

On Building Peace

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Rescuing the Nation-state and Saving the United Nations

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For my twin brother Gert, who helped me turn loneliness into adventure

For my friend Michael Fone, who helped me turn fears into curiosity

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	9
Foreword	11
Introduction	17
Is Peace Escaping Us?	
1 The Fading of the Post-Cold War Peace Order	33
1.1 The Emergence of a Post-Cold War Peace Order	35
1.2 The Unraveling of Western Global Dominance	41
1.3 The Delusion of a Just Peace	48
2 The Failing of the Nation-State	59
2.1 The Surge in Intrastate Armed Conflicts	64
2.2 The Rise of Belligerent Nonstate Actors	68
2.3 The Neglected Dual Character of Nation-States	78
3 The Marginalization of the United Nations	89
3.1 The Eroded International Law of the United Nations	92
3.2 The Inherent Limitations of the United Nations	102
3.3 The Loss of Innocence of the United Nations	105
4 Rescuing the Nation-State	119
4.1 The Nation-State and Peacebuilding	122
4.2 The Nation-State and Belligerent Nonstate Actors	131
4.3 The Nation-State and Peace Agreements	141
5 Building Peace on Collective Security	159
5.1 Restoring the Primacy of the UN Charter	164
5.2 Expanding the Mandate of the UN Charter	170
5.3 Broadening Collective UN Decision-Making Processes	181
6 Striking a New Grand Bargain for Global Peace and Security	195
6.1 Fears of a Global Power Vacuum	201
6.2 Prospect of Preserving Democratic Values	210
6.3 Risks of Fighting the Last Wars	214

7 Must Future Peace Be Different?	235
Annexes	243
Annex I UN Peace Missions: When Peacekeepers Turn into a Conflict Party	243
Annex II UN Reforms: Two Reviews Are One Too Many	251
Annex III A New Diplomacy for Intrastate Relations	259
Annex IV Glossary of Terms Used	263
Bibliography	275

Text Boxes by Chapters

Introduction	The Syrian Conflict and the End of the Post-Cold War Peace Order	29
Box 1.1	Promises of Paradise	52
Box 1.2	Wars Shape Peace	53
Box 1.3	Will We Be Able to Manage This?	55
Box 2.1	Do Intrastate Conflicts Come in Waves?	81
Box 2.2	Afghanistan's Unsuccessful Liberators	83
Box 2.3	Iraq and the Storming of a Country under Siege	87
Box 3.1	Shifts in UN Peace Operations	111
Box 3.2	From the Iran-Iraq War to the Sierra Leonean Civil War	112
Box 3.3	Rwanda, the Peacekeepers' Nightmare	115
Box 4.1	Is Peacebuilding Trying to Cheat History?	154
Box 4.2	Who Is Responsible for Lynching Farkhunda?	155
Box 4.3	Holy Books and Secular Constitutions	157
Box 5.1	Sierra Leone: When the British Saved the United Nations	186
Box 5.2	Iraq's Mistrusted Nation Builders	189
Box 5.3	Libya and the Failure to Protect	192
Box 6.1	Candles, Flowers, and the Caliphate	223
Box 6.2	Refugees, Migrants, and Teddy Bears	224
Box 6.3	Are We Setting Ourselves Up for Failure?	229

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When writing this book, I felt at times reminded of my experiences in East Germany when crossing ideological lines. Though I do not see it like this, many of my professional friends and contacts from think tanks, universities, international institutions, and journalism must have felt that my arguments went beyond what they may consider an acceptable range of criticism of the West. Several even turned their backs and no longer answered, especially not in writing. To avoid embarrassing anyone, I have decided not to mention any of the professional inputs I received.

On this background, I have to mention Simon Head of the *New York Review of Books*. Although he will, in all likelihood, not even remember our brief meeting in Berlin, he gave me this short and dry advice: *If you believe in it, stick to it!* That was all I needed to hear.

Many readers may differ from my assessment of the geopolitical developments and disagree with the recommendation I make. However, I wanted to assure them that I have written this book with all my sincerity and honesty.

Foreword

It was a cold dark early morning in Kabul on 10 November 1989 when I heard the news on the BBC on the radio. At first it seemed completely unbelievable: the Berlin Wall had fallen! There it was: Alex Brody's¹ voice speaking from Berlin and describing how thousands of people on foot or in their Trabis² were pouring through, and, yes, some even climbed over the Berlin Wall. Only a few hours earlier, this Wall was one of the best-guarded and most impregnable borders in the world.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was a momentous historical event that triggered huge political changes.³ Two years later there would no longer be a Soviet Union, no longer a communist Eastern Europe, no longer a Warsaw Pact, and, indeed, there no longer was a communist threat. Most communist parties, especially those in the West, began to disband. This was the end of the bitter nuclear East-West confrontation that, in several instances, had come close to wiping out all of mankind.

Despite the enormity of the changes, it all happened perfectly peacefully, without a shot being fired and without anyone being killed. What brought the Berlin Wall down and, with it, the communist political regime was simply people power – no Western politician or think tank, no secret service or clandestine operation had any influence on these historic developments. Indeed, Western intelligence was just as surprised by what had happened as their Eastern “counterparts.”

