

# *Beacons of Hope? The Impact of Imposed Democracy on Regional Peace, Democracy, and Prosperity*

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In 2003, American policymakers linked the democratization of Iraq with greater peace, democracy, and prosperity in the Middle East. We elaborate this regional-level policy argument theoretically and test it empirically on a global sample of states for the twentieth century. We differentiate the impact of fully and weakly democratic externally imposed polities (“bright” versus “dim” beacons, respectively) on regional interstate war, democratization, and economic growth. We conclude that (1) bright beacons reduce, while dim beacons increase war; (2) bright beacons do not stimulate democratization, while dim beacons undermine democratization; and (3) bright beacons stimulate prosperity, while dim beacons undermine prosperity.

Throughout 2003, American and British policymakers outlined *national-level* and *regional-level* policy rationales for the removal of the authoritarian regime of Saddam Hussein and the imposition of democracy in post-war Iraq.<sup>1</sup> The national-level argument proposed by policymakers suggests that a democratic Iraq would project a more peaceful foreign policy toward its neighbors in the region, cease support of terrorist groups, and end hostilities with its longtime enemy in the Middle East, Israel. Furthermore, a democratic Iraq would accommodate longstanding internal religious and ethnic political tensions, thereby stabilizing the Iraqi domestic political system. Finally, a democratic Iraq would increase the prosperity of Iraqi citizens by encouraging a free-market economy, prosperity that in turn would buttress nascent democratic institutions in Iraq.

Following parallel reasoning, the regional-level argument suggests that a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Iraq would stimulate several beneficial outcomes throughout the Middle East. Specifically, the presence of an externally

<sup>1</sup> Although policymakers are averse to characterizing the democratization of Iraq as one of imposition, statements by American President George W. Bush make clear that nothing short of a democratic Iraq would be an acceptable successor to the Hussein regime (Bush 2003a).

peaceful Iraqi democracy would translate into a reduction in interstate antagonism, thereby establishing the foundation for a general peace in the Middle East, the heart of which is the resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian dispute. Finally, the regional-level policy argument proposes that a democratic Iraq would serve as a political and economic “beacon” for the other states in the Middle East, catalyzing further democratic change and increasing levels of economic prosperity throughout the region.

Although several works of contemporary policy analysis and social science examine aspects of the national-level argument, we are unaware of extant research in the social sciences that evaluates the regional-level argument.<sup>2</sup> In the remainder of this article, we examine the regional-level argument by studying the impact of externally imposed democratic political institutions on regional interstate peace, democratization, and prosperity during the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> In general, our study demonstrates limited support for the causal arguments central to the regional-level policy argument such that even under conditions in which a strong democratic beacon emerges in Iraq, the triad of positive outcomes promised by this policy claim—i.e., peace, democracy, and prosperity—is unlikely to occur in the Middle East in toto. Yet, our study does suggest that the greater the degree to which an externally imposed democracy reflects democratic institutions, the greater the likelihood that positive regional outcomes occur.

We structure our study of the regional-level argument in the following manner. First, we elaborate the theory underlying the regional-level argument as it was reflected in recent policy statements made during the prelude to the war in Iraq and derive a set of basic hypotheses from this argument. Next, we specify our research design, including operationalization of externally imposed democratic polities, interstate war, democratization, and prosperity for a global sample of states during the twentieth century, test our hypotheses empirically, and discuss our findings. We close the paper with a discussion of the implications of our study for contemporary policymaking in international relations.

<sup>2</sup> Several recent policy studies examine the basis for the invasion of Iraq and the prospects for post-war reconstruction (e.g., Ajami 2003; Dawisha and Dawisha 2003; Patten 2003; Telhami 2003; Zakaria 2003). Several political science studies bear on aspects of the national-level argument (i.e., whether democratic regimes are significantly more peaceful, more likely to remain democratic, and more likely to develop economically; e.g., Barrow 1997; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Dassel and Reinhardt 1999; Feng and Zak 1999; Gleditsch and Ward 2000; Hegre et al. 2001; Kissane 2004; Leeds and Davis 1999; Mansfield and Snyder 2002; Maoz 1996; Meernik 2004; Peceny 1999; Poe and Tate 1994; Przeworski and Limongi 1997; Reiter 2001; Saideman et al. 2002; Ward and Gleditsch 1998), although few of these studies examine externally imposed democratic polities explicitly. A report by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Allaf et al. 2004) does address the issue of the regional impact of the American occupation of post-war Iraq. However, this report does not examine the *general relationship* between the presence of externally imposed democracy and regional outcomes, which we do herein.

<sup>3</sup> The present study is part of a broader inquiry into the consequences of externally imposed polities on national- and regional-level peace, democracy, and prosperity (Enterline and Greig 2005).

## Imposed Democracy and Regional Outcomes

In February 2003, American policymakers sought to place a possible war against Iraq in a broader, and more importantly, *regional* policy context. This important shift in policy was generally interpreted in the media as a strategy by American policymakers to garner greater support from European and Middle Eastern allies for the use of military force against Iraq (Bumiller 2003). In formulating a broader policy, American, and later British, policymakers sought to link war with Iraq, and implicitly, military victory and the eventual democratization of Iraq, with increased Middle East peace, democracy, and economic prosperity.<sup>4</sup> In the remainder of this section, we discuss the theoretical components of this regional-level policy argument as a general causal phenomenon, link the causal relationships reflected in this argument to current scholarly research, and derive a set of hypotheses.

### *Regional Peace*

As stated publicly, the American, and later European, policymakers sought first and foremost to reduce the interstate security threat posed by Hussein's Iraq and the destabilizing effect policymakers argued this authoritarian regime had on other conflicts in the Middle East. Policymakers reasoned that the cultivation of a democratic regime in Iraq would address this problem, in part, because democratic polities are more likely to exhibit peaceful foreign policies. Moreover, democratic polities are more likely to resolve disputes with other states through negotiation and compromise rather than through the resort to military force. This positive relationship between democracy and pacific foreign policy is fortified by several auxiliary assumptions implicit in contemporary policy statements and we discuss each in turn.

