

Talking to the Enemy: Explaining the Emergence of Peace Talks in Interstate War

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Abstract

Why are some states open to talking while fighting while others are not? We argue that a state considering opening negotiations is concerned not only with the adverse inference that the opposing state will draw, but also the actions that the opposing state might take in response to that inference. We use a formal model, with assumptions grounded in extensive historical evidence, to highlight one particular response to opening negotiations—the escalation of war efforts—and one particular characteristic of the state opening negotiations—its resilience to escalation. We find that states are willing to open negotiations under two conditions: when their opponents find escalation too costly, and when there is a signal of high resilience that only the highly resilient care to use. To illustrate the dynamics of the second condition, we offer an extended case study detailing North Vietnam’s changing approach to negotiations during the Vietnam War.

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Diplomacy plays a critical role in the management and resolution of armed conflict in the international system. After a war breaks out, decision-makers see the opening of talks as a constructive step in the conflict's resolution: dialogue allows for deals to be brokered and implemented among the relevant parties. Despite wartime diplomacy's positive effects, however, history is replete with examples of leaders refusing at times to talk to the enemy. In over half the wars since WWII, at least one belligerent refused to talk, privately or publicly, throughout the conflict.¹ Treating war as a bargaining process in which the belligerents are simultaneously talking and fighting throughout the whole conflict thus fails to represent war accurately. A review of the empirical record also reveals interesting variation in states' willingness to talk: positions on wartime diplomacy vary across countries and time, even within the same conflict.

Why do states often refuse to negotiate? One reason states may not want to talk is the adverse inference problem that arises when states signal an openness to negotiations: they may subsequently be viewed as weaker (Fearon, 1995, 2013; Ramsay, 2011). Switching from diplomatic silence to a willingness to talk might indicate a reduction in a state's war aims or assessment of victory, or that the state is less willing to absorb the costs of prolonging the conflict than previously thought. We argue, via a formal model and an extended case study, that such an inference does more than just provide information to the opposing state that may serve as a coordination device (Ramsay 2011). States also fear that it can encourage an opponent to *escalate* its war efforts to secure victory. We define an effective escalation as one that increases the likelihood of victory for the escalating state. As such, escalation is similar to the endogenous choice of militarization or arming (e.g., Coe and Vaynman 2020). Thus, instead of paving the way for peace, states rationally fear a willingness to talk would encourage longer, bloodier wars.

Not all states suffer from that fear equally, however. Escalation can occur in a number of ways, such as by increasing the rate at which one harms the other side, involving other countries, expanding where the fighting occurs, or dedicating more military power to the war. If escalation were too costly for one's opponent to employ, a state would have less need to fear the consequences of any adverse inference arising from taking an open diplomatic stance. As a con-

¹See the appendix.

sequence, it may be more willing to take such a stance. Further, a state able to reduce the effects of those forms of escalation—or resist them entirely—should also have less need to fear opening negotiations.

We denote a state’s ability to resist the effects of its opponent’s escalation its *resilience*. Substantively, resilience may take many forms, such as quickly being able to reconstitute power after an attack or being able to continue fighting even after forces have been destroyed. Resilience overlaps established concepts such as costs of war, power, and resolve. We expect, all else equal, states with greater resilience to possess lower costs of war and greater power and resolve, and our formal model assumes that a state’s costs of war and resilience are correlated. But resilience is different from those concepts. Two states might suffer identical costs of war, each losing 20 aircraft for instance, but the more resilient state will suffer less loss of efficacy. That resilience might be due to the aid of allies, an industrial base that can aid in rebuilding, or a military that has prepared to operate effectively despite reduced airpower. Resilience is also different from power: conventionally weaker actors, such as insurgents, can be highly resilient, whereas powerful states often win wars without resilience because their adversaries cannot destroy enough of their power to make resilience a determining factor. Finally, resilience differs from resolve: a state may display resolve to maintain the course (Kertzer 2016, 3), yet it may lack the functional ability to do so.

We illustrate with our formal model that a state’s opening to negotiations increases the belief that it lacks resilience, and so could productively be the target of escalation. That result matches the empirical record: contrary to models in which states deliberately signal weakness to induce their opponents to reduce investment in the conflict and thus increase their chances of victory (e.g., Slantchev 2010), states appear primarily concerned that their enemy will respond to a signal of weakness by *escalating, intensifying, or prolonging* the conflict if it has the capabilities to do so (Mastro 2019, Reiter 2009). Our case study provides further evidence of that concern.

For example, during the Korean War, the United States initially was closed to diplomacy, questioning “whether you would not merely get more pressure”² from China as a result. Major

²United States Department of State 1950, 1,452.

General Charles L. Bolte, who was in the Army's Plans and Operations division in Washington, agreed that a "show of strength [would] discourage further aggression, while weakness [would] encourage it."³ The Chinese had similar concerns as their logistical challenges would only worsen if the United States intensified or expanded its bombing to include targets in China itself, such as supply lines.⁴ The United States could also have used nuclear weapons against China, something the United States considered and threatened.

Due to the importance of resilience, our model incorporates an additional signal of resilience beyond the decision to open negotiations or remain closed to them. As well, the formal model captures states that vary both in their costs of war and in their resilience. Our introduction of escalation and resilience identifies a novel path through which talks can emerge in equilibrium that permits within-case and across-country variation in wartime diplomatic posture: states will choose typically open stances, potentially inviting escalation, only when they have demonstrated enough resilience to mitigate the escalation risk. The United States, for example, was able to move to an open diplomatic posture almost immediately during the Vietnam War because it had showed the ability to continue fighting under military pressure through a troop buildup of over half a million US combat troops, and an increase in attack sorties from four thousand per month at the end of 1965, to six thousand per month in the first quarter of 1966, to twelve thousand per month by October 1966. That escalation showed that the United States had a preponderance of power and was willing to use it—therefore significantly reducing the likelihood that an open diplomatic posture would convey weakness.⁵ Before the United States had taken these measures, however, internal discussions about diplomacy were replete with concerns that a willingness to talk would convey U.S. weakness.⁶ In the words of then National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy in August 1964: "After, but only after, we have established a clear pattern of pressure hurting the DRV and leaving no doubts in South Vietnam of our resolve, we could even accept a

³Foot 1990, 27.

⁴Jiang 2010, 128.

⁵Herring 1993, 155–56, 161–162.

⁶See "Memorandum of a Meeting with President Johnson," February 17, 1965, FRUS, January–June 1965, Vol. 2, Doc. 133; "McNamara Urges Major Expansion of Ground Forces," July 20, 1965, in Herring, *The Pentagon Papers*, 131; "McNaughton Hints at Compromise," in Herring, *The Pentagon Papers*, 140.

conference broadened to include the Vietnam issue.”⁷

In introducing the potential for escalation and the notion of resilience, we address the broad critique of Eric Min, who argues that wartime diplomacy is much more complex than the current literature allows, which treats it mainly as “a constant and mechanical activity” (Min 2020, 1). By modeling the decision to initiate diplomacy as distinct from later decisions regarding bargaining, war, and conflict escalation, we allow for variation in diplomatic posture across time and space. Further, as our focus is on the material cost of opening direct talks, our model helps to explain why states may choose to delay or avoid talks in favor of indirect forms of bargaining (Goemans 2000; Schelling 1957; Fearon 1997; Joseph 2021).

