

They called it peace

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Résumé ou extrait : "This new book by historian Lauren Benton offers a novel five-century history of violence in European empires from 1400 to 1900. Her focus is the hidden logic of limited war that drove conflict across many centuries and diverse regions. Never "minor" for the victims, Benton shows how such small wars-described as "border skirmishes" or "peacekeeping operations"-profoundly affected the lived experiences of people in empires around the world. Worse, such conflicts often opened trap doors to atrocities and massacres as entire indigenous communities were seen as particularly legitimate targets of generalized violence. At stake is an understanding of why small wars never remain small and why even now global law seems powerless to contend with them. Imperial small wars were, and remain, the beating heart of the global order as the motivations behind them became embedded both legally and institutionally. The first part of the book discusses raiding and captive-taking and the spread of militarized garrisons that advanced European imperial power. It maps serial small wars as components of conquest and questions the logic of truces, truce-breaking, and massacre. The second part turns to the long nineteenth century. As Europeans inserted themselves into politically complex regions, trading companies and settlers secured control over limited territories and relied on networks of alliance, proxy wars, and collaboration with other empires to fight against indigenous polities and enslaved rebels. In this context,

imperial agents began to insist, with increasing force, on Europeans' authority to regulate the conduct of war. In the process, they sharpened characterizations of indigenous fighters as savage. Global militarization in the Seven Years War and the Napoleonic Wars further altered these routines and established a "new global regime of armed peace" in which Europe claimed a right to intervene militarily anywhere in the world. Finally, Benton makes the case that the legacy of violence from the imperial era lingers on until today, resulting in global tolerance for the kind of endless conflict we have witnessed during the War on Terror."

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Paix -- Histoire

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