First, democratic polities are assumed to be less likely to support terrorist organizations, or pursue destabilizing policies in neighboring states, thereby providing a foundation for stable regional relations. Second, democratic polities reflect more inclusive political arenas in which ethnic, religious, and political differences between groups are moderated by inclusive, representative political institutions that preclude the need for groups to ground political mobilization in cultural identity. As a result, democratic states are less likely to experience domestic political instability, instability that is linked to interstate friction and militarized conflict. Finally, the very process of imposing democracy has important implications for regional politics. Specifically, democratizing authoritarian regimes through military force signals to nondemocratic states, as well as to non-state actors supported by nondemocratic states, that further pursuit of destabilizing regional policies might result in forceful responses by the international

<sup>4</sup>The most explicit outline of this policy shift is reflected in two speeches by American President George W. Bush in 2003 (Bush, 2003a, 2003b).

community, including further democratization of states through war. Given this logic, we derive the following assumption regarding democratic polities.

**Assumption 1.** *Democratic states are more likely to exhibit peaceful foreign policies.*

Current research tends to substantiate the plausibility of Assumption 1 as it pertains to the regional-level argument. For example, Gleditsch and Hegre (1997) report evidence of a global system threshold at which point-system democracy eventually begins to exert a negative effect on militarized conflict at the level of the interstate system. Crescenzi and Enterline (1999) confirm this finding, but conclude that there is considerable regional heterogeneity in the parabolic relationship between system democracy and war. Similarly, McLaughlin, Gates, and Hegre (1999) conclude that while an increase in system democracy eventually corresponds to a decrease in system war, a fully parabolic relationship fails to materialize. Ray (2000) argues that the level of conflict in the global system is, in part, a function of how the shrinking population of nondemocratic states responds to an increasingly democratic system, one that very well might be construed by nondemocratic polities as threatening, thereby increasing the likelihood of militarized conflict.

Some research emphasizes directly the regional aspects of the relationship between democracy and interstate peace. For example, Singer and Wildavsky (1993) observe that the international system can be divided into regional systems characterized as either “zones of peace, wealth, and democracy,” or “zones of turmoil, war, and development,” a framework suggesting that central to regional peace is economic development coupled with democratic institutions. Alternatively, Holsti (1996) locates the source of variations in regional war in the internal strength and cohesion of states, rather than in the pairing of states with democratic institutions, as suggested by the democratic peace literature (Russett and Oneal 2001). For Holsti, strong states correspond to conditions of regional peace, and weak states correspond to conditions of regional conflict. Despite this tangential support for the regional-level policy argument linking imposed democracy with peace, no current research examines directly the relationship between imposed democracy and regional peace, and the relationship remains empirically unverified. Here, we do so by testing the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1. The presence of an externally imposed democracy increases the likelihood of regional peace.*

### *Regional Democracy*

The second dimension of the regional-level argument links the presence of an imposed democracy with further regional democratization. This relationship is grounded in the demonstrative properties of imposed democratic polities that flow out of the assumption that the more proximate a democratic polity, the greater

the likelihood that liberal democratic ideals will become an issue of intellectual and public debate in neighboring nondemocratic states. In turn, this public debate is anticipated to increase the pressure on nondemocratic regimes to liberalize. Additionally, the presence of a liberal democracy in a region demonstrates the viability of democratic institutions in regions that are not traditionally democratic, thereby overcoming historical impediments to democratization such as colonial legacies and regimes installed during the Cold War. Finally, the regional-level argument assumes that individuals in all societies possess aspirations, if latent, for the liberties and institutions associated with liberal democracy. As a result, all societies can liberalize, even if the end product of this liberalization process varies significantly in form from the democratic institutions in the West European and North American states. Finally, the presence of an imposed democracy can act as a catalyst for further democratization in regions resistant to liberalization during previous waves, or surges, of democratization in the modern state system.

**Assumption 2.** *Democracies demonstrate the viability of liberal political ideas and governance.*

Again, current research suggests tangential support for the demonstration properties of imposed democracies. For example, in his well known study, Huntington (1991) concludes that “snowballing” of national political systems occurs regionally. Similarly, Starr (1991, 1995) finds evidence of positive spatial dependence between democratic transitions, such that democratization can diffuse across, or spill over, national borders. More recently, Starr and Lindborg (2003) find further evidence that democratic and autocratic changes increase the likelihood of similar changes in neighboring states (i.e., democratization leads to further democratization, and autocratization leads to further autocratization), a finding that squares with the analysis of the domestic and international causes of democratization reported in Colaresi and Thompson (2003).

Other research emphasizes that state-system characteristics influence the probability of further democratization. The argument that imposed democracy promotes regional democracy is consistent with the conception of diffusion as emulation described by Siverson and Starr (1991). Thompson (1996) suggests that the emergence of “zones of peace” regionally can spur democratization. Pevehouse (2002) finds that state membership in democratic international organizations increases the odds that member states democratize. Gleditsch (2002) finds strong evidence of spatial clustering among democracies within the international system. Kadera, Crescenzi, and Shannon (2003) conclude that the greater the democratic community’s power in a state–system, the more likely democratic polities are to persist, findings that square with the earlier work of Modelski and Perry (1991). Finally, Cederman and Gleditsch (2004), drawing upon the innovations in Gleditsch (2002), conclude that as the frequency of democracies within a geographic region increases, the more likely nondemocratic states in the region are to democratize.

In general, current research provides indirect, if consistent, support for the contemporary regional-level policy claim that imposed democratic polities demonstrate liberal political ideals and institutions, a process that encourages further regional democratization. Indeed, this body of research, coupled with the oft-cited cases of West Germany and Japan following the Second World War, provides relatively strong evidence that the forceful democratization of authoritarian regimes can stimulate further regional political liberalization. However, aside from this tangential evidence reflected in the scholarly literature, as well as the anecdotal cases of post-WWII Germany and Japan, no direct test of relationship exists in the current literature. We test the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 2. The presence of an externally imposed democracy increases the likelihood of regional democratization.*

### *Regional Prosperity*

Closely related to the theory linking imposed democracy with further regional democratization is the causal logic underlying the relationship between imposed democracy and regional prosperity. This causal linkage is achieved because the process of demonstration is one of liberal ideas and behavior in general, rather than solely the demonstration of democratic political institutions. Indeed, the political and economic dimensions of liberal thought, particularly the emphasis on individual agency, are mutually reinforcing. Therefore, in several ways, the regional impact of an imposed democratic, market-oriented state flows from the causal logic identified in Assumption 2 above, wherein an imposed democracy demonstrates liberal ideas and debate as well as the general viability of liberal political institutions to citizens in nondemocratic states.

