Is war necessary? In Peace and War prominent anthropologists and other social scientists explore the cultural and social factors leading to war. They analyze the covert causes of war from a cross-cultural perspective: ideologies that dispose people to war underlying patterns of social relationships that help institutionalize war and the cultural systems of military establishments. Overt causes of war—environmental factors like the control of scarce resources, advantageous territories, and technologies, or promoting the wel-fare of people like oneself—are also considered. The authors examine anthropologists role in policy formation—how their theories on the nature of culture and society help those who deal with global problems on a day-to-day basis. They argue that both covert and overt mechanisms are pushing the world closer to a devastating war and offer strategies to weaken the effects of these mechanisms. This anthropological and historical analysis of the causes of war is a valuable resource for those studying war and those trying to understand the place of social science in framing pacific options.

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