy order. This section contains excellent discussions on consumption, the current

transformation of the oil and natural gas industries, alternate fuels, and conservation. Part 3 looks at the promise and peril of the world's energy future; it includes a valuable discussion on energy security. Roberts concludes with a look at how the world could transition to a new energy economy based on current trends.

Several important implications emerge from Roberts's analysis. First, the current energy system is failing to keep up with current demand. As the developing world tries to catch up with the developed world, the demand for energy will continue to increase regardless of what happens with population and energy technology. In the future, the issue may not be whether the world is producing the right type of energy but whether it can produce enough. Second, there may be real limits to our ability to produce ever-increasing volumes of energy. If this is true, then we will need to radically rethink how we consume and produce energy. Third, the sooner we start to transform the current energy economy, the more time there will be to assess options and technologies. Fourth, the world cannot politically or economically shift from a hydrocarbon-based energy economy to a new energy economy overnight. During the transition, the world will need to develop a transition, or "bridge," energy economy. A bridge economy will give markets and society the flexibility and opportunity to phase out the worst of current trends while creating a new energy system. According to Roberts, such an economy will likely require significant improvements in energy efficiency, and an increased reliance on natural gas. Fifth, America's energy