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## **“The Democratic Peace Theory Reframed: The Impact of Modernity” by Azar Gat**

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**Sent by Sidney Moss, TPF Board Member**

**ABSTRACT** The democratic peace theory—the idea that democratic or liberal states never or very rarely go to war with each other and that they are less likely to become involved in militarized disputes (MIDs) among themselves—is the most robust, “lawlike” finding generated by the discipline of international relations. It is also the one with the greatest significance for the real world. Introduced in the 1970s, the democratic peace theory has since gathered momentum and gained credence, withstanding extensive criticism and continuously being developed, amended, and refined in the process. In practical terms, the theory suggests that a world of liberal/democratic states will be peaceful, an idea long ago championed by such figures as Thomas Paine, Immanuel Kant, and Woodrow Wilson. The theory has clear policy implications that drew the attention of the Clinton administration and became the centerpiece of President George W. Bush’s foreign policy in the wake of 9/11.

This article argues that the democratic peace theorists have overlooked the defining development that underlies that peace—and so much else—during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the industrial-technological revolution. Not only did that revolution make democracy on a country scale (as opposed to democratic city-states) possible; it also made all the countries that experienced the revolution—democratic and nondemocratic—far less belligerent in comparison with preindustrial times, with the interdemocratic peace representing only the most striking manifestation of that development. In shaping policy toward undeveloped and developing countries it should be realized that democracy is difficult to institute and sustain where economic and social modernization has not taken root; nor would democracy in itself necessarily lead to a democratic peace before such development has occurred.