In addition to the causal processes flowing from demonstration by imposed democracies, the economic dimension of the regional impact of imposed democracy is also anchored to the diffusion processes associated with economic interactions. The presence of a liberal, market economy in a region will, much like its impact on political thinking, demonstrate the viability and benefits of this economy to countries with nonmarket economies. Additionally, the presence of a market-oriented economy in a region functions as a foil for the economic stagnation that is often associated with centralized, nondemocratic economies. Much as the citizens of East European countries were subject during the Cold War to media reflecting the superior economic performance in the Western European democracies, the presence of a prosperous market economy in a region demonstrates the potential for greater economic prosperity to citizens in states with poor, centrally-controlled economies. In turn, this positive economic foil encourages citizens of states in nonmarket economies to pressure their governments for greater economic liberalization. Finally, market economies are closely associated with foreign trade, and trade is also central to this diffusion argument. The presence of a liberal trading state encourages nonliberal states to engage in trade,

a process that should increase the likelihood of further political and economic liberalization in nondemocratic states. We capture the diffusion properties of imposed democracy in the following assumption:

**Assumption 3.** *Free-market economies demonstrate superior economic prosperity.*

Of the three causal claims advanced in the regional-level argument, the link between imposed democracy and regional prosperity is perhaps the least studied in the scholarly literature. Some scholarly research does examine the regional economic impact of post-WWII Japan and Germany, and these cases appear to provide support for this aspect of the regional-level argument. For example, during the postwar period, Japan steadily increased its regional economic influence such that by the 1980s in “almost every country in the region [Asia], Japan was simultaneously the largest investor; the largest exporter; the largest source of tourism; the largest foreign-aid donor; and the largest buyer of raw commodities” (Fallows 1995, 247). This expansion of Japanese economic influence in the region stimulated and coincided with increasingly market-oriented Asian economies and rapid economic growth in many countries. Similarly, West Germany played an important role in promoting economic and social change within Eastern Europe following the Second World War. For example, Lane (1995) argues that the West German policy of *Ostpolitik* increased the openness of the societies of Eastern Europe to new ideas and influences by stimulating contacts between Western Germany and Eastern Europe. The view from West Germany was that these linkages would open the societies of Eastern Europe to new ideas and influences.

Studies of the relationship between imposed political regimes and regional prosperity default to the familiar examples identified by American policymakers—i.e., the post-WWII democratic and capitalist success stories of West Germany and Japan.<sup>5</sup> In turn, the cases of West Germany and Japan appear to suggest firm evidence of the regional benefits that imposed democratic states can have on regional prosperity. However, beyond these two notable cases, little research exploring the relationship between imposed democratic regimes and regional prosperity exists, and therefore we test the general empirical validity of the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3. The presence of an imposed democracy increases the likelihood of regional prosperity.*

Hypotheses 1–3 reflect the three core positive relationships identified in the regional-level argument introduced by policymakers in the prelude to the military invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the remainder of the article, we subject these hypotheses to the empirical record in the twentieth century.

<sup>5</sup> See President George W. Bush’s speech to the American Enterprise Institute (Bush 2003a).

## Research Design and Analysis

We begin by constructing a global sample of state-years for the 1909–94 period with the *EUGene* (version 3.40) data generation program (Bennett and Stam 2000), a sample that is based on the Correlates of War (COW; Singer and Small 1994) state-membership list, and one that includes 194 states.<sup>6</sup> We rely on the COW state-membership list to drive all subsequent merges with additional data sources.

### Externally Imposed Democratic Polities

We draw primarily on the identification of polity origin in the *Polity III*d data set (version November 2000; McLaughlin et al. 1998), in addition to cross-checking these cases with the *The Encyclopedia of World History* (Stearns 2001), to identify externally imposed democratic polities persisting in the twentieth century. Specifically, we rely on *Polity III*d's coding of the variables *ORIG1* (Origin of New Nation's Polity), *ORIG3* (Established Nations, External Conflict), and *MODEL* (Source of [Polity] Model) to identify our sample. The variable *ORIG1* coding values of 1 and 2 reflect new polities imposed in *new states*.<sup>7</sup> Second, the *ORIG3* coding values of 2 and 3 reflect polities imposed in *existing states*.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the variable *MODEL* coding value of 1 allows us to identify several additional cases of externally imposed polities.<sup>9</sup>

Relying on these coding rules for identifying externally imposed polities, we define imposed *democratic* polities as those polities receiving a coding value

<sup>6</sup>The selection of the start date for this period is dictated by the prevalence of imposed democratic polities in the interstate system, polities that exist primarily in the twentieth century, as well as the matching start dates for the COW and *Polity III*d data series. The terminal year of 1994 is dictated by the *Polity III*d data sample. Due to the presence of some missing values corresponding to our set of independent variables, this sample size reduces somewhat due to listwise deletion of a small percentage of cases. *EUGene* is a data generation program that relies, in part, on data assembled by a number of primary investigators (Fitzpatrick and Modlin 1986; Gibler and Sarkees 2002; Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996; Maoz 1999; Reiter 2000; Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972; Small and Singer 1969; Small and Singer 1982; Werner 2000).

<sup>7</sup>These polities are imposed under the following conditions: "(1) Polity imposed under the tutelage of the former occupying power, while still in authority; and (2) Polity directed by the former occupying power, or another country, after, or as part of, the attainment of formal independence." (Gurr 1990, 33).