For me, lying in a bed under a heavy blanket to protect myself against the morning cold on a mattress that had seen better days, and waiting for Ahmed, who spoke German with a heavy Bavarian accent, to light the little wood stove in my room, this was not only a momentous, but also a very emotional, event. And it had an unreal feeling. I was the only guest at what had once been the German guesthouse in Kabul, in a country in which

1 I had met Alex Brody earlier in Pakistan when he was a journalist for the BBC there. I do not know what has become of him but because of his broadcast from Berlin that November morning, I will neither forget his name nor his voice.

2 Trabi is cozy name for a small East German plastic car, the Trabant.

3 The fall of the Berlin Wall was the most spectacular, but not the first opening of the Iron Curtain that divided East and West. This credit goes to the Hungarians, and to the courageous decision by a little-known Hungarian prime minister, Miklos Nemeth, to cut the barbed wire that separated Hungary from Austria and an even less known Hungarian major of the border guards, who's name I do not know, who applied the UN refugee convention and allowed East German refugees to escape over the border to Austria to reach West Germany. This was the first little hole that would ultimately burst the dam under the pressure for political change.

the East-West conflict was still fought over with weapons delivered by the East and West. Kabul was still controlled by the procommunist Najibullah government and came under regular rocket attacks from mujahedeen forces in the surrounding mountains.⁴ The city with its lovely morning scent of wood fires marking the preparation of the first tea of the day was otherwise without electricity and without much heat; indeed, there were none of the Western amenities that come with a large development community. It was still war, and for any news I depended on my small radio running on two 1.5v batteries.

I had grown up in East Germany, went to school there, and completed the obligatory military service.⁵ I remember the feeling of being trapped when one Sunday – it was 13 August 1961 – my mother told us a wall had been built across Berlin. I remembered the day when, in November 1962, we were told that my sister, with the help of a West German friend, had escaped to West Berlin tied under a specially prepared car. And of course, I remembered my own escape with my beloved twin brother hiding in an East German freighter ship loaded with military equipment destined for Vietnam in May 1969. I remembered the excitement to be free, free to travel, free to choose a profession, free to be friends with whom I wanted, free to read what I wanted, free from being told what is good and what is bad, and free to have my own political views. I also remembered the fear that came with this freedom, the fear of getting lost in an environment of neon lights, individualism, and social indifference.

I did not quite get lost, but, of all places, I found myself in Afghanistan in 1989. The last Soviet troops had left Afghanistan only nine months earlier, defeated by mostly poor, hungry, and uneducated Afghan mujahedeen forces. Now, I was the head of the United Nations mission in Kabul code-named “Operation Salaam.” *Salaam*, meaning “peace”! Our job was to help find this peace for Afghanistan. We did not find it. Afghanistan was to enter a further period of violence and anarchy, torn apart by warlords that

4 In May 1990, I was wounded by a cluster bomb that was fired from the mountains into Kabul. According to Helo Trust, a British demining NGO, this cluster bomb was American made and the rocket delivering it was Egyptian. It is ironic that an American-made cluster bomb almost killed me only a few months before the Soviet regime, which I had successfully escaped from 20 years earlier, finally collapsed.

5 I had served eighteen months of compulsory military service in the former SS barracks built to guard what had once been the first Nazi concentration camp of Sachsenhausen near Oranienburg, what was then East Germany. As a punishment (I was the sole soldier who had dared to vote against the new socialist constitution in 1968), I had to spend the last months in the same barracks that once housed prisoners assigned to forge British pound notes.

the West had once armed against the Soviet Union only to later fall under the austere Islamist regime of the Taliban supported by an Arab Islamist group that would soon be known as al-Qaida.

Afghanistan was to suffer yet another foreign military invasion – this time by US/NATO⁶ troops. Afghans were to pay the price, rightly or wrongly, for the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. The invasion of Afghanistan, code-named “Operation Enduring Freedom,” had the mission to destroy once and for all al-Qaida and its safe havens, to free Afghans from a medieval Taliban rule, and to turn the country into a prosperous liberal democracy. At the time, it amounted to blasphemy to raise any doubts about the future success of this mission.⁷ The “whole world”⁸ was now united in what President George W. Bush called Afghan “nation building”; it was the high point of the post-Cold War new peace order.⁹ But this was not to last.

As I write these lines, most United States/NATO troops have finally left Afghanistan. Compared to the Soviet invasion in 1978, the West had come with twice as many troops, stayed almost twice as long,¹⁰ and poured tens of billions of dollars into this devastated country – resources the Soviet Union never had. This had become the longest war in post-WWII Western history; in fact, the longest war for the United States ever. Despite all of this, the West, like the Soviet Union before it, is leaving without having achieved

6 In Afghanistan, two parallel foreign forces operated: a US-led Operation Enduring Freedom and later the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

7 In early 2002, a few months into the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, I had written several internal papers for the then-SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) Brahimi cautioning against too much optimism after the quick elimination of the Taliban. See “Fighting Terrorism in Afghanistan and Milton Friedman’s Airplane” (January 2002), “Peace and Foreign Troops in Afghanistan” (February 2002), or “Afghanistan’s Peace in a Glasshouse” (July 2002). They were not appreciated.