We also contribute to a literature on talking while fighting that tends to treat the consequences of negotiation as merely informative and can, at times, be removed from what we observe in the empirical record. For example, some models allow for the endogenous choice of bargaining delay (e.g., Kennan and Wilson 1993; Leventoğlu and Tarar 2008; Langlois and Langlois 2009; Langlois and Langlois 2012; Admati and Perry 1987; Cramton 1992; Fearon 2013; Fey, Meirowitz, and Ramsay 2014; Fearon and Jin 2019). Those models assume that offers may be made at any time, unlike ours, but allow for nonserious offers that are not intended to be accepted. Nonserious offers serve a similar modeling role to a refusal to bargain, as they also limit adverse inference.⁸ Despite that similarity, none of those models share our focus on escalation and resilience. Kaplow (2016) also discusses refusal to talk, though in the context of civil conflict, without a formal model, and with a focus on causal mechanisms different from escalation. Slantchev (2010) includes the option to escalate war efforts, but, as noted, argues instead that states gain on the battlefield if their opponents underestimate them.

We provide empirical support for our model in two ways. First, we offer quantitative and archival evidence for our key modeling assumptions. Second, after presenting our formal model, we illustrate its equilibria using case study evidence of North Vietnam’s approach during the

⁷“Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to the President,” August 13, 1964, FRUS, 1964, Vol. 1, Doc. 313. 187.

⁸Moreover, empirically the making of nonserious offers is a separate strategic decision from the refusal to engage in direct talks with the enemy. Once resilience is demonstrated, a state may be open to negotiations but still make nonserious offers (like in the case of the North Vietnamese in the Vietnam War) and thus they are separate phenomena to be explained.

Vietnam War and historical examples from other cases. The data on North Vietnamese decision making stems largely from North Vietnamese Party and government documents seized during the war and author interviews with prominent Vietnamese political and military leaders active during the war.⁹

Opening Negotiations

Our model rests on the assumption that it is necessary to take an open negotiating stance before subsequent negotiations can emerge. Here, we define substantively what an open posture means.

In an open diplomatic posture, the warring party is willing to talk *directly* with the enemy without any *preconditions* in a given period. Empirical evidence confirms that leaders view direct talks differently and also learn different information from them (Mastro 2019; Holmes 2013; Hall and Yarhi-Milo 2012). There is a level of deniability about one's willingness to talk when done through intermediaries, as those avenues can be pursued irrespective of a state's willingness to talk. Further, in practice, once a state puts preconditions on talks it is effectively not open to talks until those preconditions are met.

The empirical record suggests that the default stance initially for any state engaged in active conflict is a closed diplomatic posture (see Appendix 1).¹⁰ Additionally, in almost sixty percent of all interstate wars since WWII, talks never emerged, which means one side maintained a closed diplomatic posture throughout the whole war. In about 50 percent of the cases of diplomatic silence throughout the conflict, both belligerents refused to engage. Further, the case study evidence suggests that, contrary to the assumptions of the traditional bargaining model of war, states tend not to make settlement offers until after talks begin. While states may have implicit assumptions about a range of possible settlements, Mastro's (2019) analysis of hundreds of diplomatic exchanges throughout three major wars shows that the first 'offer' tends to be "talk or not talk" and nothing more, with no explicit content of what a war termination agreement might

⁹The interviews were conducted through an official Vietnamese Diplomatic Academy translator in Vietnamese and Mandarin. These documents were translated by US intelligence agencies during the war.

¹⁰In three cases, talks did emerge relatively quickly (5-12 days), but that is mostly a result of the fact that the conflicts themselves were short – all less than a month – or negotiations were imposed by outside powers.

include.

Two Models of Diplomatic Posture, Escalation, and Resilience

We present a pair of closely related models that explore the consequences of requiring a state to deliberately open itself to negotiations prior to the occurrence of any real negotiations. The first model abstracts away from notions of escalation and resilience in order to focus on the full consequences of the adverse inference entailed by the decision to open negotiations. The second model replaces the exogenous cost of adverse inference from the first model with a more complex dynamic in which a state may want to escalate its war efforts, but does not want to do so if its opponent will prove resilient to that escalation. In that dynamic, the opponent seeks to signal its resilience to the other state, in order to take escalation off the table and so enable negotiations. We use the Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium solution concept to prove our propositions, applying the Iterated Intuitive Criterion equilibrium refinement (see Fudenberg and Tirole 1991, 449) to restrict off-the-path beliefs to those that most match the logic of the models. Proofs for all results can be found in the online appendix.

Adverse Inference Model

Our adverse inference model is a simple extension of the foundational model of Fearon (1995). In it, there are two states, A and B, which are presently at war. State A has at some point in the past decided to open negotiations with B, for reasons we need not consider. The game opens with a decision by state B to either maintain its closed negotiation stance (C), ensuring the continuation of war, or switch to an open stance (O), allowing for negotiations. Should B choose open, A may make a take-it-or-leave-it offer to B, which B can then accept or reject. Should B choose closed, no offer by A is made. Thus, the difference between our adverse inference model and that in Fearon (1995) is that state B must agree to negotiate before real negotiations can occur.

Payoffs from the game also follow those in the model of Fearon (1995). If B chooses closed, which it can do at no cost, the game ends and each state receives the payoffs from continued war. With the total “pie” over which they are fighting normalized to 1, a probability of victory for A

equal to p , and costs of war equal to c_A and c_B , respectively, this means that A receives $p - c_A$ in expectation and B receives $1 - p - c_B$.

If B chooses open, which it can do at cost $\kappa \geq 0$,¹¹ A may make a take-it-or-leave-it offer to B, with x going to A and $1 - x$ going to B. B can then either accept the offer, in which case the game ends with those payoffs, or reject the offer and obtain the war payoffs. We assume that both A and B have lexicographic preferences in the following sense: both A and B strictly prefer closed negotiations to failed negotiations in which an offer is made and declined. That accounts for the wasted resources that go into the making and the consideration of an offer, resources which, though they might not rise to the importance of the offer itself, still may be considerable.

In our model, κ should be interpreted as an exogenous cost of the adverse inference that can arise when a state opens negotiations. For example, opening negotiations might lead a state's opponent to view it as weaker in some fashion, and the change in the opponent's behavior that results from that perception could produce a cost for the state opening negotiations. Our second model will replace κ with an endogenous cost arising from an open stance; however, this simpler model allows a better focus on the consequences of a cost of adverse inference. Further, κ can stand in for other consequences besides the escalation captured in our second model: for example, the loss of reputation stemming from alienating external or internal supporters raised in Kaplow (2016).

Beliefs follow as well those in the model of Fearon (1995). We assume that A's costs of war are known, but that B's costs of war, $c_B \in [c_B, \bar{c}_B]$, are distributed according to a strictly increasing and continuously differentiable cdf $F(c_B)$ for which $F(c_B) = 0$ and $F(\bar{c}_B) = 1$. Further, we assume that $f(c_B) = F'(c_B)$ is finite for all c_B and that $F(c_B)$ has a non-decreasing hazard rate, $\frac{f(c_B)}{1-F(c_B)}$. As noted in Fearon (1995, p. 411), the latter "condition is satisfied for a broad range of distributions." We make that assumption so that our conclusions will not be driven by anything beyond our models' extensions.