<sup>8</sup>These polities are imposed under the following conditions: "(2) Polity change directed or imposed by foreign power(s) (including international agencies and agencies like the CIA) without direct military intervention; and (3) Polity change imposed by occupying foreign power(s) (West Germany in 1949, for example)." (Gurr 1990, 34)

<sup>9</sup>These polities are imposed under the following conditions: "The polity is one that is new to the country and is imposed or prescribed by external agents. Examples are the imposition of a new form of autonomous government by an invading foreign power, such as the Vichy Regime created in France after the German invasion in 1940–41; institutions created by a decolonizing power, such as the polities of all independent African countries; and institutions created under the tutelage of foreign commissions, e.g., in Albania in 1913 and in West Germany, 1949." (Gurr 1990, 35–6)

of greater than zero for the *Polity III*d composite regime score variable (i.e., *DEMAUT*). This standard for democracy is lower than the threshold of greater than six that is familiar to the literature. We argue that fledgling imposed democracies, such as those potentially imposed in contemporary Iraq and Afghanistan in 2002 and 2004, respectively, often fall below this threshold while still reflecting distinct democratic institutions and aspirations, and thereby constitute imposed democratic polities generally defined. Furthermore, as we explain in greater detail below, in our tests of Hypotheses 1–3 we explore whether the relationship between externally imposed democracy and our regional outcomes of interest vary by the degree to which the imposed democracy reflects democratic institutions (i.e., whether these institutions burn “brightly” or “dimly.”) Based on these coding criteria, 27 externally imposed democratic polities endured during the 1900–94 period, and these data are reported in Table 1. Due to data limitations, however, our analysis focuses upon the 1909–94 period.

For each case of imposed democracy, we assume that the polity endures until its respective composite score drops below the zero value on the *Polity III*d combined regime scale, at which point we code the imposed democracy as ceasing to endure.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, an imposed democracy can span several “polities,” or case numbers, as defined in the *Polity III*d data. By way of example, consider the case of externally imposed democracy in Sri Lanka (Table 2). We code the imposed democratic polity in Sri Lanka as enduring from 1948 through composite regime score values of 7, 7, 8, –88, 5, 3, 7, respectively, until the terminal year of our analysis, 1994. The Sri Lankan case illustrates the aforementioned distinction between imposed democratic polities of the bright and dim variety. Specifically, when the Sri Lankan democratic polity is imposed in 1948, its composite regime score is 7, and remains above a composite regime score of 5 until 1977, at which point an interregnum occurs. We code Sri Lanka as a *bright imposed democratic beacon* from 1948 until 1977, at which point the Sri Lankan polity becomes a *dim imposed democratic beacon* in 1978 and continues in this capacity until 1992. However, the bright beacon properties of the Sri Lankan polity resume in 1993, at which point the composite regime score returns to a value of 7. Following this logic, we operationalize imposed democratic polities such that their degree of brightness (i.e., “bright” versus “dim”) can vary during the evolution of a given externally imposed democratic polity.

To assess the regional impact of bright and dim imposed democratic polities on regional outcomes, we operationalize three pairs of variables (i.e., six total) to measure the proximity of externally imposed democratic polities to each state in each year in our sample of state-years. First, we rely on the intercapital distance data available in *EUGene* to identify the proximity in miles of each state-year in our sample to the *nearest* imposed democratic polity in the interstate

<sup>10</sup> We do not code an imposed democracy as ceasing to endure during periods of “interregnum,” “interruption,” or “transition,” as defined by *Polity III*d and *Polity II*. Rather, we code these polities as periods of dimly lit externally imposed democracy.

TABLE 1  
Externally Imposed Democratic Polities in the Twentieth Century

State	Start Year	End Year	Duration (Years)	Start DEMAUT	End DEMAUT
Austria	1920	1934	14	8	-88
Austria	1946	1994	48	10	10
Botswana	1966	1994	28	10	10
Canada	1867	1994	127	4	10
Cuba	1901	1955	54	3	-88
Cyprus	1960	1994	34	8	10
W. Germany/Germany	1949	1994	45	10	10
Guyana	1966	1978	12	2	1
Haiti	1918	1935	17	2	2
Honduras	1908	1936	28	5	5
Ireland	1922	1994	72	8	10
Jamaica	1959	1994	35	10	10
Japan	1952	1994	42	10	10
Kenya	1963	1969	6	2	0
Lebanon	1941	1990	49	2	-77
Lesotho	1966	1970	4	9	9
Malaysia	1957	1994	37	10	7
Mauritius	1968	1994	26	9	10
New Zealand	1857	1994	137	10	10
Nigeria	1960	1966	6	8	7
Philippines	1935	1972	37	5	2
Singapore	1959	1965	6	7	-66
Sri Lanka	1948	1994	46	7	7
Sudan	1954	1958	4	8	8
Syria	1944	1950	6	5	5
Uganda	1962	1967	5	7	-88
Zimbabwe	1923	1987	64	4	1

Note: Data are from *Polity III*d (McLaughlin et al., 1998) and reflect the polity durations as defined in the *Polity III*d state system.

TABLE 2  
Externally Imposed Democracy in Sri Lanka, 1948–94

Polity III Case #	Start Year	End Year	DEMAUT
12810	1948	1960	7
12820	1960	1970	7
12830	1970	1977	8
12840	1977	1978	-88
12850	1978	1982	5
12860	1982	1993	3
12870	1993	1994	7

Note: Data are from *Polity III*d (McLaughlin et al., 1998).

system, wherein said polities score greater than five on the *Polity III*d composite regime score. This first variable reflects the natural log of this distance, a measure of a state's proximity to a "bright" democratic beacon. We create a second distance variable representing a state's proximity to a "dim" democratic beacon by calculating the natural log of the distance between a given state and the nearest imposed democratic polity with a composite regime score greater than zero and less than six.<sup>11</sup>

Second, we create a dichotomous variable identifying whether a state is directly contiguous to an externally imposed democratic polity with a combined regime score greater than five (a bright beacon.) We create an additional dichotomous variable identifying whether a state is directly contiguous to an imposed democratic polity that scores greater than zero, but less than six, on the composite regime score (a dim beacon.) We use the minimum-distance data coded by Gleditsch and Ward (2001) to create these two variables.

Finally, we create a dichotomous variable identifying whether a state in a given state-year is 1 to 950 kilometers from an imposed democratic polity that scores a value of greater than five on the composite regime score (a bright beacon exists within the specified distance band.) We create the dichotomous variable to identify whether a given state is 1 to 950 kilometers from an imposed democratic polity that scores greater than zero, but less than six, on the composite regime score (a dim beacon exists within the specified distance band.) Again, we rely on the distance data coded by Gleditsch and Ward (2001) to identify these geographic bands.

We also control for the presence of an imposed democracy in a given state-year (i.e., an externally imposed democratic polity is present in a specific state in a given year.) To do so, we create two dichotomous variables that are coded a value of 1 when a state-year corresponds to the presence of an externally imposed democratic polity greater than five (i.e., a bright beacon), or greater than zero and less than six (a dim beacon), respectively, and zero otherwise.

### *Regional Peace*

Recall that Hypothesis 1 identifies a positive relationship between imposed democratic polities and regional peace. Here, we test this relationship by exam-

<sup>11</sup> For each variable measuring the distance to the nearest imposed democratic polity, we add a value of 1 to the inter-capital distance prior to calculating the natural log, so as to avoid taking the natural log of zero. Due to the fact that imposed democratic polities are not present in each interstate system year, our measures of the minimum distance to dim and bright democratic beacons are coded as missing in these observations. Specifically, dim beacons are absent in two of the 86 years (2.4%) of our sample, while bright beacons are absent in 10 of the 86 sample years (11.7%). Rather than eliminate these observations from the analysis in list-wise fashion, we substitute the maximum value that these variables measuring distance can assume, given the parameters of the geography of the interstate system. These parameters lead us to calculate the natural log of half of the earth's circumference, or 12,450 miles, as a replacement for these missing values, and as a result, the preservation of these observations in our sample.

ining whether the proclivity of states to engage in war (i.e., nonpeaceful behavior) is influenced by their geographic proximity to externally imposed democratic polities. To do so, we rely on *EUGene* to create a dichotomous variable corresponding to state-years in which a state engages in at least one war in any capacity.<sup>12</sup> This variable is coded a value of 1 when a state-year qualifies as war participation, and zero otherwise.

A state's propensity for foreign conflict likely depends upon more than simply its proximity to externally imposed democratic polities. Therefore, in addition to the variables assessing the proximity of imposed democratic polities outlined above, we include several control variables in our statistical specifications. First, we include a variable reflecting state persistence, which we operationalize as the natural log of the age (in years) of each state in each state-year (from *EUGene*.) We expect that, in general, state persistence tends to translate into more stability as border disputes with neighbors become settled, reducing the frequency of interstate conflict. Next, we control for the degree to which a state reflects democratic institutions by including a one-year lag of composite polity regime score (ranging in value from -10 to 10), from the *Polity IV* data (Marshall and Jaggers 2000). To control for the proximity of potential interstate opponents per state-year, we include a variable that records the frequency of contiguous states for each state in each state-year (based on the COW operationalization of contiguity generated with *EUGene*.)

In addition, we include three variables capturing state-level dynamics that may influence the likelihood of war. Specifically, we include variables reflecting the one-year change in the degree to which a state is militarized (military personnel/total population) from the Composite Indicator of National Capabilities (CINC) (generated with *EUGene*), the one-year change in a state's military spending (military expenditures, from the CINC individual components generated with *EUGene*), and the one-year change in a state's degree of development (the natural log of the sum of energy consumption and iron and steel production, from the CINC individual components generated with *EUGene*.) The first two variables capture the degree to which a state chooses to channel its citizenry and its economic resources, respectively, toward defense. As such, these variables provide a proxy for the general level of insecurity a state is experiencing in a year. The development variable charts economic changes occurring within a state as a means of controlling for the effect such changes can exert upon conflict involvement.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, to assess the degree to which a state's past foreign policy relationships are characterized by militarized interactions with other states, we identify the cumulative frequency of a state's prior militarized interstate dispute opponents

<sup>12</sup> Within *EUGene*, we rely on the Maoz "mzcowwar" variable to identify war participation in a state-year.

<sup>13</sup> To correct for missing values, primarily in the military personnel, energy consumption, and military spending components, each CINC component is interpolated forward from the nearest value temporally. In state-year series where no prior value exists, missing values are interpolated backward from the nearest value.

in each state-year (e.g., for the United States in the year 1950 we identify the total frequency of dispute opponents for the United States during the period 1816–1949), and weight this frequency by a state's persistence in the interstate system (in years) at a particular point in time (the raw data for which are generated with *EUGene*.) We control for the influence of different types of interstate alliances on a state's engagement in interstate war by including a variable identifying the frequency of defense pacts of which a state is a member, as well as variable identifying the frequency of neutrality pacts in which a state is engaged, for each state-year in our sample (from *EUGene*.)

The results of four logit specifications are reported in Table 3.<sup>14</sup> We rely on the correction for temporal dependence developed in Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1997), although in the interest of space we do not report the coefficients corresponding to the time and spline variables. Models 1 and 2 are estimated on a sample period of 1909–94, while models 3 and 4 are estimated on a sample period of 1946–94. Models 1 and 3 examine the impact of dim and bright beacons upon their neighbors by focusing upon the minimum distance between states and the nearest democratic beacon. Models 2 and 4 employ the two pairs of two dichotomous measures of proximity for both dim and bright beacons, coding whether or not a state is directly contiguous to each type of beacon in each state-year, and whether or not each state is between 1 and 950 kilometers to each type of beacon in each state-year.

We find partial support for Hypothesis 1 in Table 3. Specifically, the results reported for the minimum distance to a bright beacon variable in Model 1 suggest that the greater the distance between a state and a bright beacon, the greater the likelihood that such a state will engage in interstate war. Conversely, the more proximate a state is to a bright beacon democracy, the lower the likelihood of war participation. This positive relationship between proximity and war is corroborated in Model 2, wherein the performance of an alternative variable measuring the proximity of bright beacons provides greater granularity with respect to a state's minimum distance to a bright democratic beacon. Specifically, the negative and statistically significant coefficient for the variable capturing contiguity to a bright beacon for the 1909–94 period (Model 2) provides further evidence that it is the states most proximate to a bright beacon that are significantly less war prone. Substantively, our analysis suggests that a state's war propensity declines by approximately 32% when it is contiguous to a bright beacon. By contrast, there is no statistically significant relationship between the presence of a bright beacon within 1–950 kilometers of a state and that state's war propensity.

<sup>14</sup> We use the following syntax to estimate our logit models in this and the remaining statistical models: `logit, cluster (COW state)`. Our decision to cluster on the state is based upon the expectation that although observations across states are independent of one another, observations within the same state over time are unlikely to be independent. We estimate all of our logit models in STATA (Stata-Corp, 2003), version 8.2. A replication file is available from the authors upon request.

TABLE 3

## Logit Models of Externally Imposed Democracy and Interstate War

	1909–94		1946–94	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Minimum Distance, Bright Beacon	.099** [.031]		.111* [.050]	
Minimum Distance, Dim Beacon	.033 [.038]		-.087** [.033]	
Contiguity, Bright Beacon		-.384+ [.215]		.331 [.278]
1–950 km Band, Bright Beacon		-.105 [.195]		.293 [.226]
Contiguity, Dim Beacon		.035 [.225]		.631** [.241]
1–950 km Band, Dim Beacon		-.08 [.242]		.658** [.237]
State-Year, Bright Beacon	-.117 [.502]	.024 [.499]	-.76 [.504]	-.461 [.593]
State-Year, Dim Beacon	.743 [.554]	.785 [.566]	1.413** [.533]	1.284* [.529]
State Persistence	.358** [.070]	.391** [.064]	.494** [.104]	.425** [.097]
Severity of Interstate Relationships	.570** [.107]	.539** [.103]	.495** [.107]	.481** [.098]
Polity <sub>t-1</sub>	.006 [.013]	-.001 [.012]	.003 [.014]	.003 [.014]
Defense Pact <sub>t-1</sub>	.011+ [.006]	.005 [.006]	.029** [.009]	.023** [.008]
Neutrality Agreement <sub>t-1</sub>	-.048 [.061]	-.066 [.056]	-.120* [.058]	-.127* [.057]
Major Power	.219 [.207]	.148 [.225]	-.331 [.295]	-.818** [.253]
Neighbors	-.080+ [.044]	-.088+ [.045]	-.132+ [.075]	-.137* [.064]
ΔMilitarized	.443** [.106]	.452** [.110]	.167 [.134]	.141 [.134]
ΔMilitary Spending	.631** [.127]	.617** [.127]	.595** [.184]	.592** [.178]
ΔDevelopment	-.443** [.133]	-.444** [.137]	-.389+ [.212]	-.344 [.213]
Constant	-3.078** [.467]	-2.092** [.325]	-2.735** [.643]	-2.684** [.449]
Wald $\chi^2$ ( <i>df</i> = 18, 20, 18, 20)	1,370.40	1,435.08	687.31	821.84
Log-likelihood	-1,040.67	-1,046.27	-613.54	-612.79
<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	8,249	8,249	6,167	6,167

Note: Logit coefficients. Robust standard errors (clustered on state) in brackets.

+ sig. at 10%; \* sig. at 5%; \*\* sig. at 1%. (two-tailed)

Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1997) correction for time dependence not shown.

As encouraging as these results are regarding the relationship between imposed democracy and regional war, further analysis suggests the need for caution. First, although the analysis for the full 1909–94 time period suggests a significant pacifying effect by bright democratic beacons on neighboring states, this effect is considerably weaker in the sample corresponding to the post-WWII time period. Indeed, although the minimum distance to a bright beacon variable is positively signed and statistically significant, neither of the variables corresponding to a state's contiguity with a bright beacon or a range of 1–950 kilometers to a bright beacon, are statistically significant from zero, suggesting a weaker effect of bright beacons during precisely the historical interval, the post-WWII period, identified by contemporary policymakers as evidence of a causal link between externally imposed democracy and regional peace.

Most striking, however, are the findings corresponding to the performance of dim democratic beacons during the post-WWII interval. Specifically, it appears that rather than enhancing regional peace, these weak democratic beacons actually undermine regional peace. Indeed, a state that is contiguous to a dim beacon is 87% more likely to engage in war in any given year relative to a state that is not. Furthermore, Model 4 suggests that a state within 950 kilometers of, but not directly contiguous to, a dim beacon is 93% more likely to be involved in an interstate war than a state outside of this range. In general, the empirical analysis suggests that the degree to which an imposed democratic polity is democratic has significant implications for regional war. The brighter the imposed democratic beacon, the greater the negative impact on regional war; conversely, the dimmer the democratic beacon, the greater the regional tendency toward war.

Finally, the performance of the control variables describing whether a state is, itself, a bright or dim beacon suggests information that bears on theoretical arguments linking imposed democracy with regional peace. Specifically, if we rely on predicted probabilities from Model 4, a dim democratic beacon in the post-WWII period is more than *three and half times* more likely to be involved in a war than other states. Viewing the results within the context of the argument outlined above suggests that the increased war propensity of dim beacons may arise from the tendency of states neighboring these imposed polities to become more warlike, perhaps seizing upon the perceived weakness of the dim beacon. Interestingly, bright democratic beacons during this same period of time are neither significantly more nor less likely to be involved in war. Perhaps the greater stability of bright beacons dissuades potential adversaries from acting aggressively.

In sum, our analysis of regional peace suggests that externally imposed democratic polities can stimulate regional peace, but only under conditions in which imposed democratic beacons burn brightly. If an imposed democracy reflects strong democratic institutions, then this bright beacon does reduce conflict among its closest neighbors, stimulating greater regional peace. Yet, our analysis suggests that dim democratic beacons do not merely exert a benign impact on the regions in which they reside. Rather, our analysis suggests that these dim beacons

increase their own conflict propensity, as well as the war-proneness of neighboring states, a dynamic that undermines regional peace.

### *Regional Democracy*

Having considered the relationship between imposed democracy and regional peace, we now consider the impact of such polities on regional democratization, as expressed in Hypothesis 2. To test the relationship between imposed democracy and the likelihood of political liberalization (or democratization), we create a dichotomous variable that records when a given state-year in our sample reflects any positive change in the composite polity score according to the *Polity IV* data relative to a state's composite regime score at time  $t - 1$ . This variable is coded a value of 1 when such positive changes are identified in a state-year, and zero otherwise. Operationalized as such, this variable represents the least strict test of the hypothesis that imposed democracy promotes regional democratization given that any positive polity change is coded as democratization, rather than requiring these positive polity changes to cross a threshold.

Again, in addition to our primary variables of interest, we include several control variables relevant to the prediction of democratization. Because the democratization literature emphasizes the centrality that peace plays in the political liberalization process, we control for both domestic and international conflict. To assess the impact of a state's degree of conflict in foreign policy, we include a variable to control for the frequency of a state's prior militarized interstate dispute opponents in each state-year (as we did in our analysis of regional peace, above.)

Domestically, we include variables identifying government crises and revolutions (lagged one year and drawn from Banks 1996) capturing the frequency of each type of event in each state-year.<sup>15</sup> Finally, to assess the impact of demography on a state's war proneness, we include a variable that reflects the degree to which a state's population is located in urban centers (urban population/total population, from the CINC individual components generated with *EUGene*), as well as a square of this term, to capture the curvilinear nature of modernization. The results of the logit analysis on democratization are reported in Table 4.<sup>16</sup>

In general, the results reported in Table 4 suggest little empirical support for the claim that the presence of imposed democratic polities stimulates further democratization in the regions that they occupy. Considering the performance of the variables representing bright beacons, there appears to be no significant effect of these polities upon the likelihood of democratization of states in their region. While bright beacons do not seem to influence regional democratization, dim

<sup>15</sup> The data for government crises are coded until the year 1989, and we interpolate the 1989 value for each state through the year 1994. The data for revolutions are coded through the year 1994.

<sup>16</sup> We employed the Beck, Katz, and Tucker correction for temporal dependence of democratic changes, but failed to identify any evidence that this temporal dependence is present in our sample. Therefore, this correction is not included in the logit results presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
Logit Models of Externally Imposed Democracy and Democratization

	1909–94		1946–94	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Minimum Distance, Bright Beacon	.012 [.047]		.034 [.055]	
Minimum Distance, Dim Beacon	.140* [.069]		.172* [.086]	
Contiguity, Bright Beacon		-.285 [.407]		-.504 [.424]
1–950 km Band, Bright Beacon		-.008 [.147]		-.136 [.153]
Contiguity, Dim Beacon		-.247 [.293]		-.211 [.322]
1–950 km Band, Dim Beacon		-.793* [.342]		-.772* [.356]
State-Year, Bright Beacon	-.466 [.412]	-.509 [.393]	-.962+ [.502]	-1.021* [.490]
State-Year, Dim Beacon	.063 [.469]	.15 [.480]	-.009 [.541]	.031 [.535]
Polity <sub><i>t</i>-1</sub>	-.087** [.012]	-.084** [.011]	-.074** [.012]	-.069** [.011]
Severity of Interstate Relationships	-.255+ [.141]	-.255+ [.147]	-.202 [.142]	-.189 [.153]
Government Crises <sub><i>t</i>-1</sub>	.189* [.083]	.191* [.084]	.236** [.089]	.235** [.090]
Revolutions <sub><i>t</i>-1</sub>	.409** [.104]	.417** [.100]	.370** [.104]	.377** [.099]
Urbanized	.062** [.012]	.061** [.012]	.054** [.013]	.055** [.013]
Urbanized <sup>2</sup>	-.001** [.000]	-.001** [.000]	-.001** [.000]	-.001** [.000]
Constant	-4.963** [.630]	-3.691** [.152]	-5.161** [.774]	-3.459** [.166]
Wald $\chi^2$ ( <i>df</i> = 10, 12, 10, 12)	154.01	165.55	119.05	127.56
Log-likelihood	-1,305.11	-1,303.04	-1,143.45	-1,142.99
<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	7,170	7,170	5,855	5,855

*Note:* Logit coefficients. Robust standard errors (clustered on state) in brackets.  
+ sig. at 10%; \* sig. at 5%; \*\* sig. at 1%. (two-tailed)

beacons negatively influence the democratization of their neighbors. This effect occurs in both the full and post-WWII analyses (Models 2 and 4). In Models 2 and 4, for example, the presence of a dim beacon within 1–950 kilometers of a state reduces that state's probability of democratization by approximately 55%. Similar results are identified in Models 1 and 3, wherein the probability of democ-

ratization increases as the distance to the nearest dim beacon increases. Although democratization may be hindered in regions plagued by low levels of development, high levels of regional conflict, and extensive political instability, our findings regarding the impact of imposed democratic polities remain robust even when we control for these influences in our statistical models.

Interestingly, dim beacons do not appear to have the same effect upon the states directly contiguous to them as they do to other noncontiguous neighbors. Across both Models 2 and 4, the contiguous dim beacon variable, although negative, is not statistically significant. At first glance, this result seems surprising since it makes sense to expect that imposed regimes are likely to have the most direct effect upon the states that border them. Yet, these results may reflect the presence of two opposed effects that dim beacons potentially exert upon their immediate neighbors. On one hand, the weak form of democracy associated with dim beacons, as well as the instability that these polities seem to interject into the regions they occupy, would likely decrease the likelihood of further regional democratization. Conversely, the military presence of the imposing state or states (e.g., the United States in Iraq) in the state receiving the imposed polity, a presence that would encourage democratization both within the imposed polity and the region at large, would be felt most directly by states directly contiguous to the dim beacon. Such an explanation might explain the two effects that would account for the null findings for states directly contiguous to dim beacons, but it is an explanation that we plan to examine in subsequent research.

Ultimately, our empirical test of Hypothesis 2 suggests that, unlike in our analysis of interstate war, even in the best-case scenario in which a bright beacon is imposed in a state, a significant regional effect on the likelihood of democratization is unlikely to materialize. However, when weaker, nominally democratic regimes are installed—i.e., dim beacons—democratization of the region is undermined rather than enhanced.