8 The term the “whole world” is often used even if this only means Western countries. However, in 2001/2002 it was the whole world that supported the invasion of Afghanistan. Nonetheless, it quickly became a Western project when NATO took over ISAF in August 2003 and with financial support coming almost entirely from the West.

9 The first time the “whole world” had united behind US leadership in what was then the beginning of the new post-Cold War peace order was to fight the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in January/February 1991. But, different to the later invasion of Afghanistan, this did not lead to any change of political regimes and “nation building” – or as we would call this now, peacebuilding.

10 At the height of its military deployment in 2013, there were 140,000 foreign troops under NATO command in Afghanistan. To this, one would have to add tens of thousands of private security contractors. Their exact numbers are not known, but the assumption of 60,000 private partly and heavily armed security guards is probably one of the lower estimates. The Western intervention is now in its sixteenth year and is likely to continue at a reduced rate. In comparison, Soviet forces were estimated to have reached 100,000 troops and remained in Afghanistan for only nine years and two months.

what they had come for. They too could not beat a mostly impoverished and illiterate local Afghan force in sandals that were now no longer called mujahedeen but Taliban. The West was equally unable to bring about a stable Afghanistan with a well-functioning government. Worse, al-Qaida, the terrorist organization that had triggered this invasion, could not be destroyed; instead they appeared to gain strength. The threat around the world from Islamist groups such as al-Qaida, Islamic State (IS), Boko Haram, and many other similar groups has since increased manyfold.

Many political analysts claim that the Soviet empire began to disintegrate in Afghanistan. Whatever the case may be, the Soviet Union would only survive two and a half more years following its withdrawal from Afghanistan!¹¹ Of course, the West will not collapse over its withdrawal from Afghanistan. But, a sure thing is that the Afghan failure is also a game-changer for the West. Western influence in the world is now much weaker. It had to absorb huge costs while other countries advanced¹² and its technically highly sophisticated armed forces proved unable to beat low-tech, but highly motivated nonstate actors in an intrastate conflict. Much worse, the West, as the champion for the rule of law, human rights, and personal freedoms, had fallen into a moral pit, literally. This so-called “salt pit”¹³ consists of reports of torture and extrajudicial killings that, more than anything else, symbolize the Western defeat. How does this reconcile with pictures of jubilant young people hammering away at the Berlin Wall, the symbol of authoritarian imprisonment, only 25 years earlier? What had gone wrong?

Why was such an economically, technically, and militarily powerful Western coalition not able to secure a victory against a low-tech armed local opposition that had virtually no international support? Why was it not possible to build a stable and functioning Afghanistan despite almost sixteen years of massive Western technical and financial assistance? Why was it so difficult to build peace – something everyone wants? The West

11 The last Soviet troops left Afghanistan in February 1989; the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991.

12 Sachs, “Alle Wege führen nach Peking.” There is a dispute over whether China’s GDP has or has not overtaken that of the United State in which different price indexes are used. However, in the context of this book this is relatively irrelevant. What is important is that there is a massive and probably irreversible shift in economic power away from the West toward the South – and this not only due to China’s economic growth.

13 The so-called “salt pit” was a clandestine prison in a former Kabul brick factory run by the CIA in which Afghan prisoners were tortured and even killed. See US Senate Intelligence Committee, “Report on CIA Torture.”

wanted peace and Afghans want peace! Was it that Western peace and Afghan peace are different?

I have always loved Afghanistan and still have the greatest respect for Afghans on all sides of the conflict. For this reason, I regarded the repeated assaults on Afghanistan without a solution in sight to also be my own defeat. More importantly, though, it is a defeat of the collective security system and its embodiment, the United Nations, an organization for which I have worked for over three decades under often extremely trying circumstances in many countries with similar problems than those in Afghanistan. I surely had an interesting life, but was it also a successful one?

This is, therefore, also a personal book that analyzes building peace from the point of view of collective security. More than any academic research, this book takes its clues from my own experiences that took me from communist East Germany to West Berlin, London, Paris, New York, and many different countries around the world where people struggle finding peace, security, justice, and at least some prosperity.

This book will not be able to answer the questions it raises with any degree of satisfaction. There will be many different views on how best to build peace because peace itself is too complex and controversial for easy answers. Recognizing that I can only make a small contribution, if that at all, I have called this book simply "On Building Peace."

Introduction

Is Peace Escaping Us?

Today, we may be living in the most peaceful times in known human history.¹ If the decline in civilians, soldiers, or militants being killed as a result of wars or armed conflicts around the world is an indication for greater peace, we have globally made considerable progress toward peace. Since the creation of the United Nations at the end of two devastating World Wars, the absolute numbers – and even more so the relative numbers of battle-related deaths have, with annual fluctuations, drastically declined.