In order to capture situations of substantive interest and avoid trivial outcomes, we make two additional assumptions. First, we assume that there are no types of B in the support of $F(c_B)$

¹¹This cost is borne solely by the state taking the open stance, net of any that can be absorbed by a third party.

that would be willing to open negotiations and then yield everything to A. Formally, that requires $1 - p - \bar{c}_B > -\kappa$: the expected payoff from war for the highest cost type exceeds that arising from opening negotiations in order to get nothing in the negotiations. Second, we assume that A is unwilling to make an offer to B so high that every type of B would prefer it to fighting. Formally, that requires $f(\underline{c}_B)(\underline{c}_B + c_A) < 1$: A's cost of war and belief that it is facing the lowest cost type cannot be too great. It also requires that A be willing to fight rather than get nothing, so that $p - c_A > 0$. Both assumptions follow from a simple logic: if some actors would easily capitulate, then we would expect the war to have been resolved earlier, at least for some types of B.

Adverse Inference Model Equilibria

The only significant difference between our adverse inference model and the model in Fearon (1995) is the first step: B must open negotiations in order to have bargaining occur. Because different types of B (i.e., those with different costs) accrue different relative benefits from negotiations for any given offer from A, we expect that they should be differently likely open negotiations. This suggests that B's choice to open might cause A to update its prior belief about the distribution of B's costs: the adverse inference to which we refer. As lower-cost types of B do better in a war and so are more costly for A to buy off with a bargaining offer, we look for a cutoff equilibrium in which all types of B with $c_B \geq \hat{c}_B$ choose to open, and all types with $c_B < \hat{c}_B$ choose to stay closed and accept war. After all, if a \hat{c}_B -type B benefits from negotiations, types with even higher costs would also benefit, given that A cannot distinguish the costs of each. Further, B's lexicographic preferences imply that all types of B that would reject an offer from A having opened negotiations would strictly prefer to have stayed closed instead.

We state the following proposition, which is proved in the online appendix.

Proposition 1 *Unless B would accept all offers and pay cost κ in order to do so, there is no equilibrium in which B opens negotiations when $\kappa > 0$. When $\kappa = 0$, under those same conditions there is a unique equilibrium in which states with high costs open negotiations, and those with low costs do not.*

Proposition 1 indicates two possible outcomes, depending on the cost of adverse inference

arising from opening negotiations. When that cost is precisely zero, a unique equilibrium of the model exists in which some states will negotiate. States with costs of war at or above a threshold take an open stance and progress to negotiations despite the adverse inference that induces, whereas states with costs of war below that threshold stay in a closed stance and remain at war. That is, despite the fact that A expects to face a state B with higher costs of war after negotiations are opened, some types of state B take an open stance anyway.

However, that equilibrium is fragile. Should the cost be *any* positive amount, there is no equilibrium in which any state B will open negotiations unless A or at least some types of B would be willing to capitulate without gaining anything. Under the assumption that those types are relatively rare in prolonged conflict, we would expect not to see open negotiation stances taken when it is costly to do so.

The logic behind that stark result can be understood by considering the behavior of the type of B with costs of war equal to the threshold, \hat{c}_B . After opening negotiations, A knows that B's costs of war can be no less than \hat{c}_B , and has no incentive not to make the cutoff type of B indifferent between accepting and rejecting A's offer. But then that type of B would not have wanted to pay a cost $\kappa > 0$ to open up in the first place, since it received the same payoff it would have had it paid no cost κ and simply gone to war. Thus, that type cannot be in equilibrium. The logic holds for types close to \hat{c}_B as well, leading to an unraveling and no equilibrium.

In contrast, when $\kappa = 0$ and there is no cost of adverse inference, the option to open negotiations simply reduces A's uncertainty without a change in outcome. As we show in the appendix, the equilibrium offer in our model when $\kappa = 0$ is the same as the equilibrium offer in a model in which B must open negotiations. As a consequence, any type of B that would choose to open negotiations in the adverse inference model would also accept A's equilibrium offer in a model in which all types of B had to open negotiations, and any type that would not choose to open negotiations would reject that offer. Adverse inference is thus truly costless for B in this case: in addition to its lack of direct cost ($\kappa = 0$), B's ability to choose its cutoff \hat{c}_B and the requirement that A make that cutoff type indifferent ensures that B obtains the same offer it would if it were to lack the ability to close negotiations.

Though we derived Proposition 1 in the context of a take-it-or-leave-it offer by A, in the online appendix we provide and prove Proposition 1A, which shows that even when B has all the bargaining power, there is still a parameter-dependent cutoff value of κ above which there are no equilibria involving open stances by B, suggesting that our result does not depend strongly on our choice of bargaining framework. Consequently, to make our points more clearly we maintain the assumption of a take-it-or-leave-it offer by A in our second model.

Proposition 1 suggests that to understand the use of open negotiation stances in practice, and to offer a solution to the puzzle of why such stances are sometimes used despite the potentially costly adverse inference they cause, it is necessary to discern when states might take an open stance without suffering negative consequences. Our resilience model, which we introduce next, provides one example of such a consequence—the possibility that the opposing state might escalate its war efforts—and one way to avoid that cost—signal resilience to any such escalation.

Resilience Model

The resilience model incorporates escalation via an option for A to attempt to increase its probability of victory from p to $p' > p$, at a cost $\nu > 0$. That cost may be the direct cost of mobilization or an indirect one arising from the consequences of escalation, including destructive counter-escalation (Iklé 1991, 40). A's choice to escalate occurs immediately after B's decision to open or remain closed and, since escalation acts as an effective cost to B, thus serves as an endogenous cost of adverse inference. It roughly replaces the exogenous cost, κ , which we eliminate in the resilience model. The only difference is that we allow escalation after both open and closed, to account for the resilience dynamics we describe next: A may want to escalate after a closed stance in some cases, while it would never want to do so absent resilience.