### *Regional Prosperity*

The third and final hypothesis links the presence of imposed democratic polities with increased regional prosperity. To evaluate the impact of imposed democracy upon prosperity, we rely on per capita Gross National Product (GNP) data reported in Banks (1996) for our analysis.<sup>17</sup> To operationalize our dependent variable, we compare a state's GNP growth in time  $t$  with the state's three-year moving average of growth (specifically, times  $t - 1$ ,  $t - 2$ , and  $t - 3$ ). If a state's GNP growth in time  $t$  reflects an increase relative to the prior three-year average, then we code this state-year as reflecting an increase in the state's prosperity. To simplify our analysis, we code the dependent variable a value of 1 during state-years in which the change in per capita GNP growth is positive relative to this three-

<sup>17</sup> Due to the fact that the data for GNP growth are of poor quality prior to the year 1946, our analysis of this variable focuses solely on the post-WWII period, 1946–94.

year average and a value of zero in state-years in which positive growth is absent. To examine the effect of imposed democracy, we estimate two logit models with the Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1997) correction for temporal dependence. The results of our analysis are reported in Table 5.

Our analysis of prosperity suggests that, as specified in Model 1, the variable describing the minimum distance of a state to the nearest bright democratic beacon is negative and statistically significant. This finding indicates that per capita GNP growth becomes more likely the *nearer* a state is to a bright imposed democratic beacon. When we dichotomize the distance to the nearest bright beacon in Model 2, we find that states within a range of 1–950 kilometers of a bright beacon are approximately 13% more likely to experience GNP growth than other states. Interestingly, states contiguous to a bright beacon were neither significantly more or less likely to experience GNP growth.

Similar to our analysis of regional democracy, dim democratic beacons have a negative effect on prosperity in the regions they occupy. The results of Model 2 indicate that the presence of a dim beacon within a 1–950 kilometer band of a state reduces the likelihood of GNP growth in any given year by approximately 16 percent. In Model 1, the variable measuring the effect of the minimum distance to the nearest dim beacon showed a similar effect, although this variable only approached nominal significance. As was the case in the democratization analysis, the variable for states contiguous to a dim beacon was not statistically significant. This finding lends additional support to the conjecture that factors associated with dim beacons exert two separate effects upon their immediate neighbors. On one hand, the influence of the imposing power may have a spill-over effect upon the states contiguous to the imposed state, promoting greater stability and, in turn, increasing the likelihood of economic growth. At the same time, based on our analysis of peace, above, the presence of dim beacons seems to promote instability in neighboring states. As a result, the null findings obtained for states contiguous to dim beacons may reflect the impact of these two cross-cutting influences.

In sum, our analysis of externally imposed democratic polities suggests that whether or not these polities stimulate regional prosperity is contingent upon the strength of democratic institutions in the imposed polity. Although our empirical analysis is somewhat inconsistent, and certainly smaller in terms of the magnitude of the substantive effects, we do find that bright democratic beacons are associated with regional prosperity, while dim democratic beacons undermine regional prosperity, findings that lend support to Hypothesis 3.

## Conclusion

In crafting the policy argument for the invasion of Iraq, policymakers repeatedly referenced the post-World War II experiences of Germany and Japan as epicenters of subsequent peace, democracy, and prosperity in their respective geographic regions. Our study of this regional-level policy claim with data for the

TABLE 5  
 Logit Models of Externally Imposed Democracy and Growth in  
 Per Capita GNP, 1946–94

	(1)	(2)
Minimum Distance, Bright Beacon	-.032*	
	[.012]	
Minimum Distance, Dim Beacon	.019	
	[.012]	
Contiguity, Bright Beacon		-.001
		[.103]
1–950 km Band, Bright Beacon		-.171*
		[.079]
Contiguity, Dim Beacon		.116
		[.116]
1–950 km Band, Dim Beacon		.127*
		[.065]
State-Year, Bright Beacon	.115	.077
	[.105]	[.108]
State-Year, Dim Beacon	-.087	-.067
	[.136]	[.147]
GNP <sub>pc,t-1</sub>	-8.99e-06	-7.49e-06
	[.000]	[.000]
Government Crises <sub>t-1</sub>	-.115*	-.121*
	[.048]	[.047]
Revolutions <sub>t-1</sub>	-.011	-.014
	[.057]	[.056]
Severity of Interstate Relationships	-.046	-.069
	[.054]	[.060]
Polity <sub>t-1</sub>	-.002	.00019
	[.005]	[.005]
State Persistence	.012	.02
	[.029]	[.030]
Urbanized	.009**	.008**
	[.001]	[.001]
Δ Militarized	.001	.004
	[.065]	[.065]
Constant	-.321+	-.423**
	[.180]	[.132]
Wald $\chi^2$ ( $df = 16, 18$ )	167.58	166.38
Log-likelihood	-3,506.62	-3,506.82
<i>p</i>	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	5,425	5,425

Note: Logit coefficients. Robust standard errors (clustered on state) in brackets.

+ sig. at 10%; \* sig. at 5%; \*\* sig. at 1%. (two-tailed)

Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1997) correction for time dependence not shown.

twentieth century leads us to conclude that, under conditions in which bright democratic beacons persist in a region, regional peace and prosperity are promoted, but democratization is not. Furthermore, we find that imposed democratic polities that are weakly democratic generally reduce the odds that a region will achieve greater peace, prosperity, and democracy.

Based on these general findings, our analysis provides some insight into the likely regional impact of a post-Hussein democracy in Iraq. On the positive side, if Iraq emerges as a bright democratic beacon, there exists a chance for greater regional peace and prosperity. Such an achievement in a region racked by recurring, high-intensity conflict would without a doubt be a favorable development. However, the road to a fully functioning democracy on the order of Germany or Japan, i.e., quintessential bright democratic beacons, is likely to be difficult, given Iraq's ethnic and religious cleavages, near absence of a democratic tradition, the impact of the American occupation, and the potential hostility of Iraq's neighbors. Under conditions of a dimly lit democratic beacon in Iraq, our analysis suggests that regional peace, prosperity, and democracy are unlikely to follow in the Middle East.

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