Indeed, for anyone in the world living today, the risk of being killed in a war or armed conflict is only about 2% to 5% compared to the risk their parents had faced living in the 1950s.² In fact, today, four to five times as many people get killed in vehicle accidents than in wars and armed conflicts. The reduction in the risks of being killed due to wars is even more pronounced if we look back at events in the first half of the twentieth century. For the ten years from 2005 to 2015 combined, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) lists a grand total of about 567,000 battle-related deaths.³ This ten-year accumulated figure is substantially lower than the numbers of people killed in single battles during WWI or WWII.⁴ For example, the battle of Verdun in 1916 may have cost the lives of about 714,000 men, mostly soldiers, and the battle over Stalingrad in 1942/1943

1 Steven Pinker makes this argument forcefully in his *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (2011), as does Joshua S. Goldstein more specifically in reference to the United Nations in his *Winning the War on War* (2011).

2 Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, *Annual Report 2015*; see also Pettersson and Wallensteen, “Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014.” This figure is calculated as a percentage of reported average annual battle-related deaths compared to total global population; it hence reflects not only a decline in the number of those killed, but also the tripling of world population since the end of WWII. I am grateful to Prof. Joshua Goldstein for drawing my attention to this development.

3 Almost half of the total 2005 to 2015 battle-related deaths is due to events in the last two years. In 2014 and 2015, battle-related deaths were estimated to have reached 251,000. Could this be because the civil war in Syria has increasingly become a proxy war among global and regional powers? All numbers are taken from the UCDP report. See also Chapter 6.3.

4 It would be interesting to see if the dramatic increase in internally displaced and refugees during the last ten years, and the willingness of the international community to support them, has helped keep casualty numbers down. If yes, it would prove the achievements of today's humanitarian activities.

is estimated to have cost the lives of between 1.3 and 1.7 million men and women, mostly civilians.⁵

For peace, there is a further encouraging development: Since the end of the Cold War, the number of interstate wars has constantly declined. Today, wars among nation-states in which national armies fight each other over territory or power, once a regular scourge in human history, have almost completely vanished. The 2003 Iraq War saw the last major combat between regular armies; since then, confrontations between regular armed forces have been limited to skirmishes. In 2013, 2014, and 2015, the most recent years for which we have data, the UCDP registered 34, 40, and 50 armed conflicts respectively worldwide. All except one were intrastate armed conflicts. The only exception was the ongoing conflict over Kashmir between Pakistan and India. And, while the numbers of estimated averages of battle-related deaths had recently increased quite dramatically from 44,100 in 2013 to 131,840 in 2014 and around 118,000 in 2015 mainly due to the Syrian intrastate conflict, the total number of people and soldiers killed in the only intrastate war along the India-Pakistan ceasefire line was less than 50 in both years. Since 2004, UCDP charts show a very flat low line of the number of peoples being killed as the result of interstate wars.

The worldwide reduction in battle-related deaths is, of course, no conciliation for those who face death daily in Aleppo, Mosul, Fallujah, Ramadi, Sana, or Sirte, and in so many other places around the world torn apart by armed conflicts. Still, far too many people are killed or maimed and, as these are intrastate conflicts, most of them are civilians. And while interstate wars have almost vanished – and with it, one of the main causes for people getting killed – the risks for such wars to break out again still exists.

Indeed, the most disturbing development over the last ten years is the increased internationalization of intrastate armed conflicts. In 2014, 13 of the 40 registered armed conflicts saw foreign interventions; in 2015, 20 of the 50 registered armed conflicts were internationalized. By far the greatest share in battle-related deaths are nowadays due to such internationalized armed conflicts. As in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, or Libya this makes intrastate conflicts bloodier and last longer at a much greater risk to global peace and security. Much of this book will be about this internationalization of intrastate armed conflicts.

5 In comparing such numbers, we also have also to compare world population in 1916 and 1942/1943 with the world population of today. Looking at it in such relative terms, today's decline in battle-related deaths is much greater.

The decline in battle-related deaths and the waning of interstate wars are more than simply statistics; these are encouraging developments in which peace seems to be winning. Why then, should peace be our main concern and why should building peace be an issue? Behind this is another question: Why are we, especially in the West, so worried and pessimistic? Indeed, why are we so fearful about the future?

Is peace escaping us after all – despite all these positive developments?

There is this widespread anxiety, especially in Western countries,⁶ about the state of affairs in the world that goes beyond a daily breaking news culture that thrives on pictures of wars. In an interview in the magazine *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2016), the former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Martin Dempsey, acknowledged that “It’s the most dangerous period in my lifetime.” However, all Western countries combined spend about two-thirds of all military expenditures in the world.⁷ This should have made us secure. Who or what should we fear? What has made an experienced and highly decorated military like General Dempsey so pessimistic and insecure?⁸

In January 2017, Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet president, warned in a *Time* magazine article entitled “It All Looks As If The World Is Preparing for War” about impending dangers of a nuclear war, alluding to mounting tensions between NATO and Russia. This warning comes only 27 years after the end of the Cold War. Gorbachev, more than anyone else, had helped end the Cold War peacefully and with it the danger of the East-West conflict turning into a nuclear inferno. Are we now falling back into a Cold War-type of conflict? What has happened with those high hopes in 1989 that the fall of the Berlin Wall would end such conflicts and finally bring peace to the world?

There may also be something deeper that worries all of us, something still too vague to exactly pinpoint. It is more like a distant murmur, but a murmur that appears to draw closer. Could it be that the years of peace

6 In this book, we will often speak about “the West.” This is, of course a very fluid term. However, here I have used the definition used by the German historian Heinrich August Winkler in his four-volume work *Die Geschichte des Westens*. See also Annex IV.