We say “attempt to increase” because, in the resilience model, escalation is not always effective in increasing A's probability of victory. In line with our earlier discussion, more resilient states suffer fewer consequences from escalation. We capture resilience via a second type dimension for B. For simplicity, we will assume that the resilience of state B, denoted ρ , may be either low, $\rho = L$, or high, $\rho = H$. When resilience is low, escalation by A is effective, and increases A's

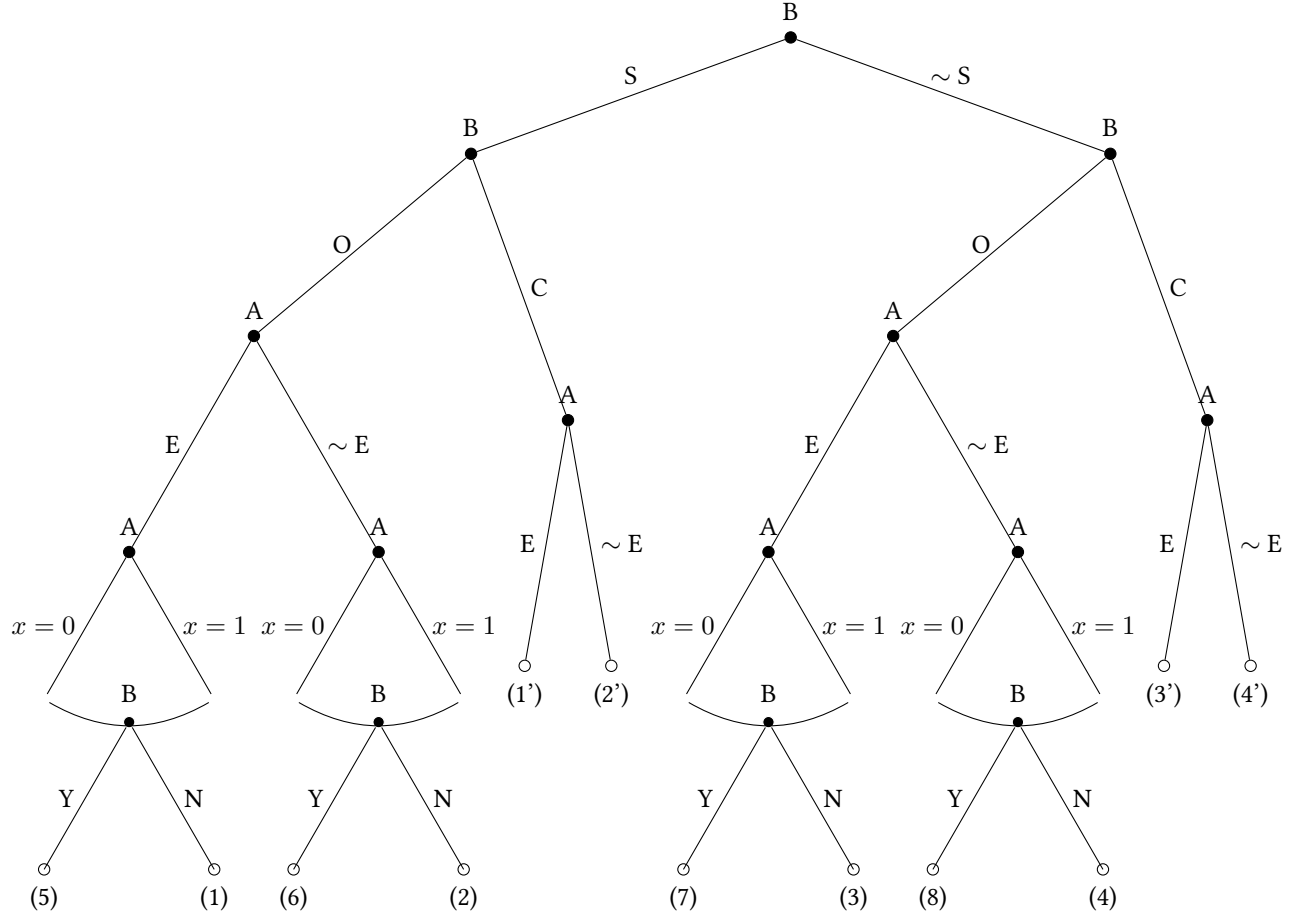
probability of victory to p' . When it is high, escalation by A is ineffective, and A's probability of victory remains at p .¹²

As with B's costs of war, A is uncertain as to B's resilience. A's prior belief that it faces a high-resilience type is q . To capture the correlation between costs of war and resilience, state B's costs of war are correlated with its resilience, in that $Pr(\rho = H|c_B) \in (0, 1)$ is strictly decreasing in c_B . In other words, in expectation, greater costs of war accompany lower likelihoods of high resilience. We assume that A's prior belief as to B's resilience gives it no cause to escalate without new information. That requires that $(1 - q)(p' - p) \leq \nu$. In contrast, we assume that A prefers to escalate whenever it faces a B with low resilience. That requires that $p' - p > \nu$.

The decision of open or closed provides information as to B's resilience due to the correlation between type dimensions. In addition, the resilience model offers B an additional opportunity to signal its resilience. We model that opportunity as a costly action, S, that B can take at the beginning of the game. That could be a single action involving, perhaps, a showy display of continued military strength. Or it could be a reduced form for conflict behavior that has taken place since the formation of A's prior belief about resilience. Different patterns of such behavior by B could lead to different perceptions of B's resilience, beyond A's prior belief. For example, as in our case study, a state may be continually fighting to build a reputation for resilience. In that case, the signal S might be the outcome from recent reputation-building, an outcome that might help state A distinguish B's level of resilience. Regardless, we assume that not taking the action, $\sim S$, is costless, but taking the action entails a cost, $k > 0$ for the low-resilience type but, for simplicity, no cost for the high-resilience type. More resilient states find it easier to signal resilience.¹³ Figure 1 summarizes the game tree for a given type of B.

¹²One could instead posit that escalation would have much the same effect in both cases but be prohibitively costly when facing a high-resilience type. The model would look much the same.

¹³Our model does not rely upon the assumptions that high-resilience types face no consequences from escalation and pay no cost to signal resilience: our results follow as well if escalation increases A's chance of winning against a high-type from p to $p'' < p'$ and the cost of signaling S for a high-type is $k'' < k$. As doing so adds nothing to the intuition gained from the model, though, we stick with the simpler assumptions.



(1,1')	$p' - c_A - \nu, 1 - p' - c_B - k$ if $\rho = L$ $p - c_A - \nu, 1 - p - c_B$ if $\rho = H$	(5): $x - \nu, 1 - x - k$ if $\rho = L$ $x - \nu, 1 - x$ if $\rho = H$
(2,2')	$p - c_A, 1 - p - c_B - k$ if $\rho = L$ $p - c_A, 1 - p - c_B$ if $\rho = H$	(6): $x, 1 - x - k$ if $\rho = L$ $x, 1 - x$ if $\rho = H$
(3):	$p' - c_A - \nu, 1 - p' - c_B$ if $\rho = L$ $p - c_A - \nu, 1 - p - c_B$ if $\rho = H$	(7): $x - \nu, 1 - x$
(4):	$p - c_A, 1 - p - c_B$	(8): $x, 1 - x$

Note: (1') is preferred to (1) and (2') is preferred to (2) by both A and B.

Figure 1: Game Tree without Uncertainty over Types

Resilience Model Equilibria

As with the adverse inference model, our goal in analyzing the resilience model is to identify conditions under which B would open itself to negotiations in equilibrium. As high-resilience types do not suffer costs from escalation, high-cost, high-resilience types will open negotiations as per Proposition 1. Our focus is therefore on the conditions under which low-resilience types

of B will open negotiations.

To address the behavior of low-resilience types, we follow closely the logic of Proposition 1. There, we saw that B opened only when there was no cost for doing so. Though we must drop the “only,” that remains true here as well: if it is too costly for A to escalate, then high-cost types of B will open negotiations regardless of their resilience. As we show in the appendix, there are many possible equilibria that betray that character. It will be too costly for A to escalate when its cost, ν , exceeds its expected benefit: the increase in probability of winning arising from a successful escalation, $p' - p$, times the posterior probability it is facing a low-resilience type and therefore would achieve success, $1 - \hat{q}$. Here $\hat{q} < q$ is A’s posterior belief that it faces a high-resilience type subsequent to an open stance. We show that it is less than A’s prior belief in the appendix, which indicates in general that an open diplomatic stance increases an opponent’s belief that escalation may be effective.

