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Game Theory 101: The Rationality Of War



Synopsis

William Spaniel, author of *Game Theory 101: The Complete Textbook*, returns with a compelling exploration of the origins of war. Using the same crystal clear logic of the *Game Theory 101* series, he investigates important questions about war, including: 1) Can two perfectly intelligent, perfectly unbiased leaders still send their countries to war with each other? 2) Why has Iran taken its nuclear program underground (literally)? 3) Why did the United States--the clear victors of the Spanish-American War--nevertheless write a check for more than \$500 million to make Spain surrender? 4) Why do most interstate wars end in peaceful compromise and not the military defeat of one side? 5) Why do virtually all civil wars end the opposite way, and what makes the few peacefully settled civil wars different from the rest? 6) How do nuclear weapons--humanity's deadliest creations--paradoxically keep the peace? 7) Why is war the worst possible outcome of a crisis negotiation? 8) What is the difference between preventive and preemptive war, and why on earth does the media use these terms interchangeably? 9) Why are states as trustworthy as poker players at the bargaining table? 10) Why do states willingly pick fights with stronger opponents and yet pacify weaker opponents? William Spaniel answers these questions by constructing game theoretical models of crisis bargaining. Fully illustrated, with more than 100 images, *The Rationality of War* will make you rethink everything you "know" about political violence. As consumers and producers of war, it is a must read for any citizen of a liberal democracy.

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Customer Reviews

I found Game Theory to be a very constructive thought tool for microeconomic analysis of decision making, but I think it may be too simple in the analysis of war. William Spaniel explains the theory well and keeps his writing concise and clear. That said, I would have liked more historical examples to demonstrate the validity of the theory prior to trying to prove it.

This book is elegant. The most complicated math it uses is multiplication, but they model war decently enough to study its main factors. You still need some math tolerance to read it, though, because it relies a lot in math proofs (even if simple, it can be tiring). Some interesting insights on strategy and on conflict resolution.

This is an amazing book! I'll never look at war the same way again. The author does a very good job at explaining why certain countries may go to war; even using mathematical equations to prove it.

A really precise, effective, and fundamental way to learn one of the core concepts that make up the cornerstone of international relations, the rationality of war. William has the unusual and unique ability to take a concept that can be tedious to someone trying to grasp the concepts of international relations through the notion of game theory, and demonstrate a very comprehensive approach. He uses proficiency, mastery, and insight as he blends contemporary scenarios that grip the interest of the reader, while intelligently breaking down concepts of algebraic and geometric logic in combination with the clever use of game trees that promote a very logical, painless, and user-friendly model of instruction.

Extremely interesting, especially for someone who doesn't know much about the subject yet.

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