7 This is an estimate made by Michael O’Hanlon and General David Petraeus in “America’s Awesome Military.”

8 There are other important personalities who expressed similar worries. Henry Kissinger observed that “the United States has not faced a more divisive and complex array of crises since the end of the Second World War” (in his opening statement before the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, 29 January 2015) and the long-time and highly experienced Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Vitali Churkin, recently complained that Russian-US relations had have hit an all-time low not seen since the Cold War.

which we in the West have enjoyed for the last decades, have blinded us to the dangers just across the borders? Is the West losing its grip on world affairs and are organizations that we have taken for granted, such as strong nation-states, regional unions like the European Union, or international organizations like the United Nations weakening or even disintegrating without any perceivable alternatives? Are the unabated population growth and the scarcity of life-essential resources such as water, land, food, or energy building up pressures around the world that could further undermine state authorities and facilitate the emergence of ever more aggressive armed nonstate actors?⁹

So far, only the long lines of refugees and migrants that arrive at our doorsteps or the news showing graphic pictures of terrorist attacks in Western cities give most of us a glimpse of the suffering, tension, and anger that are building up in so many places just across our borders – and increasingly also within our own borders.¹⁰ Are we at going through the turmoil and uncertainties that are so often the forbearers of a new world order, a world order in which we, the West, will lose the dominance we had once enjoyed? Are our fears about the future rooted in a sense that the known world peace order is changing and that we might ultimately be the losers in such changes?

The giant geopolitical changes we are presently going through may become clearer when we look back 25 years. In 1992, after the collapse of the communist system, we felt as if we were on the top of the world – in fact, on top of history. We took the collapse of the Soviet Union as final proof that the Western system of governance, its liberal democracy combined with free market economic policies and world trade, was superior to all other forms of governance. The West was ideologically, economically, and militarily unchallenged and there was now only one superpower left in the world: the leader of the West, the United States. In Fukuyama's words, history – at least the history of competing social and economic systems – had “ended.” It was now not only the West's right, but its duty to help the rest of the world brake the chains of oppressive regimes and free the way for liberal democracies to emerge. Liberal democracy as a unifying worldwide system would bring the peace and prosperity humanity had always longed for.

9 And one may add, the reemergence of nonmainstream and more aggressive right and left-wing parties in Western countries.

10 From a global point of view, what happens to us in the West are, despite all the excitement, only relatively minor events, many countries in the developing world accommodate far larger numbers of refugees and internally displaced, and far more people in non-Western countries are killed in suicide bombs and other terrorist attacks.

While in the 1990s and early 2000s, the West felt called upon to intervene militarily in many faraway places with the aim of spreading the blessings of liberal democracies, we are now primarily concerned about our own security and protecting our borders. Instead of European enlargement (we once considered this as a form of global peace policy), the European Union discusses these days how to protect its borders, how to create a common EU military command, and how to deploy our armed forces in our own countries to protect us from terrorist attacks. In the United States, the recent presidential elections were dominated by controversies over how to strengthen domestic security, including the possibility of closing entry into the country to certain groups perceived to be dangerous; there was even talk of building a wall along the 3,100-kilometer-long border with Mexico. What's more, free trade agreements, once the hallmark of the Western economic policies, are increasingly seen as existential threats.

The optimism that reigned during the immediate post-Cold War era and the conviction that we would be able to solve the world's ills – if only we wanted to – is now replaced by a deep pessimism that we can no longer find solutions to many of the international problems. We learn about climate change and the devastating consequences this can have for all humanity. We know about the population increases and the millions of young people without any hope to ever lead a productive life. There are deepening socio-economic inequalities, not only in the developing world but increasingly also in our own countries. We feel that our governments have lost control over our economies and that we have become pawns in a world of huge capital flows, hedge fund manager decisions, and the superrich evading their social responsibilities through tax evasion. Many have lost trust in their political and economic elites as well as in the media.

We know of the huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) that still exist, and this may be a potential threat that could become worse. The possession of such nuclear weapons appears to protect nation-states from the risk of any military intervention, especially from the United States. This makes them attractive and unless there are other guarantees against foreign military interventions, North Korea might not be the last country to develop such weapons. What's more, there is the constant reminder of the existence of nuclear superpower rivalries with some of the language regarding Russia and China that is reminiscent of the darkest days of the Cold War.

It may, however, also dawn on us that there is a completely new global threat scenario that is brought about by the increase in the powers and

outreach of belligerent, and often highly radicalized, nonstate actors.¹¹ These belligerent nonstate actors have made huge gains over the last 20 years. Despite, or because, of its military superiority, the West has proven incapable to overcome such threats. Indeed, such threats could become far worse should belligerent nonstate actors get hold of WMDs one day, or acquire the capabilities to conduct a cyber war. What we see today might only be the beginning of a completely new type of conflict for which we are ill-prepared, and for which we have no guaranteed defense.