In all equilibria in which A does not escalate against low-resilience, high-cost types, it is necessary for all high-cost types to play the same initial signal—S or \sim S—regardless of resilience; otherwise, A would learn B’s resilience and escalate against the low-resilience, high-cost types, and opening would not be possible in equilibrium. In most such equilibria, low-cost types do not open negotiations. However, when low-cost types of B send different signals according to their resilience, it is possible for low-cost, low-resilience types to open along with high-cost types to avoid escalation, even though some such types reject the offers made.

Though the most straightforward way for low-resilience types of B to open negotiations is for escalation to be too costly for A, the presence of the initial signal creates a way for low-resilience types of B to open despite escalation. That way requires low-resilience types to have no other choice. If the cost to them of the S signal is too great, so that $k \geq p' - p$, high- and low-resilience types can separate, with the former signaling S, and the latter \sim S. In that case, A escalates after both open and closed following \sim S. Because staying closed does not save them from escalation, there is no further cost to opening, and high-cost, low-resilience types can take advantage of an open stance to end conflict. In essence, they accept the consequences of their low resilience early via the initial signal and so enable negotiation to take place. That dynamic may explain

why talks emerged roughly within a month or two for seven interstate conflicts since WWII: the First Kashmir War, the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, the War for Bangladesh of 1971, the Turco-Cypriot War of 1974, the Cenepa Valley War of 1995, the War for Kosovo 1999, and the Kargil War of 1999.

Proposition 2, proved in the online appendix, collects the preceding arguments.

Proposition 2 *There are two ways in which low-resilience types open negotiations in equilibrium in the resilience model. One, if A finds it too costly given its beliefs to escalate after an open stance is taken, there are equilibria in which high-cost types of B open negotiations. Those include equilibria in which all low-cost types remain closed, and those in which low-cost, low-resilience types open negotiations as well, even though some will decline the offer. Two, if low-resilience types find it too costly to send the signal S, there is an equilibrium in which A escalates against all low-resilience types, and high-cost types open negotiations.*

In sum, our modeling exercise yields a coherent story of the role of adverse inference. A state that finds war costly and would prefer a negotiated settlement to continued hostilities may open negotiations, despite the adverse inference doing so induces, either when it has no choice but to accept the inevitability of an escalation by the opposing state, or when the opposing state finds it too costly to escalate its war efforts in response to the adverse inference. In both those cases, the option to open negotiations leaves a state no worse off than it would have been had it been forced to open negotiations. If neither of those cases is true, however, a country may never be open to diplomacy during the entire conflict, unless the bargaining framework is distinctly in its favor. That was the case for India's approach to wartime diplomacy with China in 1962. One month into the conflict, when China declared a unilateral ceasefire and urged India to engage in negotiations, Indian leaders still felt they had yet to demonstrate resilience through fighting.¹⁴ The fact that the Chinese ceasefire was unilateral—graciously returning all territory seized in NEFA, meticulously itemizing equipment captured and repatriating all 4,000 Indian prisoners—made it degrading for India.¹⁵ For all those reasons, India refused to relax its preconditions for talks and open up to

¹⁴Central Intelligence Agency 1964, 64.

¹⁵Chen Yi "Chen Yi fuzongli jiejian yinni zhuhua dashi Sukani tanhua jilu (guanyu yafei huiyi hezhong, yindu bianjie wenti)" 6; Sun and Chen, "Ximalayashan de xue: Zhong Yin zhanzheng shilu," 451.

diplomacy. Though we cannot say this with certainty about India, at least in our model, some states that would refuse to open in the resilience model would do better if instead all types of B had to open, as then there would be no adverse inference and no escalation, allowing those states the gains from a peaceful settlement.

We may think of two conditions under which an opponent would find it too costly to escalate. The first condition occurs when the likelihood of a successful escalation is comparatively easy to assess without additional information, or an opponent would simply have to pay too high of a cost to escalate. For example, China was open to diplomacy with India in 1962 because it had assessed before attacking that India had limited ability to escalate, even if New Delhi interpreted weakness from China's open diplomatic posture. In the days before the war, Chinese intelligence concluded that the military balance in the front regions weighted heavily in China's favor in terms of number of troops, number of heavy weapons, and logistic roads supporting front line forces. China also had a local advantage: Chinese troops were better trained and equipped with better weapons for the operational environment and the terrain was favorable to Chinese approaches to the disputed areas.¹⁶

The second condition occurs when escalation is not too costly for the opponent and the likelihood of a successful escalation is more difficult to assess, but there exists a signal of high resilience that can help distinguish high-resilience types. That situation is laid out in more detail in the case study below: North Vietnam was highly resilient, even as it was materially weaker, and managed to credibly signal that to the United States, enabling it to accept at that point the US offer to engage in talks. Before it could sufficiently signal its resilience, however, it was forced to remain closed to negotiations.

¹⁶Garver, "China's Decision," 121. Contemporary US intelligence estimates reached a similar conclusion. Chinese troops along key parts of the border outnumbered Indian troops, and China had at least five times the reinforcement capabilities of India. China also enjoyed advantages in air power, though the estimate was correct that neither side was likely to introduce air operations. "Short-Term Outlook and Implications for the Sino-Indian Conflict," Special National Intelligence Estimate, No. 13, 31-62, 3, 7-8.

The Case of North Vietnamese Diplomatic Posture in the Vietnam War

During the first three years of the war, the US made over 2,000 attempts to open talks with the North Vietnamese.¹⁷ North Vietnam ignored or opposed all these attempts, demanding that the US first meet its maximalist preconditions.¹⁸ In April 1968, after over three years of staunch rebuffs, Hanoi's approach to wartime diplomacy suddenly changed. The change came after President Johnson announced in a televised speech on March 31, 1968 that the US would seek a diplomatic solution to the war and ordered an immediate end to the bombing of North Vietnam above the twentieth parallel. While this seems like a major concession, President Johnson promised only a partial, and potentially temporary, bombing halt—and not for the first time.¹⁹ Moreover, the United States had not met Hanoi's preconditions for negotiations, including the unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other acts of war.²⁰

What explains Hanoi's initial firm position against talks and sudden change of policy in April 1968? A complete and accurate explanation of Hanoi's diplomatic posture needs to explain why Hanoi's diplomatic posture was closed for so long *and* why it changed postures when it did. Hanoi intended to talk at some point from the onset of the war, but strategic considerations dominated the leaders' discussions about the appropriate timing and conditions under which the talks could begin.²¹ Specifically, as our model argues, they were concerned with how the US would interpret and respond to an open diplomatic posture.

In a series of internal authoritative speeches and writings, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) leadership promulgated the position that while talks would emerge at some point, the time was not ripe in 1966 because Hanoi had yet to demonstrate to the US its ability to resist coercive efforts.²² Top leadership emphasized that Washington had not yet experienced enough

¹⁷ Asselin 2002, 4.

¹⁸ These conditions were referred to as the Four Points.

¹⁹ This was the fifth US bombing pause. Johnson would not agree to halt bombing completely until October 1968.

²⁰ Asselin 2002, 5.

²¹ Translation Report 1967a, 24;

Author's interview with former diplomat and prominent historian, Hanoi, Vietnam, March 2011. A former army officer who was on the international commission for control and supervision of the Geneva Accords and participated in the Paris Peace Talks also articulated this point, as did several other high-ranking career diplomats.

²² Le Duan 1986, 41.

setbacks to induce a change in its perceptions about whether Hanoi would break under military pressure.²³ Given this, Hanoi was gravely concerned that the US would interpret interest in talks in 1966 as a sign of weakness. In General Vinh's words, "we must put forth conditions to prove that we fight for the aspirations and interests of the people," and the failure to do so before talks was "tantamount to implicitly accepting the American's presence in the South."²⁴ The first principle of General Vo Nguyen Giap's strategy was that before talks began, the DRV would not respond to US offers made during bombing pauses to avoid suggesting that the bombing effectively influenced its behavior. The DRV premier articulated: "we cannot take a position which the US might understand as a sign of weakness. We have to be very careful."²⁵

According to the model, Hanoi needed to first credibly demonstrate its resilience to convince Washington that ratcheting up its war effort would only increase the cost of war to prevent adverse inference.²⁶ According to General Vinh, Washington would reach this realization when both sides were fighting indecisively and Hanoi had dealt enough blows to the US to avoid looking weak.²⁷ Therefore, top leaders advocated for "hitting the enemy harder" and "stepping up armed attacks to win greater victories"²⁸ before initiating talks.²⁹

Determining whether the Vietnamese had "accumulated enough successes" to show resilience was difficult and contentious. The Party had a mixed record of identifying US positions and therefore commissioned numerous internal studies to assess US resolve and search for indications of a genuine desire to end the war.³⁰ The North Vietnamese leadership saw great progress in its military position after the first two years of the war: despite the US escalation of troops, equipment, and funds spent, Washington had been unable to "achieve a turning point toward

²³Saigon to Department of State, Le Duan Letter, 1967, 13, 15; Translation Report 1967a, 6.

²⁴The Position of North Vietnam in Negotiations 1967, 5-06.

²⁵Hershberg 2012, 46.

²⁶Saigon to Department of State, Le Duan Letter, 1967, 11.

²⁷Author's interviews with multiple sources, Hanoi, Vietnam, March 2011; Hanoi's Attitudes, as Reflected in Recently Captured Documents 1967, Appendix V.

²⁸VC/NVA Policy on Peace Negotiation and Outline Plan for General Counter Offensive and General Uprising 1967, 11.

²⁹The Position of North Vietnam on Negotiations 1967, 4.

³⁰Author's interviews with former DRV ambassador and spokesperson, Hanoi, 2011; Hanoi's Attitudes, as Reflected in Recently Captured Documents 1967, 3.

victory.”³¹ But DRV political and military leaders were certain that talks in late 1966 would still be premature, even if some of their international supporters disagreed.³²

The nature of US involvement in Vietnam changed drastically between 1965 and 1966. From December 1963 to the end of 1966, US ground troops in Vietnam increased from 16,300 to over 400,000.³³ In June 1966, the Johnson administration expanded the bombing to attack North Vietnamese petroleum, oil, and lubricant stores and moved the bombing closer to major cities.³⁴ In 1966, the US flew 2.3 times more sorties and dropped 2.6 times more ordnance than in 1965.³⁵ Under these discouraging conditions, the North Vietnamese leadership met on March 12, 1966 to discuss ways forward. The previous two years had revealed great US capacity for escalation. To discourage further escalation, Hanoi needed to demonstrate beyond a doubt that it could not be coerced into submission even at higher levels of warfare.³⁶

The North Vietnamese harbored serious fears that if they responded to the graduated increase in military pressure, the US would conclude it was successfully softening the Vietnamese will through military pressure.³⁷ A sign of weakness like agreeing to talks could encourage the US to support the South with more troops and weapons, and perhaps even result in expanding the ground war to the North.³⁸ Then, from a position of strength, Washington could really “turn the screws” on Hanoi to force a reappraisal of its policy of supporting the South. It turns out that Hanoi was correct to be concerned; US domestic advocates for wartime diplomacy focused on how the US could “orchestrate” military pressures with diplomatic communications to enhance its coercive strategy’s effectiveness.³⁹ A willingness to talk on Hanoi’s part at this stage would have confirmed the wisdom of continued escalation, for which the US still had many resources

³¹Tab A: General Policy Statements and International Strategy 1967.

³²Translation Report 1967a, 23-24.

³³Memorandum From Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Johnson 1966.

³⁴Herring 1994, 144-5.

³⁵Intelligence Memorandum 1966.

³⁶Translation Report 1967a, 20-2.

³⁷Author’s interview with liaison officer and official note taker, Hanoi, Vietnam, March 2011. See also Saigon to Department of State, Le Duan Letter, 1967, 11; Tab A: General Policy Statements and International Strategy 1967.

³⁸Author’s interview with a Lieutenant General in the Vietnamese Air Force who was active during the war and with former DRV ambassador and spokesperson; Hanoi’s Attitudes, as Reflected in Recently Captured Documents 1967, 3.

³⁹Herring 1994, 114.

at its disposal.⁴⁰ Thus, Hanoi had to wait until the US ability to escalate was constrained before it could entertain talks. Part of Hanoi's strategy for achieving this was to damage the US military capacity so that it would lack the motivation to persist, intensify, or escalate.⁴¹

As Hanoi entered its third year of war against US involvement, the Vietnamese Workers Party Central Committee convened for three days in late January 1967 to evaluate its strategy. They assessed that the military situation had not yet advanced to the point where introducing diplomacy would be beneficial, but trends were going in the right direction. Specifically, they approached a strategic window of opportunity in which military success could have disproportionately positive effects on US perceptions of Hanoi's resilience and therefore open up Hanoi's diplomatic options.⁴² Internal assessments also identified mounting domestic opposition in the US and thus the NVN leadership came to believe that after more cost imposition, motivational and domestic political factors could hamper US ability to escalate.

Hanoi now sensed hesitancy in US policy—a major push could finally shake US confidence in the effectiveness of escalation.⁴³ On September 25, the Military Affairs Committee and Coordination and Operations Committee of Viet Cong My Tho issued a top-secret draft directive, explaining that the timing was right for a major offensive to accelerate this learning process.⁴⁴ On November 12, 1967, the Central Headquarters of the Vietnamese Workers' Party and Ho Chi Minh disseminated the attack order for the "General Offensive-General Uprising," known as the Tet Offensive.⁴⁵

Training documents listed three aspirational components of the mission: destroy a large part of US forces, wreck South Vietnamese forces to the point that they could no longer defend the government, and initiate popular uprisings in the city and countryside.⁴⁶ While histories focus largely on the final goal of inspiring uprisings, the first two were of particular relevance to Hanoi's diplomatic posture. First, the focus on "wip[ing] out a good deal of enemy potential" highlights

⁴⁰Herring 2002, 182.

⁴¹The Position of North Vietnam on Negotiations 1967.

⁴²Report by Nguyen Duy Trinh to the 13 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam 1967.

⁴³Captured Training Document States Viet Cong Current Fighting Objectives 1968, 10; Enemy Documents 1967.

⁴⁴Documents Show Viet Cong Plans 1968, 6.

⁴⁵Translation Report 1967b, 12.

⁴⁶Memorandum from Art McCafferty to Walt Rostow 1967 (a).

that Hanoi was trying to send the US a message to undermine domestic and international support for further escalation. According to a notebook entry dated January 19, 1968, the Lao Dong Party Executive Committee proclaimed the Tet Offensive would allow North Vietnam to demonstrate resilience and create a situation of constrained US strategic capacity by inflicting casualties and wearing down the enemy.⁴⁷ As Le Duan wrote to the COVSN two weeks before the offensive, the purpose of Tet was to “deal [the enemy] thunderous blows so as to change the face of the war, further shaken the aggressive will of US imperialism, compel it to change its strategy and de-escalate the war.”⁴⁸ The conditions would be ripe for implementing the “talking while fighting” strategy first introduced in the thirteenth plenum resolution. During all of this internal debate about how and when to demonstrate sufficient resilience to enter talks, Hanoi’s public stance portrayed an unwavering opposition to wartime diplomacy.

On January 30, 1968, the North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front (NLF) units unleashed a series of coordinated assaults across South Vietnam, from the demilitarized zone (DMZ) to the Ca Mau peninsula, attacking thirty-six out of forty-four provincial capitals, five out of six major cities, sixty-four district capitals, and fifty hamlets. The US and the Republic of Vietnam quickly repelled the attacks and reversed most of the enemy gains.⁴⁹ The Tet Offensive was a tactical failure for the North Vietnamese. Hanoi’s vision that the people would rise “like a surging wave that carries away everything in its wake” clearly did not come to fruition. The leadership had expected the offensive to be militarily devastating for the US, which it was decidedly not. The North Vietnamese leaders were open about these shortcomings and discussed their serious deficiencies with the cadre.⁵⁰

To Hanoi’s surprise, even though Tet had been a failure by all operational measures, initial responses suggested that the major offensive had finally convinced the US of Hanoi’s resilience, reducing the likelihood that an open diplomatic posture would be interpreted as weakness.⁵¹ Tet had taken the US by surprise partly because Washington had been indeed underestimating

⁴⁷Memorandum from Art McCafferty to Walt Rostow 1967 (b).

⁴⁸Le Duan 1986, 97.

⁴⁹Herring 2002, 228–31.

⁵⁰January 29 Initiative 1968; Communist Uprising Plans for 1968 1968, A-1; Central Office for South Viet-Nam February 1 Assessment of the Situation 1968.

⁵¹Central Office for South Viet-Nam February 1 Assessment of the Situation 1968, 1–3.

Hanoi's ability to sustain its war fighting efforts. US military and civilian leadership had told the American public that the communists were on Indochina's last legs. The scale and organization of Tet jolted the American people, exposed Washington's rosy narrative, and underscored the staying power of the enemy.⁵² Tet was a psychological shock to US leadership and the American people because it demonstrated Hanoi's resilience under mounting US military pressure.

Indeed, when asked to assess whether the DRV came to Paris out of weakness to accept a face-saving bid for peace, the State Department, the Embassy in Saigon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the field commanders all answered with a resounding *no*.⁵³

The first wave of Tet in January and February 1968 was also the final blow that created a situation in which US ability to escalate become more limited, largely due to motivational and domestic factors, thus reducing the expected costs of conversation. If Henry Kissinger is correct that war could not be settled through negotiations "until there had been a military showdown," the Tet Offensive was the closest approximation to that moment.⁵⁴ While NVN forces had been pushed back, they had also inflicted the highest US casualty figures for a single week during the entire war: 543 killed and 2,547 wounded.⁵⁵

After Tet, Secretary McNamara insisted that even if the military could produce a plan that promised victory, it would not be worth the price.⁵⁶ The bottom-line assessment among advisors and the public was that "the war cannot be won on this basis without ever-mounting commitments not worth the cost."⁵⁷ The Clifford task force, which conducted the first full-scale strategic review of US policy in Vietnam, concluded in February 1968 that "we seem to be in a sinkhole ... we put in more—they match it."⁵⁸

While the North Vietnamese were not privy to Washington's internal deliberations, they came to similar conclusions about new constraints on US ability to escalate. The North Vietnamese tracked protests in the US and noted that Secretary McNamara was released from his duty as

⁵²Herring 2002, 226.

⁵³Goodman 1978, 104.

⁵⁴Kissinger 1979.

⁵⁵Clifford and Holbrooke 1991, 469.

⁵⁶Herring 1994, 155.

⁵⁷Memorandum from Rostow to LBJ 1968.

⁵⁸Clifford and Holbrooke 1991, 493-4.

Secretary of Defense, to be replaced by Clark Clifford on March 1. They knew from press leaks that General Westmoreland had requested 206,000 more troops and that President Johnson had rejected it.⁵⁹

It is unclear whether these developments alone would have been enough to reassure Hanoi that the US was unlikely to increase its military pressure in response to an open diplomatic posture. We know that Hanoi did *not* shift to an open diplomatic posture during the weeks immediately after Tet. The timing of Hanoi's shift suggests that President Johnson's announcement that he would not run for president, coupled with the decision to limit bombing to areas south of the twentieth parallel without any reciprocal NVN de-escalation, was a determining factor. President Johnson's March 31 speech effectively ended the US policy of gradual escalation in place since 1965, confirming he lacked the will and support to persist, intensify, or escalate the conflict.⁶⁰

After Tet, Hanoi believed, and accurately so in retrospect, that it had demonstrated resilience and that US ability to escalate was hampered, meaning the strategic costs of an open diplomatic posture were now low. At this point, the Politburo decided that preliminary talks could be held with little risk and could be leveraged safely for operational benefit, including convincing the US to stop bombing the North unconditionally, which could help them regroup.⁶¹ Hanoi now saw "some advantages of the diplomatic struggle" and no longer viewed an open diplomatic posture as a liability in the war effort, even though it still did not trust US intentions.⁶² As one Vietnamese interlocutor clarified the previous US calls for negotiations, "our ears were not 'deaf.' We 'heard' you. And we gave you our answer after Tet."⁶³

In sum, North Vietnam's diplomatic posture varied during the Vietnam War, initially from a closed posture to an open posture in April 1968. Internal deliberations evince that Hanoi maintained a closed diplomatic posture for three years for fear that the US would infer weakness from an open diplomatic posture and consequently increase its military pressure. However, its leadership always planned to move to an open diplomatic posture after it definitively communicated its

⁵⁹Herring 2002, 236.

⁶⁰Herring 1993, 209.

⁶¹Guan 2004, 11.

⁶²Zhou and Pham 1998, 77.

⁶³McNamara et al. 1999, 301.

resilience to Washington, which it was able to do so through the Tet Offensive. Moreover, Hanoi came to believe that US domestic politics had created a situation in which President Johnson would not send more troops or increase the intensity or scope of the bombing campaign. With the costs of conversation now low, Hanoi could finally embrace an open diplomatic posture.

Conclusion and Implications

Getting belligerents to the negotiating table is complicated and fraught with difficulties, both in theory and practice. A willingness to talk is seen as the first concession, affecting an adversary's beliefs about the balance of power and resolve long before offers are exchanged. Assuming, as is often done, that talks occur during fighting inhibits our understanding of the process of war. This article contributes to our understanding of conflict and its negotiated conclusion by proposing a novel mechanism to explain why rational states may refuse to talk during war and when they might change their positions. We find that states are willing to open negotiations under two conditions: when their opponents find escalation too costly, and when there is a signal of high resilience that only the highly resilient care to use.

Those findings have important policy implications. Political scientists have long recognized the dilemma of compellence—states may be reluctant to give in because of concerns that they are opening themselves up to even more coercion (Schelling 1966). We show that states may be reluctant to show a willingness to talk for the same reason, and therefore it can be counterproductive to attempt to coerce an enemy to the negotiating table. Todd Sechser (2010, 649) recommends that the stronger country issuing the compellent threat offer side payments or make lesser demands to assuage the reputational costs the target states may pay for acquiescing to deal with such challenges.

That is what the US attempted to do in the case of Vietnam. Each of the six times the US paused its bombing, the goal was to “leave the DRV an opportunity to explore negotiations without complete loss of face.”⁶⁴ When those pauses failed to engender direct contacts, commenta-

⁶⁴Letter from Director of Central Intelligence Raborn to President Johnson 1965. Three short bombing pauses before the Paris Peace talks were not a part of this strategy.

tors blamed misunderstanding or miscommunication or argued that the pause had not been long enough (Kraslow and Loory 1968).

Our findings suggest a different explanation: states are concerned with the negative material consequences that their approach to diplomacy may convey to the enemy, and so face-saving measures emanating from the enemy do not allow a state to save face. After all, it would remain clear to the enemy that a decision to adopt an open stance signaled weakness, and that adverse inference would still yield the potential for escalation by the enemy. While the limitations of face-saving measures emanating from the adversary are discouraging, our findings suggest new opportunities for outside mediators, who can provide guarantees in ways that lessen the strategic costs of conversation.

An ever-increasing number of modern wars are limited conflicts that end in negotiated settlement (Pillar 1983). Understanding how military outcomes translate into political outcomes—how combat outcomes and diplomatic behavior interact to affect the likelihood that all sides will come to the table—is of greater importance than ever before. This article sheds light on the factors that influence states' decisions about talking to the enemy during wars and illustrates how future generations of policymakers can shape those factors for peace.

Appendix 1: Empirical Pattern of Diplomatic Silence

Conflict Name	Conflict Start	Proposer	Response	Days Before Talks	Conflict End
First Kashmir War of 1947-1949	1947 Oct 22	UK	India and Pakistan agree	35	1949 Jan 1
Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949	1948 May 15	Egypt	Israel accepts through UN	238	1949 Mar 10
Korean War of 1950-1953	1950 Jun 25	UN	DPRK accept	350	1953 Jul 27
Off-shore Islands War of 1954-1955	1954 Sept 3				
Sinai War of 1956	1956 Oct 29	China	US refuses	N/A	1955 May 1
Soviet Invasion of Hungary of 1956	1956 Oct 23	N/A	N/A	N/A	1956 Nov 7
Ifni War of 1957-1958	1956 Oct 23	Hungary	USSR accept	5	1956 Nov 10
Taiwan Straits War of 1958	1957 Nov 21	Spain	Morocco accept	117	1958 Apr 10
Sino-Indian War 1962	1958 Aug 23	N/A	N/A	N/A	1958 Nov 23
Vietnam War Phase 2 of 1965-1975	1962 Oct 20	China	India rejects	N/A	1962 Nov 22
Second Kashmir War of 1965	1965 Feb 7	USA	DRV accept	1176	1975 Apr 30
Six Day War of 1967	1965 Aug 5	N/A	N/A	N/A	1965 Sept 23
Second Laotian War Phase 2 of 1968-1973	1967 Jun 5	N/A	N/A	N/A	1967 Jun 10
War of Attrition of 1969-1970	1968 Jan 13	N/A	N/A	N/A	1973 Apr 17
Football War of 1969	1969 Mar 6	N/A	N/A	N/A	1970 Aug 7
War of the Communist Coalition of 1970-1971	1969 Jul 14	N/A	N/A	N/A	1969 Jul 18
War for Bangladesh of 1971	1970 Mar 23	N/A	N/A	N/A	1971 Jul 2
Yom Kippur War of 1973	1971 Dec 3	Pakistan	India accept	12	1971 Dec 17
Turco-Cypriot War of 1974	1973 Oct 6	N/A	N/A	N/A	1973 Oct 24
War over Angola of 1975-1976	1974 July 20	UK	Turkey and Greece accept	5	1974 Aug 16
Second Ogaden War Phase 2 of 1977-78	1975 Oct 23	N/A	N/A	N/A	1976 Feb 12
Vietnamese-Cambodian Border War of 1977-1979	1977 Jul 23	N/A	N/A	N/A	1978 Mar 9
Ugandan-Tanzanian War of 1978-1979	1977 Sept 24	Vietnam	Cambodia refuses June 7, 1977 proposal	N/A	1979 Jan 8
Sino-Vietnamese Punitive War of 1979	1978 Oct 28	N/A	N/A	N/A	1979 Apr 11
Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988	1979 Feb 17	China	Vietnam rejects	N/A	1979 Mar 16
Falklands War of 1982	1980 Sept 22	Iraq, UN	Iran accepts July 18, 1988	2753	1988 Aug 20
War over Lebanon of 1982	1982 Mar 25	N/A	N/A	N/A	1982 Jun 15
War over the Aouzou Strip of 1986-1987	1982 Apr 21	Israel	Lebanon accept	137	1982 Sept 15
Sino-Vietnamese Border War of 1987	1986 Nov 15	N/A	N/A	N/A	1987 Sept 11
Gulf War of 1990-1991	1987 Jan 5	N/A	N/A	N/A	1987 Feb 5
War of Bosnian Independence of 1992	1990 Aug 2	USA	Iraq accept	157	1991 Apr 11
Azeri-Armenian War of 1993-1994	1992 Apr 7	N/A	N/A	N/A	1992 Jun 5
Cenepa Valley War of 1995	1993 Feb 6	Azerbaijan	Armenia accept	217	1994 May 12
Badme Border War of 1998-2000	1995 Jan 9	Ecuador	Peru	28	1995 Feb 27
Kargil War of 1999	1998 May 6	N/A	N/A	N/A	2000 Dec 12
War in Afghanistan	1999 Mar 24	NATO	Yugoslavia accept	73	1999 Jun 10
Invasion of Iraq of 2003	1999 May 8	Pakistan	India accept	63	1999 Jul 17
	2001 Oct 7	unknown	unknown	3405	ongoing
	2003 Mar 19	N/A	N/A	N/A	2003 May 2

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