Even more worrying are those intrastate armed conflicts in which the West has been drawn into without any chance of bringing them ever to satisfactory conclusions. Whether or not the West will withdraw from such conflicts in the future, their military interventions have set entire regions ablaze. These are fires that will burn uncontrolled for a long time to come and risk engulfing us one day. At the same time, we see a deeply divided international community, unable to respond collectively to those threats. Accompanied by an increasingly hostile language, we see pictures of US, UK, French, and Russian fighter planes carrying out offensive military air operations within the same small airspace over Syria, yet with conflicting military objectives. Such close military encounters of four conflicting nuclear powers in hostile environments over such long periods of time did not even exist during the Cold War. Could the intense nuclear power rivalry in intrastate armed conflicts drag us back into interstate wars, but of much greater magnitudes?

This book argues that all these fears and threats are indications of much larger ongoing geopolitical changes, changes that are taking us away from a world that was dominated by conflicts among nation-states and military alliances to a world that will increasingly be dominated by intrastate conflicts, the weakening of nation-states, and the rise in the powers of nonstate actors. In this new world of intrastate conflicts, no clear international order will exist anymore; no single power will be able to provide global leadership and the present collective security system will be unable to fill this vacuum. This is likely to create a world that is very different from the one we know today and that creates challenges to global peace and security that were previously unknown to us. Indeed, we run the risk of a world descending into chaos and anarchy.

11 In this book, we largely avoid speaking of “terrorists” and use instead the more general term “belligerent nonstate actors.” This is because the term “terrorist” is so often misused but also to emphasize that the challenge to the nation-state is a much wider phenomenon that includes all sorts of nonstate actors. See also Chapter 2.2 and Annex IV.

The very mechanisms and institutions that are meant to prevent global chaos, to keep us safe and help cushion sudden security shocks are failing us: (i) the global post-Cold War Western-dominated peace order is fading, (ii) the traditional concept of the nation-state is faltering, and (iii) the United Nations as the international organization charged to maintain a global peace order is not equipped to adequately respond to the new geopolitical changes.

(i) *The fading of the post-Cold War peace order*

With the collapse of the communist world, the West was handed what may have been one of the most complete victories in human history. The hope was that, under Western leadership, its winning political system of liberal democracy would become an all-unifying global system. This would, in turn, bring not only peace to conflict-ridden countries but global peace. However, Western efforts to promote its political system ended mostly in failures; liberal democracy proved a difficult system to transfer into other regions and cultures. The Western-dominated post-Cold War peace order that we thought would last forever, is now crumbling, only 25 years later.

Today, the West remains a strong global power, but it no longer dominates world affairs as before. It now has to share power with many other global and regional players, many of them having very different political and value systems. If anything, Western influence may even further decline. With the fading of Western dominance, who or what could guarantee some level of global order in the future? What would a new global order look like? The answer to these questions remains unclear, nourishing fears of a looming global chaos.

(ii) *The failing of nation-states¹²*

Fears of a looming chaos in world order are further compounded by the faltering of nation-states. Once the basic building blocks in a global order and the guarantor for peace, security, justice, and prosperity to its citizens, the concept of the nation-state becomes increasingly challenged – no longer by external enemies and competing nation-states, but from within by progressing globalization and an array of nonstate actors. Not even Western countries are immune to internal pressures questioning their nation-state identities.

¹² The use of the term “nation-state” is surely controversial, but I have not been able to find a better term. See for a more detailed discussion, see Chapter 2 and Annex IV.

Far more worrying is the number of failing states with intrastate armed conflicts in which powerful armed nonstate actors challenge the authority of mostly weak governments. This has taken on such magnitude that failing states with intrastate armed conflicts battling belligerent nonstate actors have replaced interstate wars as the main threat to global peace and security. Applying the model of liberal democracy has failed to stabilize failing nation-states. External military interventions have made bad situations only worse. A clear understanding of the future of the nation-state is not to be found.

(iii) *The marginalization of the United Nations*

After WWII, the United Nations was created to help prevent or end conflicts between individual countries, prevent wars among them, or help end ongoing interstate wars. While the United Nations was fairly successful in dealing with international affairs, it largely failed in preventing and ending intrastate armed conflicts.

With the rise of Western dominance, the United Nations became progressively side-tracked. International law such as the UN Charter or UN Human Rights conventions were increasingly reinterpreted – or some would say, replaced – to suit a Western-led global peace order. This has undermined and compromised the credibility of the United Nations at a time when such an organization would have been most needed for helping solve intrastate armed conflicts.¹³ Instead, the United Nations is largely paralyzed in a changing world for which it was not created and does little to alleviate fears over a looming global chaos.

Nowhere are the erosion of international order, the failing of the nation-state, and the marginalization of the United Nations more evident than in the protracted carnage of Syria's and Iraq's intrastate armed conflict¹⁴ with its array of local and international warring parties each following their own narrow political aims. Syria is living proof of the failures of the international community to solve intrastate armed conflicts and of its intransigent naivety of continuing to see such conflicts through the lenses of interstate power games.

13 Many actors in intrastate conflicts regard the United Nations as a legitimate target to attack as such conflicts force UN peace missions to take sides. See Chapter 3.3.

14 See Box "The Syrian Carnage and the End of the Post-Cold War Peace Order" in the introduction.

In our increasingly interlinked world, the consequences of such misconceptions could be catastrophic. Building peace today must, therefore, mean having to reverse the decline of these three core pillars on which also our future global peace and security order will rest.

This book suggests that, with these geopolitical changes, the way we build peace must change. Instead of focusing resources and energies in old Cold War-style policies of containment, we must now develop new concepts on how best to deal with the real threats to global peace and security emanating from collapsing nation-states, powerful belligerent nonstate actors, and intrastate armed conflicts. As we enter a more multipolar world order with an array of global and regional powers and often very different political systems, we must return to collective security mechanisms to develop and implement any such concept. This can no longer be the sole responsibility of the West; it must now be done through collective security arrangements within the framework of a revamped and reinforced United Nations.

The collective security system must therefore be adjusted to deal more specifically with intrastate conflicts. For this reason, we suggest in the book that UN member states agree on a new “grand bargain” that would give the United Nations a second mandate. In addition to being mandated as the custodian for the international norms and principles maintaining global peace and security in the relations among member states, the United Nations should now also be mandated to develop international norms and principles that would help to prevent the collapse of UN member states and their descent into intrastate armed conflicts. More figuratively, this would mean giving the United Nations a second leg to stand on: a first leg for international relations and a second leg for intrastate relations.

Implementing such a grand bargain would be anything but simple. It could revolutionize international affairs as practiced today. Indeed, it would touch some of the most sensitive issues in international relations as it would challenge the 400-year-old Westphalian model of sovereign nation-states and suggest adapting it to our modern interconnected globalized world. This would require a change in the UN Charter.

A grand bargain would further require the development of internationally accepted norms and standards for intrastate relations, similar to those that govern international relations today. This would have to include not only relationships between a state and its citizens, but also relationships among various communities within a nation-state. A grand bargain would have to set and regulate the conditions for deciding if and when to intervene into intrastate armed conflicts and, even more importantly, the collective mechanisms that will establish the right to decide such interventions. A

grand bargain would have to include a whole set of different levels of external interventions; military interventions must remain the very last option. All of this goes far beyond what the Security Council does today when it declares an intrastate armed conflict as a threat to global peace and security.

What looks at first as a further erosion of the principle of national sovereignty would, at a closer look, strengthen national sovereignty. By placing any intervention, and especially military interventions, strictly under international law and collective decision-making, it sets the bar for intervening in UN member states with intrastate armed conflicts very high. This would also reduce the risk of intrastate armed conflict becoming victim to foreign interests. A grand bargain would hence help protect especially smaller UN member states from arbitrary and unilateral foreign interference and interventions. It would, on the one hand, recognize the continued need to intervene, but, on the other hand, limit the conditions and approaches under which outside powers may intervene in the intrastate armed conflicts of other countries. An international framework in which such interventions could take place under the control of a collective security system would have to be set. This book sketches such a framework to place international interventions – both civilian and military – in intrastate armed conflicts within a revised and enlarged UN Charter and international law.

The book makes several proposals that could give such a grand bargain more structure and substance; some of them are unconventional and may hence be controversial. It argues, for example, that countries have the dual character of being a *nation* and a *state* and that intrastate conflicts are the result of both going wrong. Solutions must, different to liberal peacebuilding, consider both sides of this dual character. It emphasizes the need for a new approach in dealing with *armed nonstate actors* around the world, not only with radical Islamist groups but also with separatist movements, transnational crime syndicates, and all other sorts of armed revolutionary and rebel groups that threaten the state.

The book argues that in intrastate armed conflicts there is no such thing as a fair peace and that there are, like in interstate wars, winners and losers. To argue otherwise is presumptuous. This role of an international community would then be to try to minimize the negative effects of a *winner's peace* on the loser. In other words, it will not be about what peace should be but more what peace should not be. To achieve this, the book suggests that a peace following armed intrastate armed conflicts would need two peace agreements and suggests that national constitutions would have to become such a "*second*" *peace agreement*. Further, the book suggests more inclusive decision-making processes among the member states of the United Nations by increasing the

mandate of the UN Peacebuilding Commission to support and advise the UN Security Council when it comes to solving intrastate armed conflicts.

What the book doesn't and cannot do is to give an answer to the core question of what the "peace" is or should be for intrastate armed conflicts. It makes no attempts to formulate any alternative to liberal democracy. It makes therefore also no suggestion of what an ideal nation-state should look like. Here we must learn to be more open to different peace solutions and various political systems of government. The underlying argument throughout the book is, however, that we must return to international principles, norms and laws to govern not only our relationships among nation-states, but increasingly also within nation-states. These will normative values to which all can agree. These values will, no doubt, be heavily influenced by norms and values that come from liberal democracy. But in this case, they would be globally accepted values and not values that are brought about by various military "freedom" operations or by regimes change.

In the future, we may face even greater threats to peace and security that emanate from intrastate armed conflicts, failing nation-states and the rise of armed nonstate actors. Such developments are likely to be driven by population increases. According to the UN Population Division,¹⁵ over the next thirteen years the world's population may increase by 1.3 billion. That is more than twice the entire population of the European Union. In 80 years, world population may even reach between 11 and 12 billion people. That is an increase of about 4 billion people or more than three times the entire population of the African continent today. Virtually all these population growths will be in low-income countries with weak governments that have few options to meaningfully integrate¹⁶ the bulge of largely abandoned young people. This in turn will create exceptional pressures on the resources that provide for the basic necessities of human survival such as water, energy, food, and land. Environmental degradation due to the overuse of national resources in poor countries and an irresponsible overuse of scarce natural resources in rich countries could trigger a vicious cycle from which many parts of the world may not be able to escape.

15 All data are taken from UN Population Division, *World Population Prospects*.

16 While we often speak of the problems we have in integrating refugees and migrants, much poorer countries face far greater problems of having to integrate the hundreds of thousands of youths who are rejected by their traditional societies and roam the shantytowns of the cities. For example, in the Sahel zone with the world's poorest countries, the share of those under 25 years of age is about 70%. Most of them are unemployed in the deeper sense of the word and will have no chance to ever find a place in their own societies.

Already weak and failing nation-states and their governments may no longer cope with such exceptional pressures and begin to lose the grip over these problems. A collapse of more nation-states will force many of those millions, if not hundreds of millions, of abandoned youths to find safety in nonstate organizations. Not all of these nonstate actors may turn violent. In fact, many of them we may not. Indeed, civil society, traditional forms of organizations and, above all, religious communities may absorb millions of the youth that have fallen out of the more formal sectors of nation-states and give them at least some dignity and a future.

However, frustration will turn many to violence and ultimately further strengthen belligerent nonstate actors, be they ideologically driven movements, criminally driven organizations, or a mix of both. This will make many of such belligerent nonstate actors become more powerful, allowing them to control territories and populations – and possibly even to take over nation-states. The resulting threats of global peace and security from this will dwarf all the interstate problems the West gives so much attention to today. The frustration and anger of hundreds of millions may destroy traditional state structures and be increasingly channeled through belligerent nonstate actors. In this backdrop, the building of a military airstrip on an artificial island in the South China Sea or the tag-of-war over spheres of interest in the Ukraine become almost irrelevant. Such interstate problems are the conflicts of the past; future conflicts will be driven by intrastate problems. We better start preparing for this.

Our future may hence be decided on how we will collectively be able to deal with intrastate armed conflicts, collectively be able to rescue collapsing nation-states, and collectively be able to approach the phenomena of the rise in nonstate actors – both civil and belligerent nonstate actors. It is a huge challenge indeed, one that will need a collective security system and a stronger United Nations. This book tries to make a contribution to finding new and unconventional – though surely insufficient – solutions.

The structure of the book is very simple: the first three chapters deal with the problems, and the next three chapters with possible solutions. In the very short seventh chapter I try to find closure.

Accordingly, the first three chapters sequentially examine (i) the fading of the global peace order, (ii) the failing of nation-states, and (iii) the marginalization of the United Nations. The following three chapters sequentially discuss possible solutions for (i) how to rescue the nation-state, (ii) how to achieve more comprehensive collective security through the United Nations, and,

finally, (iii) how to make such reforms feasible. And as my first thoughts in this book were about the West, I felt it appropriate to close the book in Chapter 7 with a final thought on China from my former Korean colleague Y.J. Choi.

The book includes nineteen separate text boxes dealing with specific events or issues. I have chosen this format to add some life to the subject of building peace without disrupting the flow of the more general arguments in the book itself. For the same reason, there are annexes added that look at the changes to peacekeeping, recent attempts by the United Nations to reform, and the impact all of this may have on diplomacy. The final annex is more than the usual glossary defining the terms used in this book as it debates how terminology has influenced our thinking about building peace.

Box The Syrian Conflict and the End of the Post-Cold War Peace Order

The carnage in Syria has been lasting for five years and there is no end in sight. What made this conflict in Syria – as the parallel conflict in Iraq – so exceptionally cruel and why is it so difficult to find a peace solution?

The main answer is probably that the Syrian carnage is the result of the absence of any internationally accepted laws and norms for intrastate armed conflicts and foreign involvement in such intrastate armed conflicts. It underlines the urgency that we begin to build a collective framework – similar to those we have developed for interstate wars – that would help contain such types of conflicts. The very brutality of the Syrian intrastate armed conflict shows that none of the parties to the conflict – be they local or international – feel any constraints. The Syrian conflict takes place in a de facto lawless and normless environment, being in parts an intercommunal local conflict and an international competition.

The Syrian conflict demonstrates the problems of the new phenomenon of intrastate armed conflicts that involve many different local and international forces, each pursuing separate and conflicting aims. Since the end of the Cold War, such intrastate armed conflicts have globally become the dominant form of warfare and increasingly draw in outside forces. The international community must find new answers on how to better contain them. The Syrian quagmire, being an extreme form of such internationalized intrastate conflicts, can teach us some lessons that may be useful for finding better answers. The following nine points are drawn from the Syrian conflict but also apply, at different degrees, to all other internationalized intrastate armed conflicts:

- 1 The Syrian conflict symbolizes the fading of the Western-dominated global post-Cold War peace order; solutions can no longer be imposed by a single superpower. In particular: