

**ABSOLUTE ALLIANCES:  
EXTENDED DETERRENCE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS**

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **ABSOLUTE ALLIANCES: EXTENDED DETERRENCE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS**

**MIRA RAPP-HOOPER**

What is a nuclear umbrella alliance and how does it differ from other defensive alliances in international politics? Scholars and practitioners frequently refer to this type of pact, but no study has defined it or identified how a nuclear security guarantee, as an umbrella alliance is better-termed, is unique. This dissertation presents and tests a theory of nuclear security guarantee formation and management.

In Chapter 1, I establish two factors that make nuclear security guarantees novel: their ambiguous treaty content and unilateral provision of military aid. I present my Theory of Absolute Alliances, positing that these alliance attributes can be explained by the fact that security guarantees aim to establish deterrence by punishment in addition to deterrence by denial. Security guarantees' vague content and one-sided provision of capabilities, however, means that they are also riddled with vexing information problems that patron and client must manage at all stages of their alliance relations. I derive three hypotheses on security guarantee formation, entrapment, and abandonment that are tested in this project.

In Chapters 2 and 3 I present a hypothesis on nuclear security guarantee formation, positing that while the presence of shared adversaries among prospective allies may explain the formation of many defense pacts, nuclear security guarantees have more exacting conditions for formation. For security guarantees to form, prospective allies should have exclusive adversaries—that is, one or more shared adversaries and no unshared adversaries—between them. I test this proposition statistically and using case

studies of the US decision to deny Israel a formal security guarantee and the formation of the Franco-Russian alliance, a non-security guarantee.

In Chapter 4 I hypothesize that security guarantees' ambiguous and unilateral nature may create a heightened risk of crisis entrapment for patrons. These features serve the purposes of general deterrence, but once an ally is involved in a crisis, they also mean that the patron is inclined to intervene to clarify its commitment to a weaker ally that cannot credibly defend itself. I test this hypothesis using summary statistics and qualitative case studies of the US-Taiwan and Sino-Soviet alliances in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis. I also examine US non-intervention in the Beagle Channel Crisis, a non-security guarantee case.

In Chapter 5, I present a hypothesis on client state abandonment fears. Security guarantee clients are prone to particularly acute abandonment fears. I posit that because of the *a priori* information deficits in these pacts, patrons may try to address abandonment fears through the unilateral provision of information on patron strategies and policies. I examine case studies of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group and the Extended Deterrence Dialogues in the US-Japan alliance, and consultation in the US-Thailand alliance, a non-security guarantee.

I find significant support for my three hypotheses and conclude this study with directions for future research and policy implications.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Columbia University is a wonderful place to study international relations and I could not have asked for a better graduate school experience. This is due in large part to my inimitable advisors—Richard Betts, Page Fortna, and Robert Jervis. Throughout my time at Columbia, Professor Betts has been a thoughtful and encouraging example of a scholar whose work unites theory and practice. He is dedicated to helping his students bridge the academic and policy worlds, and I have been a great beneficiary of his guidance. Page is a brilliant methodologist, a gifted teacher, and a committed mentor. Without her, I would not have discovered that there was a dissertation topic to be found in nuclear umbrellas, nor would I have approached this project in the way I did. And since my first week at Columbia, Professor Jervis has always made time for my endless stream of security studies questions, and has taught me to relish communication and complexity in international politics. His curiosity will continue to inspire me throughout my career. In addition to being acclaimed scholars, Professors Betts, Fortna, and Jervis are also remarkable people and it is my true fortune to have been their advisee.

I am grateful to Andy Nathan, who took me on as a teaching assistant so that I could develop my regional interest in Asia and has encouraged my work ever since. Appreciation is also due to Janice Gross Stein, who I met late in my graduate career, but whose work I have long admired.

My five years at Columbia were also made memorable by some terrific friends and colleagues. Kate Cronin-Furman was an unflappable comprehensive exams compatriot, gave superb dissertation feedback, and helped me to discover that any challenge can be overcome if one is equipped with sufficient quantities of dark chocolate. She, Pavi Suri, and Ali Cirone, were great sources of counsel on work and life. Andrew Cheon was generous with his time and STATA wisdom and always has a kind word for those around him. Over the years, I received ample IR guidance from my two forbearers in the “Pearls and Bombs” trifecta, Erica Borghard and Dianne Pfundstein. Ingrid Gertsman was a constant source of warmth and encouragement.

I am also grateful to the institutions that supported my graduate research, including the Council on Foreign Relations, the Stanton Foundation, the Carpe Diem Foundation, the RAND Corporation, and the Lyndon B. Johnson Foundation. The highlight of my year at CFR was Alexandra Perina—a gifted legal scholar, who, despite my incessant questions about various Article V commitments, also became a dear friend. At the Center for Strategic and International Studies, I am now lucky to work with Michael Green, a model scholar-practitioner and boss, and Zachary Cooper, whose impeccable formatting help and encouragement in this final stretch will be repaid in spades when he submits his own dissertation soon.



Perhaps the greatest privilege of my graduate school career was my working relationship, and more importantly, friendship with Kenneth Waltz. Although he left us eighteen months before this project was complete (the total time it took him to write his own dissertation, he would insert!), his advice, enthusiasm, copious margin notes, and love have continued to guide me throughout. He is remembered often and much missed. With no unnecessary modifiers.

Finally, tremendous thanks are owed to my family, biological and chosen. My selected sister, Caitlin Petre, has been as fierce a friend through PhD program applications, methods classes, comps, and dissertation write-ups as she was on the playground in second grade. My brother Teo inspires me every day with his indomitable work ethic, sense of humor, and warm heart. My formidable fiancée, Matthew Brest, lent his Excel skills to my data-entry efforts, ran to Barnes and Nobles to help me finish my final footnote, and was an unflagging source of support. Moreover, he treats my passions and ambitions as his own and I am so fortunate to be marrying him. Finally, there is Rayna Rapp—mother and mentor extraordinaire. Her love of learning is surpassed only by that for her children, and this project would not have been possible without either one. This dissertation is dedicated to her.

## INTRODUCTION

*Nuclear Umbrella*: n. The protection provided by the nuclear weapons of one country to its allies.

-Oxford English Dictionary

The Oxford English Dictionary provides a straightforward entry for a “nuclear umbrella,” and one that accords with its common usage by policymakers and national security analysts. But this crisp definition belies a deeper puzzle: The term “nuclear umbrella” has no real legal or political meaning, and most experts who use it are not entirely certain of what it comprises or where it originated. Moreover, while a large body of Cold War-era work examined some of the complexities related to the practice of extended deterrence, no political science study has asked or analyzed whether and how so-called nuclear umbrella pacts differ from other types of alliances. These are the subjects of this dissertation.

The origins of so-called nuclear umbrella alliances are to be found in American strategy following World War II. Following the widespread devastation of many of its partners, US policymakers hoped to restore and reinforce the balance of power in Western Europe and Asia against the emergent communist threat from the Soviet Union, and originally sought to do so using economic and political means.<sup>1</sup> Early references to “umbrella arrangements” in US government documents refer to initiatives such as the Marshall Plan, which was intended to give European allies shelter under which to recover from the devastation of conflict with the eventual aim of permitting those states to return

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<sup>1</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 36-37.

to complete political independence.<sup>2</sup> By 1948, strategists in the Truman administration came to believe that economic aid alone would not suffice: The United States would have to exert “counter-pressure” and establish “strongpoint defense” against the Soviet Union to buttress the political and territorial status quo in Western Europe as Moscow consolidated its own position in the East.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of using alliances towards this end, however, came from the Europeans themselves, who formed the Brussels Treaty in 1948 to aggregate their military capabilities against a conventionally-superior USSR. They sought the United States’ association with this arrangement precisely because it had not been devastated by the war and possessed the world’s only atomic weapons and the means to deliver them. American participation could substantially strengthen Europe’s military position if Washington would only indicate a willingness to use these weapons from afar in its allies’ defense. With the United States’ pledge, the North Atlantic Alliance was born. Shortly after NATO’s 1949 founding, select US government documents began to refer to Washington’s “security umbrella” to the alliance as a military and political influence strategy that went well beyond economic aid.<sup>4</sup>

In the vigorous Senate debates that preceded NATO treaty ratification, congressmen implicitly recognized the Janus-faced nature of the US security umbrella. Senators argued and the public believed that the NATO treaty “required the United States to treat an attack

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2 The first relevant reference to an American “umbrella” that this author can locate in the Foreign Relations of the United States series is a 1948 discussion of US political and economic aid to Europe. In this document, American umbrella aid is contrasted with Western Europe’s own efforts toward military unity in the form of the Brussels Treaty. “Western European Unity and Defense,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948*, Western Europe, p. 218 (Hereafter FRUS).

3 Gaddis, pp. 48-57.

4 See, e.g., “Meeting of US Ambassadors at Paris, October 21-22, 1949,” FRUS 1949, Western Europe, p. 489. In this document, US Ambassadors to European countries define the US “security umbrella” to NATO as its unilateral military commitment to the alliance.

on London like an attack on Washington DC.”<sup>5</sup> Testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, however, underscored the fact that “the treaty is so vaguely constructed and so replete with double talk” that its ratification would not actually tie Washington’s hands.<sup>6</sup> The alliance at once appeared to bestow upon the United States the most solemn of military responsibilities while not actually binding it to carry out any particular action, because its treaty promises were so amorphous.

The apparent first use of the full term “nuclear umbrella” in the Congressional Record occurred in 1959, when a Senator used it to explain Western Europe’s failure to devote sufficient resources to its own defense.<sup>7</sup> This date accords with the term’s entry into the public lexicon. The chart below demonstrates that the phrase appeared in almost no English-language books until the late 1950s, became reasonably widespread by 1965, and reached its peak popularity in 1985. Its usage declined steadily after the Cold War ended. So what was—or, more accurately, is—this elusive “nuclear umbrella” or “security umbrella” alliance?

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<sup>5</sup> Hearings Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Congressional Record, Part 1, pp. 276-282, Part 2 pp. 518-525, as quoted in Mariah Zeisberg, *War Powers: The Politics of Constitutional Authority*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, Congressional Record, (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 975.

<sup>7</sup> Hearing before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 86<sup>th</sup> Congress, Disarmament and Foreign Policy Hearings, January 28, 30 and February 2, 1959 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 261.

Figure 1- Google N-Gram Search for “Nuclear Umbrella” in All English-Language Books



### Definitions and Scope

For the purposes of this study, a nuclear umbrella alliance is a *formal, positive, security guarantee extended by a nuclear power to another sovereign state*. This definition has several components. First, it is a security guarantee. Second, it is extended by a nuclear weapons-possessing state to another country. Third, it is a formal alliance agreement. And fourth, it is a positive promise extended by a state actor. I consider each of these components in turn.

To begin, an umbrella alliance involves a security guarantee that explicitly states that an attack on one ally will be considered an attack on both or all. This is known as a mutual defense or collective defense clause.<sup>8</sup> Most scholarly studies have defined a nuclear umbrella alliance as *any* defense pact concluded with a nuclear power.<sup>9</sup> The historical

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<sup>8</sup> An important exception to this is the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, whose title belies the fact that the agreement is largely one-sided owing to Japan's constitutional constraints on the use of force.

<sup>9</sup> To wit, every political science study that employs nuclear umbrella alliances as an independent variable defines them as any defense pact extended by a nuclear power. This definition ignores the fact that states can and do extend more limited defense pacts that are not full security guarantees. Dan Reiter, "Security Commitments and Nuclear Proliferation," *Foreign Policy Analysis* Vol. 10, No. 1, (2014), pp. 61-80; Matthew Fuhrmann, and Todd S. Sechser. "Signaling Alliance Commitments: Hand-Tying and Sunk Costs in Extended Nuclear Deterrence." *American Journal of Political Science* (2014); Fuhrmann, Matthew, and Todd S. Sechser,

record and basic intuition make clear, however, that states can and do conclude more limited defense pacts without having extended full security guarantees. As will be discussed in Chapter 1, some defense pacts apply only to delimited adversaries, in specific theaters, or in certain contingencies. Some promise only consultation in the event of an attack, but do not necessarily promise military aid. Security guarantees are therefore best thought of as a *subset* of defense pacts, but the two categories are not interchangeable. For an alliance to qualify as a nuclear umbrella pact, the alliance treaty itself must contain mutual or collective defense language.

Second, to qualify as an umbrella pact, the country extending the security guarantee must itself possess nuclear weapons. Those states who extend security guarantees do not, in general, declare the means that will be used to repel an attack on their allies. Security guarantees are intended to cover the spectrum of escalation from a serious conventional to a nuclear attack. Patron possession of a nuclear capability implies that these weapons may be used if necessary. These pacts are deemed “nuclear umbrella” alliances by virtue of the fact that they are extended by nuclear powers. They do not traditionally contain overt

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“Nuclear Strategy, Nonproliferation, and the Causes of Foreign Nuclear Deployments,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 58, No. 3 (2014), pp. 455-480; Bleek, Philipp C., and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, “Why Do States Proliferate? Quantitative Analysis of the Exploration, Pursuit, and Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons,” in Potter and Mukhatzhanova, eds. *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century* Vol. 1 (2010); 178-179. Philipp C. Bleek and Eric B. Lorber, “Security Guarantees and Allied Nuclear Proliferation,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (2014), pp. 429-454; Dong-Joon Jo and Erik Gartzke. “Determinants of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 51, No. 1 (2007), pp. 167-194; Matthew Kroenig, “Importing the Bomb: Sensitive Nuclear Assistance and Nuclear Proliferation,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 53, No. 2, (2009), Sonali Singh, and Christopher R. Way, “The Correlates of Nuclear Proliferation A Quantitative Test,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 48, No. 6 (2004), pp. 859-88; Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

promises of nuclear use. Formal security guarantees could theoretically be extended by non-nuclear powers, but historically they have not been.<sup>10</sup>

Third, this study focuses only on those guarantees that are formalized by alliance treaties, and candidate cases are admitted based on the text of the alliance treaty itself. I follow a widely used international relations definition of alliances: “written agreements signed by official representatives of at least two independent states that include promises to aid a partner in the event of military conflict.”<sup>11</sup> Formal alliances feature “specificity, legal and moral obligation, and reciprocity that are usually lacking in informal alignments.”<sup>12</sup> Following the alliance literature’s emphasis on formal, written agreements between sovereign states, this study does not count among its nuclear umbrella/security guarantee cases relationships of strong alignment if they are not formalized in a security treaty. This is not to say that longstanding, tightly knit security relationships short of formal alliances are irrelevant or are incapable of producing deterrence. Rather, the need to delimit the phenomenon under study has led this author to select the formal security guarantee as a criterion.<sup>13</sup>

This distinction is not purely definitional—even if alliance commitments short of formal security guarantees do send powerful deterrent signals, the basic fact that these are

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<sup>10</sup> This statement is based on the author’s review of all formal alliance treaties, 1816-present, as defined by the Correlates of War Project. The text of all treaties is available in; Douglas Gibling, *International Military Alliances, 1648-2008*, (Washington, CQ Press: 2008).

<sup>11</sup> The full definition is as follows: Alliances are “written agreements signed by official representatives of at least two independent states, that include promises to aid a partner in the event of military conflict, to remain neutral in the event of conflict, to refrain from military conflict with one another, or to consult/cooperate in the event of international crises that create a potential for military conflict.” Brett Ashley Leeds, Jeffrey M. Ritter, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, and Andrew G. Long, “Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944,” *International Interactions* Vol. 28 (2002), pp. 237-260.

<sup>12</sup> Glenn Snyder makes this observation. Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Although they do not currently qualify as cases of nuclear security guarantees, the US defense relationship with Israel and with Taiwan are analyzed in this study.

alignments rather than formal alliances means that these commitments are distinct. The United States' commitment to Taiwan from 1979 to present, for example, is one of strong alignment but not formal alliance. One is hard-pressed to argue that this relationship has not changed from the US-ROC relationship of 1954-1979, when the two states possessed a mutual defense treaty. The mere fact that the treaty was abrogated suggests that something about the commitment is different. The United States' contemporary commitment to Taiwan is contingent and circumscribed when compared to the security guarantee that was once in place. Indeed, one alliance scholar terms the post-1979 US-Taiwan arrangement a "probabilistic commitment," distinguishing it from the kind of commitment that exists in a broader guarantee.<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of generating and developing a useful theory of security guarantee formation and management, then, I follow the recent practice of restricting my domain to formal alliance commitments only.

Fourth and finally, umbrella alliances are positive guarantees extended by sovereign states. They are treaty-based promises that declare that if an ally becomes the victim of attack, military aid will be forthcoming. This phenomenon is distinct from the security assurances that are generally associated with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).<sup>15</sup> All five nuclear weapons states (NWS) that are recognized by the NPT have extended some form of unilateral, negative security assurances to non-nuclear powers. These are generally broad promises made by nuclear weapons-possessing states *not to use those weapons* against non-nuclear powers. Positive security guarantees are also distinct from positive

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<sup>14</sup> Brett V. Benson, *Constructing International Security: Alliances, Deterrence, and Moral Hazard* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 169-190.

<sup>15</sup> For more on this distinction see Jeffery W. Knopf, "Varieties of Assurance," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, June 2012, p. 388.



security assurances, or general promises by NPT nuclear states to come to the aid of non-nuclear states if they are attacked with nuclear weapons.<sup>16</sup> NPT-related security assurances have generally come in the form of UN resolutions or unilateral declarations and do not constitute formal military alliances among sovereigns.<sup>17</sup>

I have defined a nuclear umbrella alliance as a formal, positive, security guarantee extended by a nuclear power. This definition allows me to identify 54 total umbrella cases from 1945 to present. Three different nuclear powers—the United States, the Soviet Union/Russia, and the United Kingdom— have extended these guarantees to their allies. Table 1 gives a full list of nuclear security guarantee cases. Figures 1 and 2 use maps to depict the universe of security guarantee cases. Figure 1 shows the three guarantee-extending states and their umbrella allies during the Cold War. Figure 2 depicts the same relationships in the post-Cold War world.

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<sup>16</sup> NPT-related positive security assurances have generally been weak and diffuse. See Knopf, “Varieties of Assurance,” p. 389 for more on this.

<sup>17</sup> The earliest negative nuclear security assurances were extended via UN Security Council Resolution 255, accompanying the NPT. The nuclear powers adjusted these assurances at the 1978 and 1982 UN General Assembly Special Sessions on Disarmament. They were reworked again at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. For more on the history of negative security assurances and how they differ from positive guarantees, see John Simpson, “The Role of Security Assurances in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” in Jeffrey W. Knopf, ed. *Security Assurances and Nuclear Nonproliferation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 57-81.

Table 1- Nuclear Security Guarantee Cases, 1945-Present

<b>United States</b>	<b>USSR</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
Canada (1949-)	China (1945-60)**	Thailand (1954-72)
UK (1949-)	Albania(1955-91)	Pakistan (1954-72)
Netherlands(1949-)	Bulgaria (49-89)	Malaysia (57-71)
Belgium (1949-)	Czech. (55-91)	Australia (54-72)
Luxem.(1949-)	GDR (55-91)	New Zeal. (54-72)
France (1949-)	Hungary (49-89)	
Portugal (1949-)	Poland (49-89)	
Italy (1949-)	Romania (49-89)	
Norway (1949-)	DPRK (1961-94)	
Denmark(1949-)	Armenia (2002-)^	
Iceland (1949-)	Belarus (2002-)^	
Greece (1951-)	Kazakhstan (2002-)^	
Turkey (1951-)	Kyrgyzstan (2002-)^	
Philippines (51-)	Tajikistan (2002-)^	
Australia (51-)		
New Zeal. (51-86)		
Japan (51-)		
ROK (53-)		
Germany (1954-)		
Thailand (1954-77)		
Pakistan (1954-72)		
Taiwan (1954-79)		
Spain (1981-)		
Czech Rep. (97-)		
Hungary (1997-)		
Poland (1997-)		
Bulgaria (04-)^		
Estonia (04-)^		
Latvia (04-)^		
Lithuania(04-)^		
Romania (04-)^		
Slovenia (04-)^		
Slovakia (04-)^		
Croatia (09-)^		
Albania (09-)^		

\*\* - This alliance technically expired in 1979, but was effectively terminated by 1960.

^ - These alliances are not included in statistical analysis, as the datasets employed here end in 2000.

Figure 2- Cold War-Era Nuclear Patrons and Clients

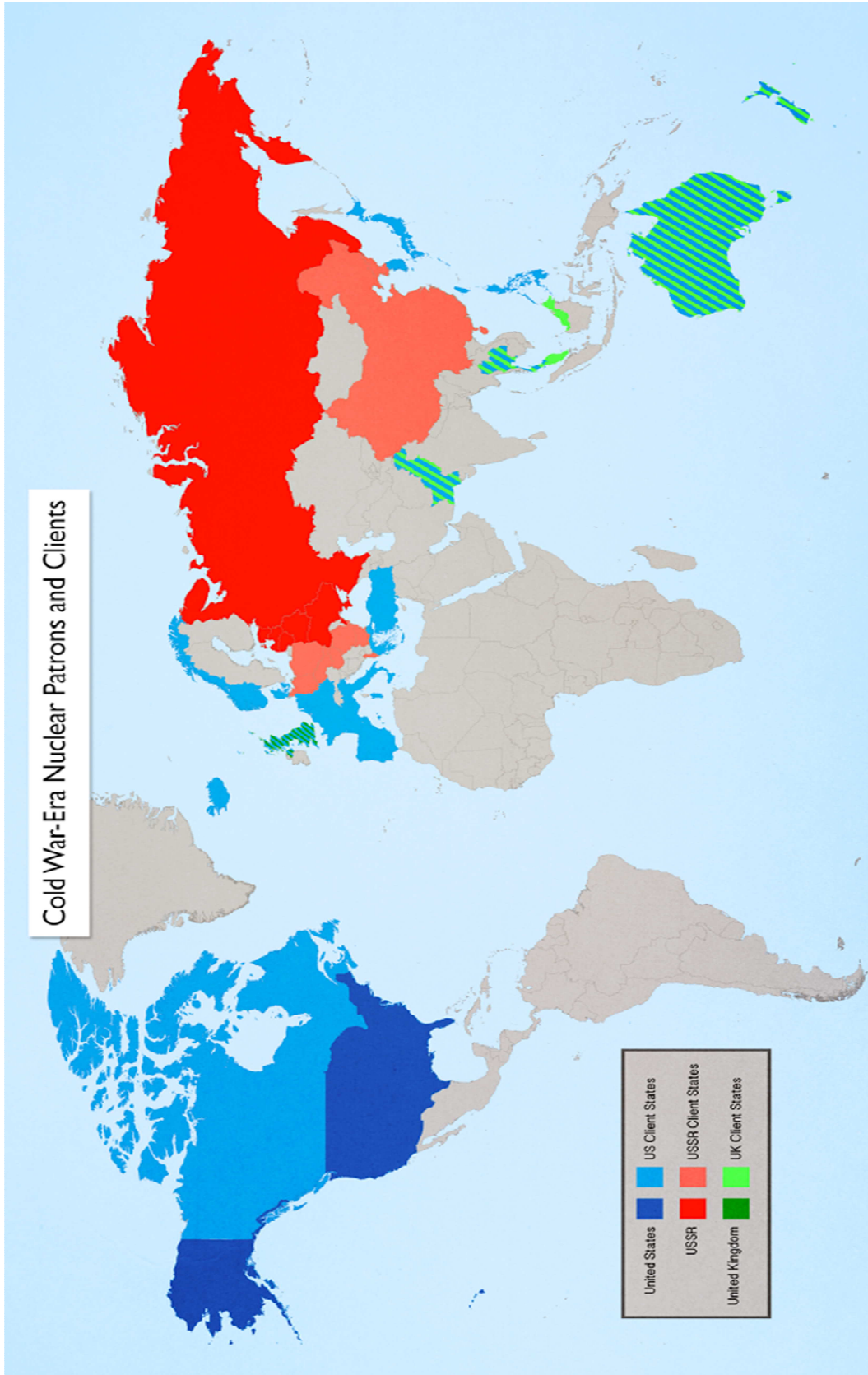
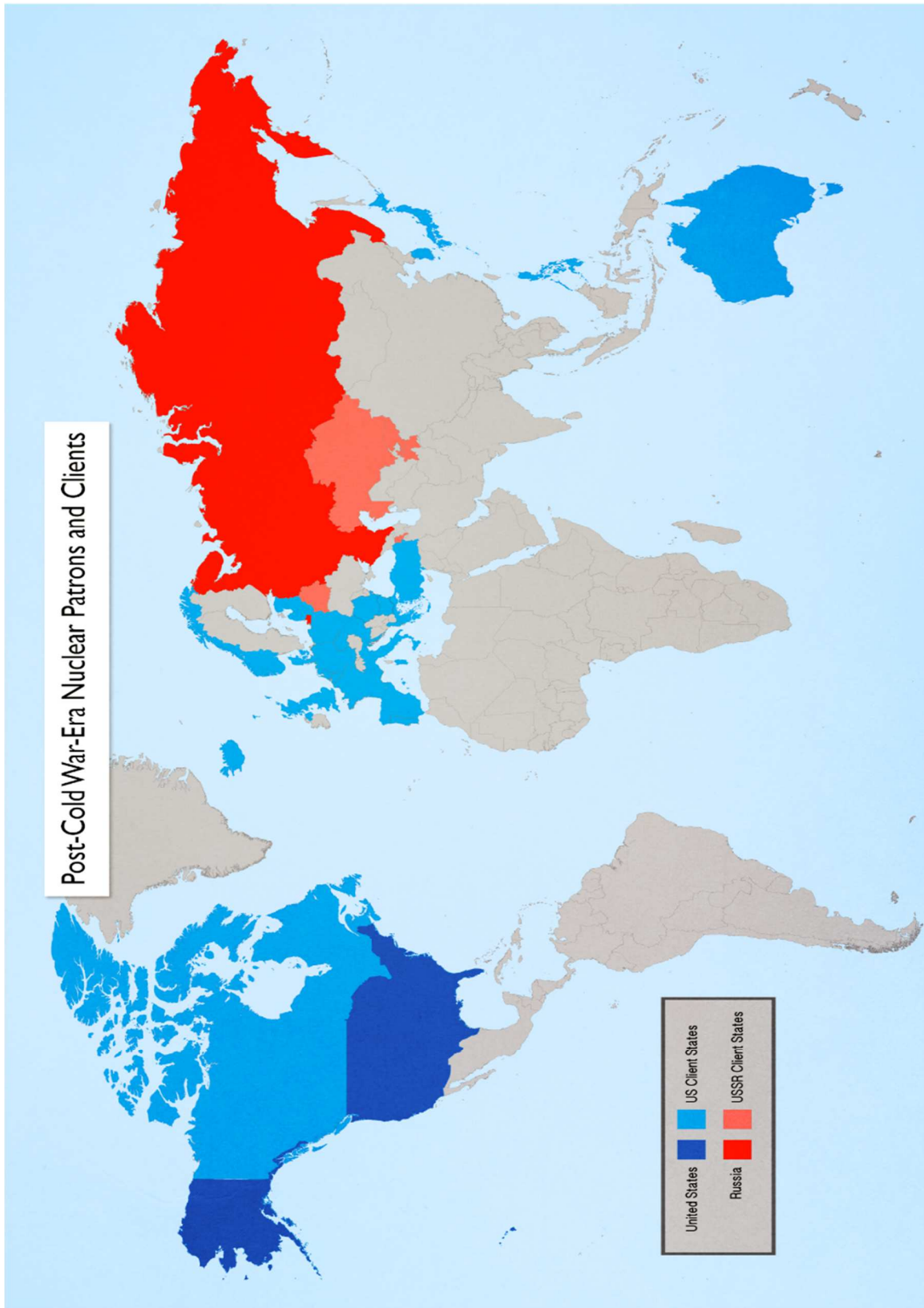


Figure 3- Post-Cold War-Era Nuclear Patrons and Clients



Having established what nuclear security guarantees are, one might logically inquire next what they aim to accomplish. Nuclear security guarantees seek to prevent large-scale conventional or nuclear attacks by establishing general deterrence on behalf of allies.<sup>18</sup> Deterrence is an influence strategy in which one state (the deterrer) aims to prevent another (the target or adversary) from taking unwanted actions by altering its cost calculations. The objective of *extended deterrence* is to dissuade attacks on allies rather than to prevent direct attacks on one's own territory and borders.<sup>19</sup> Homeland deterrence is sometimes referred to as Type I deterrence, and extended deterrence as Type II deterrence.<sup>20</sup>

Extended deterrence is related to but distinct from *allied assurance*. Both are influence strategies, and although the terms are often used interchangeably, they have different meanings. When patrons practice extended deterrence they to aim affect the cost calculation of an adversary.<sup>21</sup> Assurance, on the other hand, is aimed at the ally, and seeks to convince it that the deterrence-extending state is committed to its defense. Put differently, assurance may be thought of as efforts by one state to convince another that its security commitments are credible.<sup>22</sup> These strategies are, however, deeply intertwined, and this study examines them both. Chapters 2 and 3 concern the formation of security

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<sup>18</sup> Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977), p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988).

<sup>20</sup> On this distinction, see: Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Balance and Nuclear Blackmail* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1987), p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey W. Knopf, "Security Assurances: Initial Hypotheses," in *Security Assurances and Nuclear Nonproliferation*, ed. Jeffrey W. Knopf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 14; Linton Brooks and Mira Rapp-Hooper, "Extended Deterrence, Assurance, and Reassurance in the Pacific in the Second Nuclear Age," *Strategic Asia 2013-2014*, p. 268.

<sup>22</sup> "Exploring the Nuclear Posture Implications of Extended Deterrence and Assurance: Workshop Proceedings and Key Takeaways," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), November 2009, p. 8; Linton Brooks and Mira Rapp-Hooper, "Extended Deterrence, Assurance, and Reassurance in the Pacific During the Second Nuclear Age," *Strategic Asia* (2013), p. 268.

guarantees, which require deterrence-extending states to make strategic calculations about their will and ability to deter adversaries and to assure allies. Chapter 4 is concerned primarily with extended deterrence, and how it may lead to the crisis entrapment of patron states. Chapter 5 is concerned with some of the mechanisms that deterrence-extending states use to try to assure their allies of their commitments.

Because the security guarantee dynamic is often at least a tripartite one, I employ specific terms throughout the study to identify the states involved. The *patron* is the state who extends deterrence; the *client* is the ally who receives that security guarantee and is the object of assurance efforts; the *adversary* is the target of the patron's extended deterrence efforts.

This study will demonstrate that security guarantees are unique to the nuclear age, and that the patron's possession of a nuclear capability shapes the manner in which these alliances are formed and managed. Because this is a study of security guarantees as a type of alliance, it is largely focused on intra-alliance dynamics—that is, the relationship between patron and client.

Extended deterrence seeks to dissuade adversaries from attacking a client state with the threat that a patron state will join a conflict on its ally's behalf, with military aid that could theoretically involve the full spectrum of escalation, up to and including nuclear weapons. It is worth noting, however, that extended deterrence is, in general, supported by both conventional and nuclear military means. Nuclear weapons backstop and cast a long shadow over extended deterrence and assurance efforts. Why they do so and how this informs the way so-called umbrella alliances function is the subject of this study.

## CHAPTER 1 - ABSOLUTE ALLIANCES: A THEORY OF NUCLEAR SECURITY GUARANTEES

“It takes only five percent credibility of American retaliation to deter the Soviets, but ninety-five percent credibility to reassure the Europeans”

-Dennis Healy, Defense Minister, United Kingdom<sup>23</sup>

### Introduction

Analysts of extended deterrence are fond of referencing the above quote from former British Defense Minister Dennis Healy: In a security guarantee relationship, a relatively small probability of patron intervention may be enough to deter an adversary from attacking, but a much larger prospect of aid may be necessary to assure the client state that it is, in fact, secure.<sup>24</sup> This assertion may be puzzling to those who espouse purely “rational deterrence” perspectives: If an adversary is deterred, a client state should believe itself to be secure.<sup>25</sup> Since the early Cold War, however, nuclear powers have extended deterrence to their allies. And for nearly as long, scholars and policymakers have lamented the credibility problems inherent in these guarantees, primarily because the costs of using nuclear weapons on behalf of an ally could vastly outweigh the value of that alliance. As this chapter will demonstrate, this classic credibility concern is only one of a host of reasons that adversaries and allies may doubt so-called nuclear umbrella alliances.

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<sup>23</sup> Denis Healey, *Time of My Life* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989), p. 243, quoted in David Yost, “Assurance and U.S. Extended Deterrence in NATO,” *International Affairs* Vol. 85, no. 4 (2009), p. 768.

<sup>24</sup> This proposition has been discussed by Schelling and Jervis. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); Robert L. Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>25</sup> For a description and discussion of rational deterrence theories, which view deterrence as a set of expected utility calculations see: Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal, “Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies,” *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 2, (January 1989), pp. 150-153. For some prominent critiques, see: Robert Jervis, “Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence,” *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (January 1989), pp. 183-207; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter,” *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (January 1989), pp. 208-224.

Security guarantees extended by nuclear powers are a unique type of alliance in international politics. Unlike most other defensive arrangements, these pacts promise existential support, but specify almost nothing about how it will be provided.

Nuclear security guarantees are perhaps the most extreme promise one state can make to another. One country, the patron, extends a pledge to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another, the client, against any adversary who may attack it. These alliances imply, but do not explicitly state, that this defense commitment may include the use of nuclear weapons if necessary. They also specify almost nothing else about the patron's defense commitment. Given this ambiguity, it is not at face value evident that recipients of these guarantees should believe them to be credible, or that they should deter the adversaries against whom they are aimed.

The unique nature of nuclear security guarantees becomes clear when they are compared to other defense pacts. Traditional defense pacts are far more circumscribed in terms of adversary, geographic scope, *casus foederis*, and duration than security guarantees. Allies do not expect these other defense pacts to provide blanket protection for an unlimited duration. In broad terms, most military pacts are designed to aggregate allies' capabilities to meet specific threats and situations, and aimed to deter or wage specific wars. In the pre-nuclear age, alliances often changed as military capabilities and threats shifted—a fact that has led leading scholars of international relations to characterize defense pacts as “temporary marriages of convenience.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> John Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1995), p. 9.



Nuclear security guarantees look nothing like traditional defense pacts. They are rarely tied to a specific adversary, theater, or contingency. They enter into force for long periods of time or indefinitely. Most importantly, at the highest levels of potential escalation they do not aggregate military capabilities: One state, the patron, possesses the most crucial instruments of deterrence, while the other, the client, does not. Compared to most defense pacts, nuclear security guarantees are riddled with information problems between the allies and with respect to adversaries.

In what ways are nuclear security guarantees so different from traditional defense pacts? And how do they persist, despite the fact that there are ample reasons for adversaries and allies to doubt the credibility of these commitments? This dissertation theorizes that the unique nature of these pacts can be understood by their ambiguous treaty content, and the unilateral provision of capabilities within the alliance. These uncommon factors prevail because of the patron's interest in signaling deterrence by punishment in addition to deterrence by denial, but this in turn results in vexing information deficits for all three parties involved. The formation and management of these unique alliances are informed by patrons' needs to compensate for these using peacetime signaling tools.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. The next section analyzes those features that make nuclear security guarantees unique alliances. I demonstrate that, compared to traditional defense pacts, nuclear security guarantee treaties are broader, vaguer, longer-lasting, and involve a vast asymmetry of capabilities. These pacts involve an unprecedented information disparity among alliance partners and are unusually ambiguous. This is in large part due to the type of deterrence that these alliances aim to

produce, which is both enabled and compelled by the potential for rapid and exceedingly destructive wars in the nuclear era.

I turn to an examination of security guarantee treaty text, exploring what exactly these alliances do and do not promise, and demonstrate that the alliances themselves actually guarantee very little. I examine patrons' motivations for extending so-called umbrella alliances, and clients' motivations for accepting them. I then diagram and explicate the tripartite dynamics that arise between patron, client, and adversary as a result of these vague treaties and their unilateral provision of aid. I go on to present my theory of nuclear security guarantees, and deduce the four hypotheses that will be tested in the remainder of this dissertation. These hypotheses address how the ambiguous and unilateral nature of security guarantees shape the way these alliances form, and how the classic alliance dilemmas of entrapment and abandonment manifest themselves in these pacts. Finally, I review the methods that I will use in the remainder of this project and conclude.

### **Security Guarantees: Alliance Anomalies**

Security guarantees are a post-1945 phenomenon in international politics: Few if any pre-World War II pacts included defensive promises as broad as those contained in nuclear security guarantees.<sup>27</sup> As will be discussed shortly, the advent of nuclear weapons and long-range delivery vehicles makes global power projection on behalf of allies possible.<sup>28</sup> The prospect of a short, massively destructive war also encourages more

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<sup>27</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p.14. Snyder's observation is born out if one reviews the texts of pre-1945 defensive alliances. One might point to pre-1945 declarations such as the British and French guarantees to Poland as examples of earlier security guarantees, but these promised protection against a specific adversary.

<sup>28</sup> See Michael Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power*, p. 110.

expansive standing alliance commitments than existed in the pre-nuclear age. Additionally, security guarantee relationships are sanctioned by Article 51 of the UN Charter, which gives all states the legal right to engage in collective self-defense—military assistance to an ally who has come under attack.<sup>29</sup> These technological and legal developments mean that nuclear-armed states are capable of defending far-off clients. Beyond the means that support them, however, nuclear umbrella alliances are also substantively different from traditional defense pacts. Using data drawn from the ATOP 3.03 dataset, I turn to a brief descriptive comparison between security guarantee treaties and other, more traditional defensive alliances.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Defense Pacts: The Conventional Wisdom***

In international relations theory, defensive alliances are generally understood to be cooperative endeavors in which members pool their resources to prosecute conflict with a common enemy.<sup>31</sup> Defense pacts are often characterized by a “get help” motive, in which one state promises to aid in another’s defense in exchange for a reciprocal promise of military aid.<sup>32</sup> They also tend to express obligations in a detailed manner. Alliance treaties identify a *casus foederis* that explains when the treaty will be brought into force. They often specify the opponent that the treaty is aimed against, the theater in which it applies, and

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<sup>29</sup> Chapter VII, Article 51 States: “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.” Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VII, Article 51, United Nations. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>

<sup>30</sup> To conduct this summary statistical analysis, I added two additional variables to ATOP 3.03: A nuclear security guarantee variable and; a variable for all defense pacts that are not nuclear security guarantees. The Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions Project, Leeds et. al. (2002).

<sup>31</sup> Snyder, pp. 1, 52.

<sup>32</sup> Snyder, p. 10.

the nature of the military response that may be forthcoming if aid is needed.<sup>33</sup> Because of these details, Glenn Snyder has argued that the expectations that arise from alliances are “narrow and specifically bounded.” He suggests “[o]nly a portion of allies’ interests, perhaps not even all of their common interests, are selected for joint support.”<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Robert Jervis has commented that “[a]lliances are formal commitments to support the other under specified circumstances (and often in specified ways).”<sup>35</sup>

Defense pacts may be symmetric or asymmetric, both in terms of the capabilities of member states and in terms of treaty obligations. They may form between major and minor powers, or between equals, and the treaty obligations may vary between partners or may be identical. If defense pacts specify an alliance duration when they enter into force, the mean specified length is seven and one-half years. In actuality, a typical defense pact lasts for about 20 years.<sup>36</sup> Most defense pacts are public, but occasionally states sign defensive alliances in which part or all of the treaty is kept secret.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, many defense pacts are quite specific—approximately half of non-security guarantee defense pacts specify an adversary, theater, alliance, or particular military contingency as the target of the pact.<sup>38</sup>

Why are traditional defense treaties so detailed? Recent international relations scholarship has highlighted the great signaling power of alliance treaty content.<sup>39</sup> This

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<sup>33</sup> Brett Ashley Leeds, Andrew G. Long, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, “Reevaluating Alliance Reliability: Specific Threats, Specific Promises,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 44, No. 5, (2000), p. 692-693.

<sup>34</sup> Snyder, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 211.

<sup>36</sup> This information is taken from the ATOP 3.03 dataset. Specified length is taken from the variable “speclgth.” Actual duration is arrived at by subtracting the start from the end date.

<sup>37</sup> Approximately 12% of all non-security guarantee defense pacts have secret clauses or are secret in their entirety.

<sup>38</sup> 95 of 234 non-security guarantee defense pacts specify a targeted threat in some form.

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g., Brett Ashley Leeds, “Domestic Political Institutions, Credible Commitments, and International Cooperation,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (1999), pp. 979-1002.; Brett Ashley Leeds,

literature demonstrates that defensive alliances rarely provide broad commitments of alliance support. Instead, limiting the scope of an alliance to particular theaters or contingencies can send powerful messages to allies and adversaries as to when they should expect alliance aid to be forthcoming, and when they should not.<sup>40</sup> Alliance partners are therefore committed only to those contingencies that they enumerate. Once a state has agreed to provide aid in specified cases, it should be likely to follow through on these agreements by virtue of selection.<sup>41</sup> By specifying the conditions under which partners may go to war on each other's behalf, alliance treaties produce targeted deterrence.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, limiting the scope of an agreement may make it even more likely to be fulfilled, as it is less likely to be derailed by uncertainty in the international environment.<sup>43</sup> These defense pact characteristics are consistent with much international relations scholarship on alliances. Yet most of this alliance wisdom is at odds with the fundamental features of nuclear security guarantees.

### ***Nuclear Security Guarantees: Unconventional Treaties***

Nuclear security guarantees differ from typical defense pacts in a number of important ways. First, where defense pacts may be thought of as resource-pooling mechanisms, nuclear security guarantees are unilateral in their provision of crucial

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"Alliance Reliability in Times of War: Explaining State Decisions to Violate Treaties," *International Organization* Vol. 57, No. 4 (2003), pp. 801-827.

<sup>40</sup> Leeds et. al, "Reevaluating Alliance Reliability,"; Leeds, "Alliance Reliability in Times of War."

<sup>41</sup> James D. Fearon, "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation," *International Organization* Vol. 52, No. 2 (1998), pp. 269-305; George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Peter N. Barsoom, "Is the Good News About Compliance Good News About Cooperation?," *International Organization* Vol. 50, No. 3 (1996), pp. 379-406.

<sup>42</sup> Brett Ashley Leeds, Andrew G. Long and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, "Re-evaluating Alliance Reliability: Specific Threats, Specific Promises," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 44, No. 5, (2000) p. 688.

<sup>43</sup> Michaela Mattes, "Reputation, Symmetry, and Alliance Design," *International Organization* Vol. 66, No. 04 (2012), p. 686.

capabilities. Security guarantee allies may combine some resources in preparation for conventional conflict, but only the patron of the guarantee possesses nuclear weapons. The client state may retain the military capabilities to provide for its own defense at lower levels of conflict, but the patron is the exclusive guarantor of security at the highest levels of escalation.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, nuclear security pacts necessarily have a “guarantee” motive—the patron states an intention to act on behalf of a client regardless of whether it can reciprocate.<sup>45</sup> This stands in contrast to the “get help” motive that is more likely to accompany a traditional capability-aggregating alliance.

Related to the unilateral nature of these guarantees is the fact that nuclear umbrella agreements provide defense promises that are much broader than the typical defense pact. Most security guarantees are activated if the ally is the victim of an “unprovoked attack,” but the details of a *casus foederis* are not given. Security guarantees do not specify the threat against which they are intended to defend. Unlike other defense pacts, they do not identify adversaries, specific regions, specific states acting in specific regions, ongoing conflicts, or other alliances as threats.<sup>46</sup> Rather, they guarantee defense of the client’s territorial integrity broadly defined. Details of the patron’s military response are also not spelled out in advance. Short of promising that it will provide for its defense, the patron

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<sup>44</sup> Two important exceptions to this are the British and the French nuclear arsenals. French nuclear forces remain under national control, however, so the United States and the United Kingdom are the only real case of nuclear pooling within an alliance, and the UK arsenal is subverted to NATO (and thus, US) control. Because of the incentives that accompany deterrence by punishment/war avoidance (discussed herein), however, my argument should still apply to these cases.

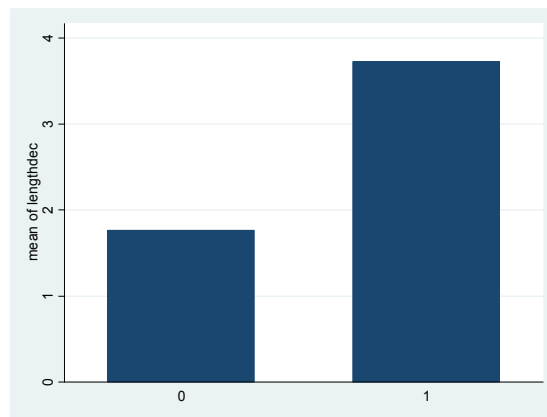
<sup>45</sup> See Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 10 for some more discussion of the “guarantee” motive. This guarantee motive is certainly present in most asymmetric alliances (e.g. US-ROK, US-Japan)—the client is not expected to provide military assistance to the patron outside of its home territory. NATO also involves an asymmetric guarantee where nuclear weapons are concerned, but because it is a collective defense pact, member states can be called upon to assist the United States outside of Europe. Ironically, the only time NATO’s Article 5 has ever been invoked was on behalf of the United States following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

<sup>46</sup> This information is obtained through summary statistics run on the SPECTHRT variable in ATOP 3.03.

does not delineate when or how it might use any particular military capability on a client's behalf. This includes the potential use of nuclear weapons, which is implied, but in no way made explicit by the treaty commitment itself.<sup>47</sup>

Security guarantees also tend to be long in duration. Security guarantees either specify an intended alliance length in years, or enter into force indefinitely. If a security guarantee specifies a duration at the time of its formation, the mean specified length is 11 years. Thirty-three percent of security guarantees enter into force indefinitely, while only four percent of other defense pacts do so. In actuality, security guarantees last at least twice as long as other defense pacts, with an average duration of four decades as opposed to two. These pacts are therefore semi-permanent or permanent security apparatuses, and are not aimed at any discrete conflict in particular.<sup>48</sup>

*Figure 4- Defense Pact Duration (in decades)*



Non-Security Guarantees    Nuclear Security Guarantees

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<sup>47</sup> For a legal analysis of the obligations contained within the United States' security guarantee treaties, and the basic conclusion that they "say nothing," see Michael J. Glennon, "War-making Treaties," in *Constitutional Diplomacy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 192-228, but especially pp. 205-225.

<sup>48</sup> I create a variable, "non-security guarantee defense pacts," which excludes offense pacts, non-aggression pacts, and ententes, and find that, like all other alliances, these have an average duration of two decades.

Are the differences between nuclear security guarantees and other defense pacts attributable to broader changes in alliance design over time? Scholars have found that, in general, Cold War and Post-Cold War alliances are more likely to be designed as “standing” rather than “reactive” alliances.<sup>49</sup> Yet even when pre-1945 alliances are excluded from the analysis, these features still hold. Significantly, 32% of post-1945 non-security guarantee defense pacts continue to specify the threat they are aimed against. These pacts still last about half as long as their security guarantee counterparts, and while relatively few post-1945 alliances include secret provisions, a handful of non-security guarantee defense pacts still do. While there have obviously been some changes in post-1945 defense pacts in general, it remains true that nuclear guarantees are therefore less specific, longer-lasting, and more public than other defense pacts.

Security guarantees make broad promises of assistance with little information about how aid will be provided, over long or indefinite time horizons. Given Leeds’ logic of how treaty provisions produce informative alliance signals, one might infer that nuclear security guarantee treaties are very poor instruments of deterrence. Indeed, there is ample evidence that broad, non-specific agreements are just the sort of alliances that should be least likely to withstand changes in the international environment.<sup>50</sup> Agreements that reduce, rather than encourage, uncertainty should be the most effective and durable.<sup>51</sup> In the words of one legal scholar, “a contract does not exist unless its terms are reasonably

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<sup>49</sup> Brett Ashley Leeds and Michaela Mattes, “Alliance Politics during the Cold War: Aberration, New World Order, or Continuation of History?” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* Vol. 24, No. 3 (2007), p. 194.

<sup>50</sup> Leeds (2003); Mattes (2012).

<sup>51</sup> Page Fortna demonstrates this with respect to peacekeeping agreements. Virginia Page Fortna, “Scraps of Paper: Agreements and the Durability of Peace,” *International Organization*, Vol. 57, No. 2, (2003), pp. 337-372.



certain.” If there is slim basis for deciding when and how an agreement will be invoked “there is no contract, and no legal obligation.”<sup>52</sup>

It is clear, however, that security guarantees aim to send a very different sort of signal than traditional defense pacts. Rather than delineate where they will apply, against whom, and the response required, security guarantees make an across-the-board commitment to support a client state’s territorial integrity, and introduce the possibility of overwhelming patron intervention into adversary calculations. Why might security guarantee patrons have incentive to construct agreements that are both broad in their scope and vague in their promises? One might assume that such ambiguity could be dangerous, as it “muffles signals” and encourages miscalculation.<sup>53</sup> As Richard Betts has observed, “deterrence should be ambiguous only if it is a bluff.”<sup>54</sup> Why would security guarantee patrons choose to make their commitments anything other than crystal clear?

Given the broad aims of security guarantees, their unilateral nature, and their unusually long shelf lives, highly explicit alliance commitments may actually be less advisable, allowing challengers to exploit defenders’ weaknesses.<sup>55</sup> Specifying an alliance commitment completely may allow adversaries to determine the issues on which the allies

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<sup>52</sup> Michael J. Glennon, “War-making Treaties,” in *Constitutional Diplomacy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 224.

<sup>53</sup> Timothy Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 290. See Crawford for more on why ambiguous vs. unambiguous signals may be desirable in extended deterrence commitments.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Betts, “The Lost Logic of Deterrence,” *Foreign Affairs* March/April 2013.

<sup>55</sup> For more on the utility of ambiguity in deterrent threats, see: Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 29-30, 246-49; Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 75, 84-85; Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974) p. 529-30; Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). p. 123-30.

will not aid one another, undermining deterrence on those issues.<sup>56</sup> Broad deterrent promises may prevent adversaries from “nibbl[ing] away at points of local weakness,” or engaging in “salami tactics.”<sup>57</sup> By leaving security guarantee agreements somewhat vague, allied states may avoid incremental challenges.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, a very precise alliance treaty raises the costs to the patron of non-fulfillment, which may be undesirable when commitments are intended to cover a variety of circumstances. Given that security guarantees are intended to remain in force for decades, this lack of specificity may allow these alliances to adapt to changing geopolitical circumstances.<sup>59</sup> The contingencies in which the United States is most likely to have to aid Japan, for example, are quite different at present than they were in the 1960s. For the patron, who has promised to use its military might to preserve the sovereignty of a far-off ally, broad, vague agreements may inject flexibility into a commitment of existential proportions that is intended to last for a very long time.

Despite the deterrence and commitment advantages that may accrue from non-specific security guarantee agreements, their breadth, lack of detail, and length in force make them an uncommon type of alliance. Moreover, the fact that these guarantees are backstopped by a capability that only one power possesses is unprecedented in the modern era. While most military alliances aim to dissuade an adversary from attacking, nuclear

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<sup>56</sup> James D. Morrow, “Alliances: Why Write Them Down?” *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 3, No. 1 (2000), p. 73.

<sup>57</sup> George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1968), p. 132.; Schelling, 1966, p. 77-78.

<sup>58</sup> One obvious drawback to broader, less contingent agreements is that they may encourage moral hazard. See Brett V. Benson, *Constructing International Security: Alliances, Deterrence, and Moral Hazard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 3-6; 71-90.

<sup>59</sup> “According to Glenn Snyder, “The more explicit and precise the verbal commitment, the greater the cost of non-fulfillment and the lower the credibility of non-fulfillment.” Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 169.

security guarantees are unique in that only one party holds the primary persuasive instrument of power.

The table below summarizes some of the important features that distinguish nuclear security guarantees from traditional defense pacts. Taken together, these alliance differences also point to a distinct object of each type of pact. In most defense pacts, states combine resources towards a fairly specific security goal, to be sought over some definite time and space. In nuclear security guarantees, however, parties cooperate asymmetrically to ensure the long-term sovereignty of the client state, while the patron state is the sole possessor of the means to carry out the guarantee. One party is completely reliant on another’s capabilities at high levels of potential escalation with scant information about its defense provision. Nuclear security guarantees, therefore, promise a great deal and specify very little.

*Table 2- Security Guarantees vs. Other Defense Pacts*

<b>Traditional Defense Pact</b>	<b>Nuclear Security Guarantee</b>
Capability aggregation	Nuclear asymmetry, aggregation at lower levels
“Get help” motive	Guarantee motive
Symmetric or asymmetric	Always asymmetric
Specific <i>casus foederis</i>	<i>Casus foederis</i> is “unprovoked attack”
Specific military object	Object is always sovereignty/territorial integrity
Threat is specific and often includes adversary, theater, other alliances or conflicts	Do not specify adversary, theater, other alliances, or conflicts
If length is specified, avg. 7.5 years	If length is specified, avg. 11 years
4% enter into force indefinitely	33% enter into force indefinitely
Lasts 20 years on average	Lasts 40+ years on average

## What's in a Guarantee?: Exploring the Treaty Text

Security guarantee treaties are less specific than other defense pacts, but what sorts of positive promises do they contain? The vast majority of security guarantees (35) have been extended by the United States, with another 14 by the Soviet Union/Russia and five by Great Britain. Treaty content varies somewhat depending on the patron extending the guarantee. Any given patron does not always use entirely consistent language across its treaty guarantees. Nonetheless, nuclear security guarantee treaties share some important similarities.

Despite prevailing wisdom, no security guarantee treaty commitment automatically commits the patron to use force on behalf of its client under any particular circumstance. Instead, nuclear security guarantee treaties reserve for the patron the *right* to use force on behalf of an ally, but do not compel it do so. This right, however, is not a treaty prerogative per se, but one enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which permits the use of force for individual or collective self-defense. Security guarantees adopt fairly standardized language that keeps the definition of the targeted threat, the actions that will be forthcoming, and the processes for implementing an alliance response very vague indeed.

The United States has been the most profuse nuclear patron since 1945, and although its treaty language has evolved somewhat over time, the contents of its guarantees are quite similar. The North Atlantic Treaty is widely understood to have the firmest, most committal language of any US security guarantee. In US security guarantees,

Article V of the treaty contains the *casus foederis* and details the military response that will follow. NATO's Article V reads:

The parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all; and consequently they agree that, if such an attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with other parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.<sup>60</sup>

The phrase "as it deems necessary" is of no small importance. The day the NATO treaty text was made public, Secretary of State Dean Acheson gave a speech in which averred that the North Atlantic Treaty "does not mean that the United States would be automatically at war if one of the nations covered by the pact is subjected to armed attack. Under our constitution, the Congress alone has the power to declare war."<sup>61</sup> At Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings one month later, Acheson reiterated the limited scope of Article V. Responding to a question on whether the NATO treaty obligated the US President to use nuclear weapons on behalf of European Allies, Acheson stated: "Article V... does not enlarge, nor does it decrease, nor does it change in any way, the relative constitutional position of the President in Congress."<sup>62</sup> In response to further questioning on whether anything in Article V could lead to an automatic declaration of war by the United States, Acheson stated: "Unequivocally, 'no'."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty, April 4, 1949, Washington DC.  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm)

<sup>61</sup> Address by Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Delivered on March 18, 1949, as quoted in Glennon, p. 210.

<sup>62</sup> North Atlantic Treaty: Hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 81st Congress, 1st Session, p. 18,

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

NATO's Article VI does specify that an armed attack includes an armed attack on the "territories of any of the Parties in Europe or North America" and "on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties when in or over these territories..."<sup>64</sup> It does not, however, define how an armed attack will be identified. It reserves for the signatories whatever response "it deems necessary" and does not guarantee aid in any form. The North Atlantic Treaty is, however, unique in the pantheon of US guarantees, because it is the only one that promises military aid to the *patron* if it is attacked on its home territory. Given the actual language of Article V, however, this promise cannot be understood to be all that iron-clad.

The United States' next two security guarantees were signed in 1951. The US-Philippines mutual defense treaty and ANZUS contain identical treaty language. In each, the parties agree that "an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declare [ ] that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." An armed attack is defined as an attack on the territories of any of the parties, territories under their control, or the armed forces, vessels, or aircraft of the signatories.<sup>65</sup> Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles observed: "a whole range of defensive measures... might be appropriate depending on the circumstances," and "any action in which the United States joined would have to be taken in accordance with our constitutional processes."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Article VI also applies to the Algerian Departments of France and applies to islands under the jurisdiction of any of the parties in the North Atlantic as long as they are north of the Tropic of Cancer. North Atlantic Treaty, Article VI.

<sup>65</sup> Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines, Article IV.

<sup>66</sup> Senate Executive Report, No. 2, 82nd Congress, 2nd Session (1952).

The “peace and safety,” “common danger,” and “constitutional processes” language crafted for the Philippines and ANZUS treaties was adopted for the US-Japan, US-South Korea, The Manila Treaty (SEATO), and the US-Taiwan treaty, which was subsequently abrogated in 1979.<sup>67</sup> This language was specifically chosen to preempt congressional concerns that the United States was committing itself in advance to any particular response, but all are legally equivalent to the North Atlantic Treaty in automaticity and specificity.<sup>68</sup> All US security guarantees to East Asian client states are very similar in substance. While there is some variation in US security guarantee language, then, there is very little in the degree of ambiguity enshrined in these commitments. As a 1979 report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee argued:

No mutual security treaty to which the United States currently is a party authorizes the President to introduce the armed forces into hostilities or requires the United States to do so, automatically, if another party to any such treaty is attacked. Each of the treaties provides that it will be carried out by the United States in accordance with its “constitutional process” or contains other languages to make clear that the United States’ commitment is a qualified one—that the distribution of power within the United States Government is precisely what it would have been in the absence of the treaty, and that the United States reserves the right to determine for itself what military action, if any, is appropriate.<sup>69</sup>

Soviet and Russian security guarantees are no less vague. Article IV of the Warsaw Pact evokes the North Atlantic Treaty and states:

In the event of an armed attack...each State Party to the Treaty shall, in the exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, afford the State or States immediate assistance,

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<sup>67</sup> Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States of America, 1960; Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea, 1953; South East Asia Collective Defense Treaty, 1954; Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and Republic of China (Taiwan), 1954; Security Treaty among Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America (ANZUS), Articles IV and V.

<sup>68</sup> Glennon, pp. 214-215.

<sup>69</sup> Senate Report No. 7, 96th Congress, 1st Session, 31, Taiwan Enabling Act, (1979).

individually and in agreement with the other State Parties to the Treaty, by all the means it considers necessary, including the use of armed force.

After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in July 1991, Russia and several former Soviet Republics formed the Collective Security Treaty, which adopted similar language.

The Sino-Soviet Treaty was far more ambiguous than either of these in both its *casus foederis* and promised response because of its origins. The original Sino-Soviet Treaty was signed between Moscow and the Nationalist Chinese government before the conclusion of the Second World War. In 1950, following the communist revolution in China, the Soviets nullified the agreement with the Nationalists and signed a new one with Beijing. The 1950 treaty, however, largely retained the language of the 1945 document, and targets Japan and its allies. If either party is attacked, the other signatory promises to “render military and other assistance.”<sup>70</sup> The Sino-Soviet Treaty is therefore anomalous in its targeting of an adversary, but otherwise fairly routine in its amorphous commitment.

Great Britain’s 1957 mutual defense treaty with Malaysia contained looser language still. Article VI states: “In the event of a threat of armed attack against any of the territories or forces of the Federation of Malaya...the Governments of the Federation of Malaya and of the United Kingdom will consult together on measures to be taken jointly or separately to ensure the fullest cooperation between them for the purpose of meeting the situation effectively.”<sup>71</sup> Article VII states: In the event of an armed attack... the Governments of the Federation of Malaya and of the United Kingdom undertake to cooperate with each other and will take such action as each considers necessary for the purpose of meeting the

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<sup>70</sup> Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance, 1950.

<sup>71</sup> Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Federation of Malaya on External Defense and Mutual Security, 1957, Article VI.



situation effectively.”<sup>72</sup> The United Kingdom’s other security guarantee commitments originated through SEATO, and therefore used the American treaty language.

Despite the fact that US security guarantees to NATO and East Asia and the Soviet Union’s to the Warsaw Pact are often held up as some of history’s most closely-knit alliances, the treaty language in these pact is anything but committal. A guarantee, by definition, assures a particular outcome for its recipient.<sup>73</sup> These umbrella treaties, however, do no such thing.

### **Why Extend or Accept an Umbrella?**

Traditional defense pacts and nuclear security guarantees both aim to deter attacks by adversaries, and to make military cooperation more likely if conflict should arise.<sup>74</sup> As we have seen, however, the nature of their treaty content suggests that security guarantees aim to deter in a different manner than other defense pacts. Why would nuclear patrons offer broad, ambiguous, long-lasting promises of aid to far-off clients? And why would clients accept these vague commitments?

In a typical defense pact that relies on the pooling of conventional capabilities, allies aim to: dissuade an adversary from initiating war by signaling that their combined capabilities may be sufficient to defeat him; defend the status quo if it is disturbed, and; deny the adversary territorial gains.<sup>75</sup> In general, traditional defense pacts endeavor to

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<sup>72</sup> Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Federation of Malaya on External Defense and Mutual Security, 1957, Article VII.

<sup>73</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary.

<sup>74</sup> See Morrow, “Alliances,” and Mattes, “Reputation” on this point.

<sup>75</sup> Snyder, *Defense and Deterrence*, p. 41.

frustrate an adversary's specific military goal, thwarting attempts at a low-cost or quick victory. They are therefore primarily focused on deterrence by denial.

In contrast, nuclear security guarantee allies aim to: dissuade an adversary from initiating war by signaling that the patron's capabilities will be used on behalf of the client; defend the status quo if it is disturbed; retaliate against the adversary, potentially causing severe damage to cities, military targets, and industrial centers of great value. By introducing the possibility of serious and rapid conventional or nuclear retaliation on behalf of an ally, however remote, security guarantees threaten deterrence by punishment as well as deterrence by denial.<sup>76</sup> Like their predecessors, nuclear umbrella allies also plan to frustrate opportunistic conventional attacks. But rather than solely deter by creating the conditions to *win* a specific war, nuclear security guarantees also signal that the costs of any potential war will be too great for an opponent to bear.<sup>77</sup> As Bernard Brodie observed, this kind of deterrence requires that nuclear security guarantee allies reject "the Napoleonic maxim, 'on s'engage; puit on voit.'"<sup>78</sup> In a profound departure from their predecessors, nuclear security guarantee alliances aim to forestall all attacks on client states in perpetuity.

Alliance commitments that rely on deterrence by punishment are both enabled and shaped by the technological means that support them. Defense pacts that rely solely on deterrence by denial assume that if war occurs, allies will assist each other in frustrating an aggressor's military aims, and that an offensive could be repelled over a period of days,

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<sup>76</sup> Snyder, *Defense and Deterrence*, p. 43.

<sup>77</sup> Bernard Brodie et al. *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt 1946), p. 76; Bernard Brodie, *The Anatomy of Deterrence* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1958), pp 3-5; Snyder, *Defense and Deterrence*, p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> Brodie, *Anatomy of Deterrence*, p.25.

weeks, or months. Nuclear weapons and long-range strike capabilities allow patrons to make promises of defense to far-away allies, but they also mean that attacks on those allies could take place with little warning time, and that devastation could be wrought quickly.<sup>79</sup> This technology creates some uncertainty as to the precise location of origin of military threats, as well as the belief that they will emerge quickly and with great destructive force if they do. The protection of a client state therefore becomes a fundamentally strategic problem, as opposed to a tactical and operational one. To quote Brodie again, “[a]n intercontinental ballistic missile carrying a thermonuclear warhead is something that can affect us [...] much more immediately and entirely. The ICBM is, in the most compelling meaning of the word, strategic.”<sup>80</sup>

Why would patrons assume this strategic challenge? Because of the novel threat that it creates, the speed and potential devastation of war in the nuclear age also allows and encourages leading powers to project military power beyond the homeland. In addition to extending security guarantees, the United States, Soviet Union, and Great Britain all practiced defense in depth after 1945 with the belief that a robust forward military presence was necessary to ensure the security of the nation as well as its allies. Forward basing allowed major powers to maintain a continuous military presence to respond to persistent threats, and to address global contingencies with fewer logistical demands. As advances in power projection created first-strike incentives, forward basing became a critical part of major powers’ deterrence strategies, as they preferred to defeat enemies abroad before they could threaten the homeland.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959) p. 158.

<sup>80</sup> Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, p. 10.

<sup>81</sup> Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *US Global Defense Posture: 1783-2011* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2012), p. 78.

A patron's decision to extend security guarantees and to establish forward bases are distinct calculations and do not always coincide. Nonetheless, a formal security guarantee may make it especially likely that a client state will contract away some of its sovereignty to allow a patron base access, and a forward patron presence may assure allies and deter adversaries as a tangible indicator of the security guarantee.<sup>82</sup> Umbrella alliances are therefore closely coupled with leading states' reliance on power projection. These are not purely altruistic guarantees, but intimately linked to major power national security strategies that emphasize deterrence and power projection as tools of status quo preservation in the nuclear age.

The map below illustrates this point. While the Second World War was still under way, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff conducted two postwar basing studies that evaluated requirements for overseas basing after the war concluded. These potential postures assumed that the forward positions recommended would be sufficient for the United States to enforce postwar peace among the major powers. One study identified 66 potential foreign base sites, and the other 84. Neither, however, anticipated a need for US bases in Western Europe, or assumed the deployment of ground troops abroad.<sup>83</sup> Instead, Washington's 1943 Perimeter Defense strategy would allow it to project enough power into Europe and Asia to prevent those regions from being dominated by other states, but the US did not expect comprehensive forward deployment, and certainly did not envision a standing military presence to support a European Alliance. This vision was defunct within

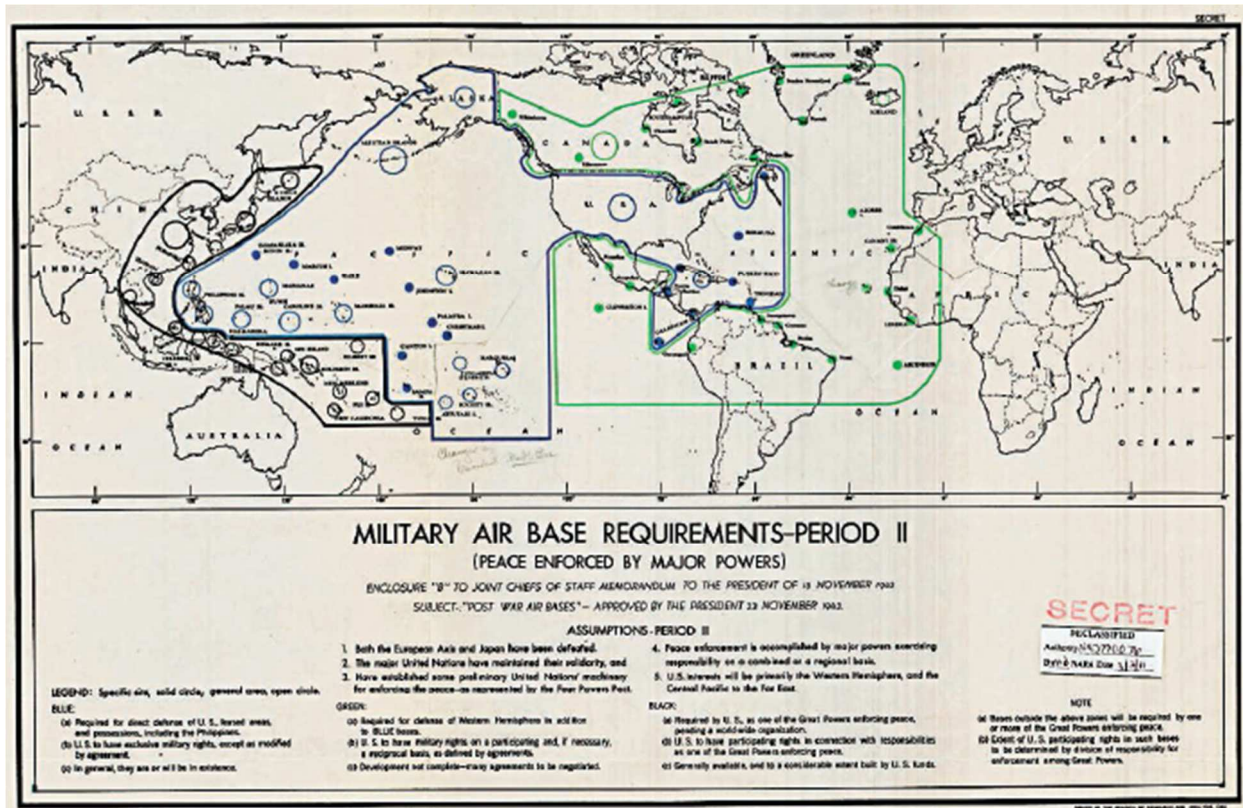
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<sup>82</sup> Pettyjohn, US Global Defense Posture.

<sup>83</sup> Elliot V. Converse III, *Circling the Earth: United States Military Plans for a Postwar Overseas Military Base System, 1942-1948* (Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 2005); James F. Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy 1945-1947* (Washington: Office of Joint History, 1996), pp. 139-160.

only a few years, as Washington contemplated the prospect of facing a nuclear-armed Soviet Union in Western Europe, and reoriented its strategy accordingly. The United States' strategy for engaging the Soviet threat comprised both the NATO alliance and its forward defense of Western Europe.

Figure 5- US Basing Requirements According to JCS 570/2 (1943)<sup>84</sup>



Nuclear security guarantees' peacetime deterrence goals change the risk calculus for all parties involved. No adversary can initiate conflict against a nuclear-backed client without contemplating the possibility, however remote, that its patron might intervene and that conflict might escalate to devastating levels, and this may induce caution in the

<sup>84</sup> Image appears in Pettyjohn, p. 51.

adversary.<sup>85</sup> The possibility of having to make good on its threat may also change patron behavior, however: the decision to use nuclear weapons against any state requires a willingness to inflict, and possibly incur in return, rapid, widespread destruction. Even if an ally is highly-valued, these military means are difficult to fit to most political ends. And with so little of its alliance commitment specified, the patron must always consider the possibility that a small skirmish could escalate into a devastating conflict. Rather than aim at an achievable military victory, therefore, nuclear security guarantee alliances aim to achieve political victory through the protection of allies and the preservation of the political status quo. The intuition of these alliance arrangements will be familiar to most scholars of nuclear strategy, and accords with Bernard Brodie's prescient 1946 assertion: "Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose."<sup>86</sup>

This alliance logic is not necessarily dependent on a condition of mutual vulnerability between patron and adversary, whereby each possess a secure second-strike capability. Indeed, the vast majority of nuclear security guarantees were concluded well before mutual vulnerability had obtained.<sup>87</sup> This logic also does not necessarily require that one espouse a "minimum deterrence" perspective, which sees nuclear war as irrational, and therefore, highly unlikely.<sup>88</sup> Even strategists who believe that nuclear wars may

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<sup>85</sup> This assertion is supported empirically by the fact that nuclear-backed client states are much less likely to be targets of militarized interstate disputes than states who are not holders of security guarantees. Fuhrmann and Sechser, "Signaling Alliance Commitments."

<sup>86</sup> Bernard Brodie et. al., *The Absolute Weapon* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1946), p. 76.

<sup>87</sup> Most security guarantees were formed between the early and mid-1950s, and the condition of MAD did not obtain until approximately the mid-1960s. This author has seen no historical evidence to suggest that these treaties were formed in anticipation of mutual vulnerability.

<sup>88</sup> See, e.g., Robert Jervis, *The Illlogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

rationally be fought have examined how the threat of deterrence by punishment enables the military goal of war avoidance.<sup>89</sup> One need not subscribe to any particular school of strategic thought to acknowledge that the nuclear age has ushered in an era of extreme caution where warfighting is concerned, as evinced by diminished risk-taking in high-intensity disputes, and fewer changes to the political and territorial status quo.<sup>90</sup>

Beyond deterrence and power projection for the sake of status quo preservation, security guarantee patrons have at least one additional, subsidiary motivation for extending and maintaining these pacts. Umbrella alliances are unilateral in their provision of crucial power projection capabilities, meaning that client states cannot easily replace a security guarantee if a patron removes it. This, in turn, allows the patron to use its security guarantees as tools of control over less powerful states.<sup>91</sup> Not only may patrons demand basing rights on client state territory, but they may become deeply involved with client state security policy on an ongoing basis. Shortly after the end of World War II, French President Charles de Gaulle reportedly called on US President Harry Truman to discuss a treaty to “keep Germany down,” to which Truman responded that “the atomic bomb had changed all that.”<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Lord Ismay, NATO’s first Secretary General, is often credited with a phrase that suggests that the alliance’s original purpose was deterrence, power

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<sup>89</sup> To take, perhaps, the most extreme example, in the preface to *On Thermonuclear War*, Herman Kahn stated that the book was “dedicated to the goal of anticipating, avoiding, and alleviating crises.” Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. xviii.

<sup>90</sup> Rauchaus has found that nuclear weapons tend to shift conflict to the lower end of the escalation spectrum; Fuhrmann and Sechser have found that recipients of extended deterrence are significantly less likely to be victims of attack. Robert Rauchaus, “Evaluating the Nuclear Peace Hypothesis: A Quantitative Approach,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2009), pp. 258-277; Fuhrmann and Sechser, “Signaling Alliance Commitments: Hand-Tying and Sunk Costs in Extended Nuclear Deterrence.

<sup>91</sup> For literature that explores this alliance motivation in detail, see: Jeremy Pressman, *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Patricia A. Weitsman, *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

<sup>92</sup> Lloyd Gardner, H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews, Vol. XV, No. 34 (2014).

projection, and allied control: “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.”<sup>93</sup>

Despite the fact that it may become a vector of patron power projection and subject to its control, a client’s motivation for accepting a security guarantee is relatively straightforward. By taking on a great power sponsor, the client is absolved of the need to provide for its own defense at the highest levels of escalation.<sup>94</sup> Because an attack on it could conceivably catalyze a great power nuclear war, superpower extended deterrence may seem to be a far more potent threat than what a relatively weak client could hope to accomplish on its own through conventional self-defense or through the costly pursuit of its own nuclear arsenal. The client also gains broader political benefits that come from its close association with a nuclear-armed great power. The fact that the client is interested in receiving a security guarantee, however, by no means suggests that it will remain confident in its promises as the threat environment and its patron’s commitment changes with time.

Nuclear patrons have ultimately chosen to extend deterrence and adopt forward defensive strategies to preserve the political and territorial status quo. Each has done so, however, in slightly different ways. The Soviet Union maintained a quasi-empire over the Warsaw Pact, and extended guarantees to other communist allies, such as China and North Korea.<sup>95</sup> The United States’ alliance system has functioned as something on the order of an

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<sup>93</sup> Lord Ismay, as quoted in David Reynolds, *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe: International Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>94</sup> See Horowitz, *Diffusion of Military Power*, p. 108, for more on how a nuclear alliance strategy can substitute for other defense investments. On nuclear security guarantees as substitutes for indigenous nuclear weapons programs see: Philipp C. Bleek and Eric B. Lorber, “Security Guarantees and Allied Nuclear Proliferation,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 58, No. 3, pp. 429-454.

<sup>95</sup> On the quasi-empire within the Warsaw Pact, see: Condoleezza Rice, *The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army, 1948-1983: Uncertain Allegiance*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).



“empire by invitation.”<sup>96</sup> American guarantees were initially devised to provide allies with protection while they recovered economically in the wake of World War II. After North Korea’s Soviet-sponsored invasion of the South, security guarantees were widely considered to be tools for avoiding undesirable involvement in far-away wars.<sup>97</sup> And for the short time they were in effect, the United Kingdom was interested in using extended deterrence to maintain influence over former colonies. How do these alliance motivations change umbrella pacts in practice? To answer this question, it is necessary to explore the novel dynamics that abound between a nuclear patron, client, and challenger.

### **Diagramming Deterrence in the Nuclear Age**

The demands of deterrence in the nuclear age change the way alliances are formed and managed. Deterrence by punishment requires that a patron be willing and able to threaten on behalf of a client to inflict catastrophic levels of destruction on an adversary, raising the costs of conflict to unacceptable levels. Although punishment was possible in the pre-nuclear age, nuclear weapons and their delivery systems have changed its potency by orders of magnitude. Pre-nuclear age instruments of punishment, such as naval blockades and coercive airpower, attempted to inflict that harm on targets on a much smaller scale and over a much longer time period of time.<sup>98</sup> It was therefore uncertain whether the targets of that punishment would be able to bear it. Since 1945, however, a patron can promise punishment on behalf on of an ally with a speed and scale that will

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<sup>96</sup> Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952." *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 23, No. 3 (1986), pp. 263-277.

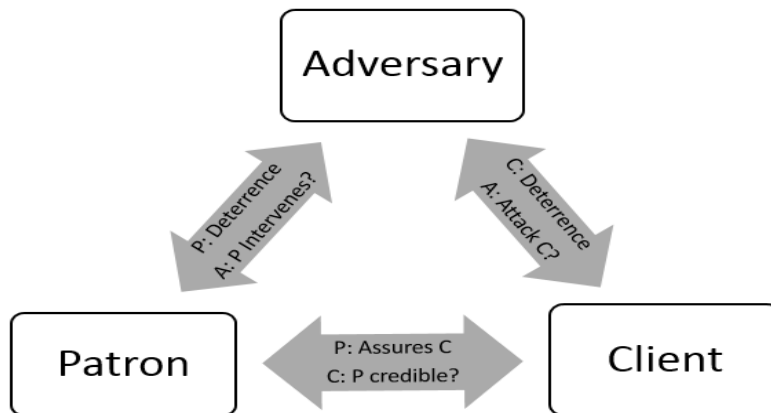
<sup>97</sup> Tongfi Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle But Seldom Entrap States," *Security Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2011, pp. 360-361.

<sup>98</sup> On the changed role of punishment in the nuclear age, see Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, p. 10.

necessarily be devastating if it occurs. While nuclear security guarantee treaty commitments contain a great deal of uncertainty, the capabilities that backstop them suggest a response that may be anything but.

Ambiguous treaty commitments, unilateral nuclear capabilities, and the incentives that accompany this unique type of deterrence create uncommon alliance dynamics between the nuclear patron, the client under its protection, and a potential adversary. The diagram below highlights how each of these three players evaluates the others.

Figure 6- Extended Deterrence Dynamics



In this triangular relationship, patron, client, and adversary must form judgments about the patron's security guarantee commitments to its client with imperfect information. This complex tripartite dynamic involves the following considerations:

- 1) The patron gives to its client a security guarantee that suggests that an attack on the client will be treated as an attack on the patron. The treaty language is vague on *casus foederis* and promised aid, and alliance capabilities are provided unilaterally.

Because they are sovereign states with a fuzzy commitment in which one partner is vastly more powerful, the patron can never be inexorably committed to the client.

- 2) At any given time both the client and the adversary (if it has any interest in attacking) evaluate whether the patron will intervene on the client's behalf, despite the devastating and otherwise-avoidable harm that it may absorb if it does.
- 3) The client is dependent on the patron by virtue of capability asymmetry, and uninformed about this intervention probability due to treaty ambiguity. It looks to signals from both the patron and the adversary to determine whether it is, in fact, secure.
- 4) Nuclear-age technology creates the imperative for the patron to convince client and adversary that it is deterring the adversary from attacking at all, and barring that, that it will intervene using "all available means" if its client is threatened. Because the expectations in the security guarantee are ambiguous, however, the patron itself may not know if, in fact, it will intervene in any particular contingency.
- 5) The only confirmation that that the patron's lofty alliance promise is, in fact, reliable, is an attack or major crisis in which the patron intervenes. If the patron effectively deters the adversary, however, we should not expect to observe either one of these things.<sup>99</sup>
- 6) Because there are few or no truly confirming signs of the patron's commitment, both client and adversary may continually reassess the patron's likelihood of intervention in a conflict on behalf of the client. Where it perceives any potential threat to the client from the adversary, the patron can be expected to take steps beyond its treaty guarantee to demonstrate to both audiences that it intends to uphold its ambiguous treaty promises.

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<sup>99</sup> James Fearon, "Selection Effects and Deterrence," *International Interactions* Vol. 28, No. 1 (2002), pp. 5-29.

In sum, the ambiguous and unilateral nature of nuclear security guarantees begets a vexing information deficit for all parties involved. The adversary has limited information off of which to base its decision to challenge the client, and despite its guarantee, the patron itself may not know with any certainty the situations in which it will come to its client's aid.<sup>100</sup> This leaves the client to determine its level of assurance based on the degree to which it *perceives* its security to be guaranteed. These high-level dynamics permit a number of hypotheses on how exactly the formation and management of security guarantees proceeds, and these are the subject of the remainder of this project.

Before proceeding to these, however, it is worth noting that even these macro-level dynamics help us to understand one puzzle that has plagued analysts and practitioners of extended deterrence since the early Cold War. The so-called Healy Theorem, with which this chapter opened, posits that it is substantially more difficult for a nuclear patron to assure its clients than it is for it to deter its adversaries—a statement that would seem a direct challenge to so-called rational deterrence theory.<sup>101</sup> In a world of perfect information, this should clearly be untrue. But this statement would also seem puzzling in any world in which the adversary and the client could view the same patron signals of commitment, as both should presumably derive from these the same probability of patron intervention. If the adversary is deterred, one might reasonably imagine that the client should be inexorably assured. Indeed, as an ally of the patron's, one might expect the client

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<sup>100</sup> I am grateful to Robert Jervis for the insight that the patron itself may not be certain about intervention.

<sup>101</sup> Rational Deterrence Theory is not, in fact, a unified theory, but an approach to the study of deterrence that relies upon expected utility calculations. See: Achen and Snidal, pp. 150-151; Jervis, "Rational Deterrence," pp. 183-189.

to have *more* information about its patron's intentions than its adversary does, making the patron's guarantee all the more credible.

As the foregoing diagram and discussion highlight, however, the adversary's evaluation of the likelihood of patron intervention in an attack, and the client's evaluation of its own security, are two distinct calculations. The adversary makes its decisions based on its prior desire to attack (which may be low or entirely absent) and its belief that the patron will intervene. The client, however, is one additional level of decision-making removed from this calculation, and must make judgments about the degree to which its patron's commitment mitigates the threat from the adversary, and therefore, how secure it feels. Because there are few concrete indicators of how reliable its security guarantee actually is, the client must evaluate and re-evaluate the patron's credibility over the years or decades that the guarantee endures. Even in a perfectly rational world free of cognitive bias, this tripartite dynamic means that an adversary may have almost no desire to attack based on expected utility while the client remains completely uncertain that its guarantee is functioning as it hopes. Nuclear security guarantees are, therefore, alliances that leave something—indeed, most everything—to chance. How exactly do states form and maintain these extraordinary commitments?

### **Signaling Security Guarantees in International Politics**

International relations scholars have not previously recognized or systematically studied the fact that alliances may be tools that enable power projection for the purposes of deterrence. Indeed, many seminal theories of alliance formation and management are silent on why nuclear-armed superpowers would form and go to great lengths to preserve

their alliances with small, less-capable client states, and many classical works dismiss alliances since World War II as inconsequential. Because they consider alliances only insofar as they can shift the balance of power between system leaders, seminal theories miss the fact alliances in the nuclear age may be formed and sustained for reasons that are unique to the post-1945 period.<sup>102</sup> Our understanding of several alliance first-principles—namely, balancing, entrapment, and abandonment—may require revision if we are to understand how security guarantees operate in the nuclear age.

Structural realism views alliance formation as of great potential consequence in multipolar systems, and relatively unimportant in bipolar systems. When multiple great powers are present, it is possible that allies will de-align or defect to an opposing coalition, greatly disadvantaging their former partners, especially if conflict occurs.<sup>103</sup> Under bipolarity, however, alliances are thought to be much less important: system-leading powers are said to focus mostly on their relationship to one another.

Scholars have similarly argued that the alliance dilemmas of entrapment and abandonment are less serious in post-1945 alliances. Entrapment occurs when a state is dragged into a conflict over an ally's interests that it does not share, or shares only partially.<sup>104</sup> Abandonment is allied defection, and can take the form of re-alignment, de-

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<sup>102</sup> Structural realism views alliances as crucial in multipolar systems and relatively unimportant in bipolar systems. When multiple great powers are present, it is possible that allies will de-align or defect to an opposing coalition, greatly disadvantaging their former partners, especially if conflict occurs.<sup>102</sup> Under bipolarity, however, alliances are thought to be much less important: system-leading powers are said to focus mostly on their relationship to one another. Because military interdependence is low in a bipolar world alliances are not thought to be terribly useful to great powers, and add little to their capabilities. Systemic theories' emphasis on great power positions mean that alliance formation is viewed as important primarily in multipolar periods, but is an afterthought under bipolarity. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 19; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>103</sup> Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," p. 483-484; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 169.

<sup>104</sup> Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," p. 467.

alignment, or failure of an ally to provide support in promised contingencies.<sup>105</sup> Leading work has suggested that the dilemmas of entrapment and abandonment were strong prior to 1945 because allies were mutually dependent and had realignment options.<sup>106</sup> These dilemmas were “sharply truncated” in the Cold War, however, because superpowers were firmly committed by virtue of their own interests to their allies and de-alignment was thought to be irrational.<sup>107</sup> Patron entrapment is unlikely for superpowers, which have greater resources and cannot easily be restrained by smaller allies.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, the virtual impossibility of an ally realigning with the opposing camp mitigates the risk of patron entrapment.<sup>109</sup>

Existing theories do not explain why nuclear-weapons possessing great powers would choose to ally with smaller, less-capable powers, and provide them with broad, vague, unilateral commitments of existential military aid for long periods of time. They also do not recognize that these alliances may transcend the goal of discrete military cooperation and be part of broader deterrence strategies to hold the political status quo. Approaches that assume that states pursue alliances with a narrowly-construed self-help motivation may therefore have a limited ability to elucidate nuclear security guarantees and the anomalous role they play in international politics.

Indeed, leading theorists Kenneth Waltz and Glenn Snyder quietly acknowledge that nuclear security guarantees are a fundamentally different type of alliance. To quote Waltz,

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<sup>105</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 466.

<sup>106</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 494.

<sup>107</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 483-484

<sup>108</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 483-484; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 169.

<sup>109</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 485.

“[a]s de Gaulle has often said, nuclear weapons make alliances obsolete. At the strategic level he was right. That is another reason for calling NATO a treaty of guarantee rather than an old-fashioned alliance.”<sup>110</sup> In a brief aside in his seminal 1984 article, Snyder likewise acknowledges that entrapment and abandonment may manifest differently in nuclear-backed pacts.<sup>111</sup>

These leading theories’ relative silence on the formation and maintenance of nuclear security guarantees, however, means that a theory of this type of alliance must revisit first principles. We have seen that compared to traditional defense pacts, nuclear umbrella alliances promise a great deal and specify very little, relying on ambiguous treaty language and capabilities that only one power possesses. In an international system that has no governing authority to manage and enforce agreements, we know that alliances are subject to opportunism. We also know that for commitments to be credible, they must be consistent with the incentives of the actors involved.<sup>112</sup> If simply forming a vague alliance backed by the threat of nuclear weapons were enough to deter all potential adversaries, despite the panoply of informational uncertainties these entail, patrons would have great incentive to represent themselves as committed when they were not.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 182.

<sup>111</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 492

<sup>112</sup> This is a commonly used definition of credibility, which describes a strategy that is subgame perfect. It is worth noting, however, that many authors defined credibility as a function of the beliefs of the party receiving the signal. Under this alternative definition, an alliance is credible if an adversary *believes* the patron will intervene on behalf of a client—this goes one step beyond the patron having incentive to so. The distinction is relatively minor if one is following a rationalist framework, because player strategies readily translate into player beliefs. But if one rejects the idea that states or their leaders rationally update their beliefs, then the difference is significant. Because this study mostly concerns itself with the alliance partners and their management of potentially incredible agreements, I use the first definition, but acknowledge that a different theoretical framework and focus might make it preferable to use the second.

<sup>113</sup> James D. Morrow, “Alliances, Credibility, and Peacetime Costs,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 38, No. 2, (1994), pp. 270-297. For discussions of why alliance formation itself may be an informative signal, see: James D. Morrow, “Alliances: Why Write them Down?,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2000), pp.



How do allies and adversaries assess the credibility of a patron's amorphous commitment? Generally speaking, both audiences can evaluate a threat of military denial by evaluating the patron's capabilities—does it have the capabilities and the operational capacity to take action on behalf of the client state? But evaluating the patron's threat of punishment is in large part a judgment of intent—does the guarantor have the will to intervene and to carry out a devastating attack on behalf of an ally?<sup>114</sup> Security guarantees therefore require that the patrons extending them and make their defense commitments publicly and repeatedly known.<sup>115</sup> Because security guarantee treaties communicate so little information to allies and adversaries, patrons must take further action to signal alliance intent to both audiences.<sup>116</sup>

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63-83.); Alastair Smith, "Alliance Formation and War," *International Studies Quarterly* (1995), Vol. 39, pp. 405-425; James D. Fearon, "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation," *International Organization* Vol. 52, No. 2 (1998), pp. 269-305; Brett Ashley Leeds, "Domestic Political Institutions, Credible Commitments, and International Cooperation," *American Journal of Political Science* (1999), pp. 979-1002; George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Peter N. Barsoom. "Is the Good News about Compliance Good News about Cooperation?" *International Organization*, Vol. 50 (1996), pp. 379-406.

<sup>114</sup> For further discussion of why deterrence by punishment requires stronger evidence of intent, see Snyder, *Defense and Deterrence*, p. 16-24.

<sup>115</sup> This is intuitively similar to Schelling's concept of "connectivity." It also accords with the large international relations literature on costly signaling. See, e.g. James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1997), pp. 68-90; James Fearon, "Signaling Versus the Balance of Power and Interests An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 38, No. 2 (1994), p. 236-269.

<sup>116</sup> Scholars of signaling in international politics often adopt or parallel James Fearon's distinction between hand-tying (intent) and sunk cost (upfront investment) signals. As several scholars (including Fearon himself) have observed, however, these are ideal types and difficult to apply empirically. Moreover, the distinction between signals of capability and signals of intent existed prior to Fearon's formalization of these concepts. See James Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1997), pp. 68-90; Branislav Slantchev, "Military Coercion in Interstate Crises," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (2005), p. 534; Branislav L. Slantchev, *Military Threats: The Costs of Coercion and the Price of Peace*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 61, 78-80; Schelling (1966); Robert L. Jervis, *The Logic of Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Barry O'Neill, "The Intermediate Nuclear Forces Missiles: An Analysis of Coupling and Reassurance," *International Interactions*, Vol. 15, No. 3-4, 1990, p. 150; Michael Spence, "Job Market Signaling." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (1973), pp. 355-374.

Patrons can compensate for the vague, unilateral nature of security guarantee pacts through the demonstration of the military capabilities that support the alliance, including forward-deployed troops, conventional weapons systems, military bases, and visible joint exercises. They may also release information about the size and composition of the patron's nuclear arsenal, as well its deployment patterns. Observable indicators of the patron's military investment in its client make an adversary more likely to believe that it will intervene in wartime because its defense interests are already involved, and also serve the conventional alliance goal of deterrence by denial.<sup>117</sup> Even a small demonstration of patron military commitment can send a potent message, as it increases the risk that a war with the client will necessarily involve its security guarantor. "What can 7,000 American troops do, or 12,000 Allied troops do?" Schelling asked. "Bluntly, they can die. They can die heroically, dramatically, and in a manner that guarantees that the action cannot stop there."<sup>118</sup>

Patrons may also rely on signals of political commitment to communicate their intent.<sup>119</sup> Included within this category are nuclear declaratory policy, which states how a patron may use its nuclear weapons and public statements of support for client security. Another important signal of intent is consultation and dialogues with allies, which provides

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<sup>117</sup> Moves such as these add some degree of "automation" to the patron's decision to respond on behalf of the client. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense*, p. 24.

<sup>118</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 47.

<sup>119</sup> For additional discussion of the different types of public commitment nuclear powers may employ, see Snyder, *Defense and Deterrence*, 239-240; For a discussion of how formal alliances can act as signaling as well as commitment devices, see Morrow, "Alliances, Credibility, and Peacetime Costs."

them with information on how their security will be guaranteed. The most enduring and informative indicator of commitment is, of course, the formal alliance treaty itself.<sup>120</sup>

Many scholars of international signaling have tended to separate communication into those messages that require some material cost be paid up front, and those that come with a reputation cost that may be paid later.<sup>121</sup> In reality, however, few signals serve purely to communicate capability—most involve some message of intent as well.<sup>122</sup> It is of course, important that a client state know that its patron is materially able to defend it, but where superpower alliances are concerned, this part of the equation is rarely in doubt. Rather, many signals of military capability, such as forward-deployed troops, are signs that the patron is both able and willing to protect the security of the client. The presence of several thousand troops on an ally's soil does not manifest a capability that would have otherwise been unknown: rather, it demonstrates a firm commitment to use it on behalf of the client. These signals of intent serve to reduce the vast information asymmetries that are inherent in nuclear security guarantees.

By demonstrating their military capability on behalf of an ally, patrons reveal their defense commitments. By signing formal treaties, engaging in joint preparation for conflict, or forward-deploying troops, patrons may *increase* their commitment and mitigate some of the uncertainty that accompanies a vague unilateral guarantee.<sup>123</sup> As Thomas Schelling has

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<sup>120</sup> A treaty may be an especially credible signal of commitment if it is extended by a democracy. If an alliance must be ratified by a legislature, for instance, chances are lower that leaders will renege on its terms, and institutional obstacles will make it hard to change the treaty once it is in place. Lisa L. Martin, *Democratic Commitments: Legislatures and International Cooperation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 13.

<sup>121</sup> This distinction follows Fearon's 1997 dichotomy between "hand-tying" and "sunk cost" signals. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands vs. Sinking Costs."

<sup>122</sup> A signal may be thought of exclusively as one of capability if the purpose of demonstrating it is to prove its possession. A good example of this kind of signaling is a nuclear test.

<sup>123</sup> It may be helpful to divide signals into those that reveal commitments and those that reveal and also increase commitments. I am grateful to Daniel Altman for this insight.

observed: “To project the shadow of one’s military forces over other countries and territories is an act of diplomacy. To *fight* abroad is a military act, but to persuade enemies or allies that one *would fight* abroad, under circumstances of great cost and risk, requires more than a military capability. It requires projecting intentions.”<sup>124</sup>

### **Hypotheses on Nuclear Security Guarantee Formation and Management**

My theory of nuclear security guarantee formation and management posits that the unique nature of these pacts can be understood by their ambiguous treaty content, and the unilateral provision of capabilities within the alliance. These uncommon factors prevail because of the patron’s interest in signaling deterrence by punishment in addition to deterrence by denial, but this in turn results in vexing information deficits for all three parties involved. To compensate for these, security guarantee allies engage in peacetime signaling to make their commitments publicly and repeatedly known. The logic of the theory is represented in the arrow diagram below.

*Figure 7- The Theory of Absolute Alliances*



How, precisely, do these unique features change alliance formation, entrapment, and abandonment? This section addresses these questions.

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<sup>124</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 36.

## ***H1: Security Guarantee Formation***

Conventional alliance wisdom holds that defense pacts are usually formed between states that share an adversary.<sup>125</sup> Allying states may have some, but not all, interests in common. Indeed, where traditional defense pacts are concerned, it is theoretically possible for states “to make strictly defensive commitments to two adversaries...”<sup>126</sup> This is true because states are often allying to deter a foreseeable war against a specific adversary. State A and State B may form an alliance against State C, despite the fact that State B is a rival of State D and State A is not. Balancing theories of alliance formation are, however indeterminate on where specific alliances should form.<sup>127</sup>

When an alliance aims to deter not just one adversary in a certain contingency but all potential foes from any kind of attack on a client, the requirements of alliance formation should be more exacting. Rather than form a security guarantee with any state with whom it shares an adversary, a nuclear patron must consider its audience. It can anticipate that upholding a vague, unilateral security guarantee for years or decades will require it to demonstrate often its intent to defend the client. It should, therefore, be unwilling to extend a security guarantee if the prospective client has an adversary that that patron does not share.

If the patron extends a security guarantee and an unshared adversary is present, the patron cannot easily reassure that third state that the alliance is not aimed at it. The actions that the patron may need to undertake to attempt to demonstrate the credibility of the alliance, such as joint military exercises, planning, or forward deployment, may polarize

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<sup>125</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 166.

<sup>126</sup> Jervis, *System Effects*, p. 235.

<sup>127</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 462.

relations with that third state. Because security guarantees are *not* targeted promises of aid in specific contingencies, the patron cannot easily tailor these signals to reassure a third party that they are not aimed at it. Extending a security guarantee to a state with an unshared adversary may mean that the patron not only acquires a new adversary, but risks entrapment in a war that it might have otherwise avoided. Returning to the example above, State A should be wary of extending a guarantee to State B, given its antipathy for State D. For State A to extend a security guarantee to State B, then, B's rivals should be exclusively shared with A. That is, B should not have rivals that A does not share. The same should not necessarily hold true of more traditional defense pacts, however, where allies can tailor their defense commitments to specific adversaries or contingencies. For most other alliances, the presence of a shared rival should be a strong predictor of defense pact formation.

***H1:*** *For a security guarantee to form, client states should have rivals that are exclusively shared by the patron; for non-security guarantee defense pacts to form, shared rivals will be better predictors of alliance formation.*

DV: Nuclear security guarantee/Non-security guarantee defense pact formation

IV: Shared/exclusive adversary status

Methods:

Large-N (Chapter 2): ReLogit models

Qualitative (Chapter 3): Case studies of the US decision not to extend a security guarantee to Israel (1963) and the decision to form the Franco-Russian Alliance (1894)

## ***H2: Entrapment in the Nuclear Age***

Entrapment occurs when a state gets dragged into a conflict on behalf of an ally whose interests it does not share, or shares only partially.<sup>128</sup> As one scholar has observed, however, it is difficult to point to cases of true entrapment, especially in recent decades.<sup>129</sup> During the Cold War and since, leading powers faced relatively little risk of entrapment, traditionally defined, because alliance ties were rigid and clear. There may, however, be an additional reason why it is hard to locate many post-1945 cases of patrons being dragged into their clients' wars: Security guarantors have great incentive to ensure that their clients do not go to war at all. No patron, however, committed should want to use nuclear weapons, especially on behalf of national interests that are not its own, or risk escalation to the nuclear threshold in a serious conventional war. Entrapment, traditionally defined, should rarely if ever be observed among nuclear umbrella allies. It may, however, take on a new form.

As already discussed at length, nuclear security guarantees' nonspecific treaty content may be beneficial to both patron and client during peacetime. By leaving its commitments vague, patrons introduce uncertainty into an adversary risk calculus, and the suggestion that they *may* intervene in a conflict on a client's behalf may well be enough to deter a potential challenger. A patron can provide deterrence without committing itself firmly to precise contingencies. Clients, who hope to outsource their security at the highest levels for long periods of time, may likewise be happy to accept a commitment that suggests that the patron may intervene in *any* defensive contingency. The ambiguous and

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<sup>128</sup> Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," p. 467.

<sup>129</sup> Tongfi Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle But Seldom Entrap States," *Security Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2011) pp. 350-377.

unilateral nature of security guarantees therefore serves the interests of *general deterrence* quite well.

Once the client becomes involved in a dispute or crisis, however, these defining security guarantee qualities may quickly become liabilities. If an adversary has made the decision to challenge the client, it has already accounted for the patron's ambiguous alliance guarantee. Even if the patron's direct interests are not invoked in the standoff, it faces the possibility that a minor skirmish involving a relatively weak client will escalate. The client state may not be able to credibly defend itself, and the patron may face an incentive to intervene sooner in crisis rather than doing so later in an actual war. Put differently, the characteristics that make security guarantees dependable tools of general deterrence may not make them particularly useful for immediate deterrence, giving patrons the incentive to intervene using prompt public statements or shows of force to reinforce their commitments and prevent escalation. The same tendencies should not prevail in other defense pacts, in which the patron is not necessarily on the hook for all defensive contingencies. In these other alliances, the patron has fewer incentives to intervene on its client's behalf in the crisis phase.

**H2:** *Ambiguous, unilateral commitments create incentives for nuclear patrons to intervene forcefully in security guarantee client crises to restrain allies and deter adversaries; the same crisis incentives do not prevail in other defense pacts.*

DV: Allied crisis intervention (statements and shows of force)

IV: Defense pact type (traditional vs. security guarantee)

Methods:

Quantitative (Chapter 4): Summary statistics using ICB data



Qualitative (Chapter 4): Case studies of crises in the US-Taiwan security guarantee (1958), Sino-Soviet security guarantee (1958), and US-Argentina and US-Chile non-security guarantees (1978-79)

### ***H3: Abandonment in the Nuclear Age***

The fear of abandonment, or allies' concern that partners will fail to make good on their alliance promises, is the second half of the alliance security dilemma. Allies are generally said to abandon an alliance partner if they formally abrogate the alliance treaty, fail to support the ally when the agreement's *casus foederis* arises, or decline to back a partner in a dispute with an adversary.<sup>130</sup> A central challenge of any alliance is managing partners' fears that these events will occur, and the unilateral and vague nature of security guarantees give client states good reason to be especially anxious. Without sufficient patron assurance that it does not intend to abandon its junior partners, client states may seek other alliances or the independent capabilities to provide for their own deterrence and defense, which may, in turn, impoverish patron global influence. Patron and client also have significant common interests, however, and the patron therefore has ample reason to want to assuage its clients' abandonment fears.

These abandonment fears largely stem from the fact that patron and client do not pool resources at the highest levels of escalation, leaving the latter dependent on the former for the primary instrument of deterrence, and potentially warfighting. While allies in traditional defense pacts have ample reasons to fear abandonment as well, both usually maintain their own armies, meaning that capabilities are symmetric and the commitment bilateral. An ally's failure to fulfill its alliance promise could still result in a significant

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<sup>130</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 182.

military loss, but would not be a catastrophe of the same existential proportions. Where nuclear umbrella alliances are concerned, however, allies must be convinced that their patron's efforts at deterrence are going far enough to affect the cost calculations of their adversary, so that it, in turn, will not attack at all. It must believe this despite the fact that it has no specific indication of when and how its patron may intervene if that should become necessary.

Leading institutional theories have argued that where states share substantial mutual interest, as in an alliance, they can assure one another through cooperation, defined as mutual policy adjustment. I posit that deterrence-related consultations need not actually induce real cooperation among security guarantee allies to mitigate client abandonment fears, however. Rather, because client states have so little a priori information about how their patrons are providing for their security, deterrence institutions can assuage abandonment fears by giving patrons a vehicle through which to unilaterally communicate existing strategies and policies. I hypothesize that nuclear patrons through the provision of information and with the aim of keeping the guarantee unilateral and ambiguous.

**H3:** *Patrons form nuclear consultation mechanisms to increase unilateral information sharing.*

DV: Nuclear consultation formation

IV: Defense pact type

Method:

Qualitative (Chapter 5): Comparative case studies of the formation of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group, the US-Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogues, and military consultation between the United States and Thailand (non-security guarantee).

## Methods

This dissertation makes use of multiple strategies to test the hypotheses presented above. It relies upon large-n regression analysis, summary statistical analysis, and qualitative case studies. Several of the case studies draw upon original archival research and interviews. Whether tested qualitatively or quantitatively, each hypothesis compares nuclear security guarantees and traditional defense pacts, to substantiate the unique nature of the former.

The power of statistical methods lies in the ability to compare the relationship between independent and dependent variables across a large number of cases. This type of analysis is not limited to one set of cases and thus provides external validity that in-depth analysis of a few cases cannot claim. In this study, for instance, statistical methods allow me to draw upon the universe of all politically-relevant state dyads, as opposed to just the cases of nuclear guarantees, or the broader population of alliances that are under study. Statistical methods are also not subject to the same degrees of freedom problems that may affect case studies. When testing hypotheses on a limited number of cases, it may be difficult to get sufficient variation on the relevant variables to reach strong conclusions about the relative strength of different arguments. This is not so when large-n methods are used.

For my alliance formation hypothesis tested in Chapter 2, I construct an original dataset of shared and unshared rivalries and alliance formations. The dataset contains yearly information for all politically-relevant dyads from 1816 to 2000. I draw upon COW

4.1 Alliance data, and Klein, Goertz and Diehl's rivalry data.<sup>131</sup> I also code several variables, including nuclear security guarantees, shared rivals, and exclusive rivals myself. For data on patron crisis intervention used in Chapter 4, I draw upon the International Crisis Behavior dataset, examining crises 1945-2000 using summary statistics. I measure allied intervention by restricting ICB's 3<sup>rd</sup> party intervention variables to intervention by a treaty ally according to COW 4.1 Alliance data.

There are, however, many limitations to statistical approaches. First, all statistical models impose some assumptions on the data, and these may be unrealistic or even implausible. This dissertation will employ traditional statistical approaches, and by extension, the assumptions that come along with these. I will attempt to identify and deal with these explicitly. Second, international relations data itself may be problematic. There is ample debate in IR about how best to measure a rivalry, for example, so the data I utilize likely measures adversary status imperfectly.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, while there have been many cases of alliance formation throughout history, there have only been 54 bilateral nuclear security guarantee formations. Although I select a statistical model, the Rare Events Logistic Regression, designed to deal with this problem, it is important to keep in mind nonetheless.

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<sup>131</sup> Douglas Gibler, *International Military Alliances 1648-2008* (Washington: CQ Press, 2008); James P. Klein, Gary Goertz, and Paul F. Diehl. "The New Rivalry Dataset: Procedures and Patterns." *Journal of Peace Research* 43, No. 3 (2006), pp. 331-348.

<sup>132</sup> For some of these debates, see: James P. Klein, Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, "The New Rivalries Dataset: Procedures and Patterns," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2006), pp. 331-348.

Case studies can be strong in several areas where statistical methods tend to be weak.<sup>133</sup> Statistical analysis tests predictions about correlations between variables, but cannot explain the whys and hows of those relationships. Qualitative research can evaluate whether variables that the hypotheses predict are behaving for the reasons expected. Case studies allow researchers to generalize on well-defined types of cases with a high degree of explanatory richness.<sup>134</sup> They are useful when one aims at high conceptual validity, helping to identify the indicators that most closely represent the theoretical concepts under study. Cases both help to identify relevant variables and refine concepts further. This method is also useful when a study examines the role of a particular causal mechanism. Cases can help a researcher determine what conditions activate a particular causal mechanism, and explore in depth the operation of that mechanism. Qualitative analysis is also helpful where causal complexity is present. That is, case studies can help a researcher recognize if multiple causal explanations are at play in explaining a single outcome.<sup>135</sup> In sum, qualitative analysis can increase a researcher's confidence that a hypothesized prediction holds for the reasons the theory expects it will hold.

The qualitative analysis in this dissertation will employ matched comparative cases and process tracing. The comparative method involves cross-case, controlled comparisons among a small number of cases. Through the comparative method we can introduce variation on the dependent variable, and thus draw stronger conclusions about the

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<sup>133</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of how qualitative research can address some of the pitfalls of statistical analysis, see: Henry E. Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), Chapter 3.

<sup>134</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), p. 31.

<sup>135</sup> George and Bennett, pp. 19- 22.

influence of the independent variable under study, and the theory more broadly.<sup>136</sup> Process-tracing, on the other hand, is useful for linking possible causes to observed outcomes. Instead of focusing on the analysis of variables across cases, it examines the causal pathway in a single case. Drawing on archival documents, interviews, and secondary sources, process tracing allows me to determine whether the causal process hypothesized is in fact evident in a particular case.<sup>137</sup> Process tracing will be combined with the comparative method, such that the within-case results of individual case studies are compared within a common theoretical framework. Each of these qualitative methods on their own certainly has their pitfalls.<sup>138</sup> They are, however, stronger when combined, and especially useful when they are paired with other methods.

It is worth noting at the outset that there are some methodological flaws and biases inherent in this study. As with many phenomena in international politics, this study of nuclear umbrella alliances cannot escape selection effects. I have attempted to deal with some of these by studying the formation as well as the function of nuclear umbrellas (they are both a dependent and independent variable), but some still remain. For example, for it to be a candidate ally, any potential client state likely lives in a dangerous neighborhood in the first place. This affects both its interest in security guarantees and the likelihood that it will fear abandonment or become involved in a conflict or crisis, meaning there is some endogeneity. This is of particular concern in Chapter 4, where I examine patron intervention in clients' crises. There are, of course, also a limited number of potential

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<sup>136</sup> This method of comparison is related to Mill's Method of Difference. For more on the Method of Difference and Method of Agreement and the conditions under which these apply, see George and Bennett, p. 153-155.

<sup>137</sup> George and Bennett, p. 6.

<sup>138</sup> See George and Bennett, pp. 161-170 for the drawbacks of controlled comparative case methods.

nuclear patron states in the international system. Patrons must have robust power projection capabilities as well as an interest in providing for another country's security to form these pacts in the first place. Patrons are therefore system-leading powers, and most cases are the US and USSR. Furthermore, the nature of the subject under study means that I have relatively few candidate cases to examine (n= 54, see Introduction, p. 13). All cases have occurred since 1945, and the vast majority of alliances were formed during the Cold War. I intend to study the full universe of umbrella cases throughout history, however, which adds to the explanatory power of my theory.

This dissertation concerns itself with all nuclear security guarantees, 1945-present. In all quantitative analysis, whether regression or descriptive statistics, all three nuclear patrons' alliances and alliance behaviors are included. Because of both data availability and substantive importance, however, the United States' alliances are the primary focus of the qualitative case studies. Particularly because of Moscow's hierarchical military relations with Warsaw Pact countries, there is relatively little data that allows me to trace how exactly the Soviet Union managed many of its security guarantees. The Sino-Soviet alliance is analyzed in Chapter 4, however.

The focus on the United States' alliance system is warranted for substantive reasons as well. Even during the Cold War, the vast majority of nuclear security guarantees were extended by the United States. Although Russia presently extends several nuclear security guarantee commitments, the United States maintains these pacts with over 30 countries. If new security guarantees are formed in the future, they will almost certainly be American. Testing a theory of security guarantee formation and management on qualitative cases that

are disproportionately US cases is justified because this is a predominantly American tool of strategy and statecraft.

Combining the methodological insights and the hypotheses derived above, I now summarize some basic aspects of my research design. The phenomenon under study is nuclear umbrella alliances, defined as a subclass of defense pacts.<sup>139</sup> This phenomenon is *not* an empirical universal. That is, there are many cases where security guarantee alliances do not form, although they might have. There is natural variation on the dependent variable. The theoretical framework used here is a theory of security guarantee formation and maintenance that is driven by these alliances' unusually ambiguous and unilateral nature.

The chief goal of this study is to explain how, despite a host of informational problems and uncertainties, nuclear security guarantees have formed and persisted for decades. This project does *not* seek to adjudicate the factors that make extended deterrence more or less credible, or why it succeeds and fails when it does. Rather, it aims to elucidate how this particular type of alliance forms and functions given the panoply of deterrence-related information problems that prevail in these pacts.

Beyond the contributions this dissertation will make to the literatures on alliances, deterrence, and signaling, however, there are some broader implications. Policymakers often discuss "the nuclear umbrella" as a tool of statecraft, but without a firm grasp of what exactly this comprises, it is difficult for analysts to make strong assertions about the policy

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<sup>139</sup> George and Bennett argue that most successful studies are those that work with a well-defined, smaller-scope *subclass* of a broader phenomenon. This type of research allows for narrower, but more precise generalizations. Studies of each subtype can be thought of a building blocks in broader, typological theories (in this case, theories of military alliances more broadly). George and Bennett, pp. 77-78.



possibilities and pitfalls of this type of alliance. There are at least three areas of US foreign policy to which the findings from this study will be directly applicable.

The first is in the Persian Gulf. President Barack Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have both suggested that if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, the United States may extend security guarantees to additional states in the Gulf Region.<sup>140</sup> Without a systematic understanding of how nuclear umbrellas form and function, however, it is difficult to assess the utility of such a policy. Chapters 2 and 3 will yield conclusions that speak directly to the feasibility and desirability of extending US guarantees to Gulf States in an effort to contain Iran.

Findings from this study are also relevant in the Pacific, where US allies are growing increasingly anxious as China rises and North Korea develops its nuclear arsenal. Chapter 4 of this study will highlight some issues areas in which Washington may face crisis entrapment on behalf of its East Asian clients, while Chapters 5 and 6 will suggest some ways that these partners may be assured despite mounting security challenges in the region.

Finally, until March 2014, deterrence analysts had turned their attention away from NATO. Russia's annexation of Crimea has brought deterrence and assurance in Europe back onto the global agenda. A firmer understanding of how the alliance has grappled with the requirements of extended deterrence in the past will inform debates about how it can do so now and in the future.

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<sup>140</sup> For an analysis of the viability of this option, see Colin Kahl et. al, "If All Else Fails: The Challenges of Containing a Nuclear-Armed Iran," Center for New American Security, May 13, 2013; Zachary K. Goldman and Mira Rapp-Hooper, "Conceptualizing Containment: The Iranian Threat and the Future of Gulf Security," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 128, No. 3 (2013), pp. 589-616.

## CHAPTER 2 - THE ENEMY OF MY FRIEND: ALLIANCE FORMATION AND SECURITY GUARANTEES

“It would be a mistake to help the French crush Germany when the French were unwilling to aid Russia against Austria or Turkey.”<sup>141</sup>  
-Russian Foreign Minister Nikolai Geirs

### Introduction

Since the early Cold War, the United States, Russia, and Great Britain—three of the five declared nuclear powers under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) — have all extended security guarantees to close allies. Many of these are still in force today.<sup>142</sup> Despite the fact that these alliances were foundational to the United States’ and Soviet Union’s grand strategies during the Cold War, and the fact that the United States and Russia both continue to maintain many of these alliances, we know little about how and why these pacts form. Under what conditions do nuclear-weapons possessing states extend security guarantees, and do these conditions differ from those under which more traditional defense pacts are concluded?

In this chapter, I argue that the ambiguous and unilateral nature of nuclear security guarantee commitments change the way these alliances are formed. Specifically, I hypothesize that while a shared threat may explain the formation of traditional defense pacts, nuclear security guarantees should only form if the prospective client state *does not* have adversaries that the patron does not share. That is, for security guarantees to form, the client state should *only* have adversaries that are exclusively shared with the patron. Drawing upon a novel alliance and rivalry dataset, I find substantial support for this hypothesis, and little evidence for the notion that the determinants of nuclear security

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<sup>141</sup> As quoted in William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism: A Penetrating and Revelatory Study of European Diplomacy in the Crucial Period of 1890-1902* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968), p. 32.

<sup>142</sup> See Introduction, Table 1, for full list of cases.

guarantee formation are the same as those of traditional defense pacts. Consistent with previous scholarship, I also find evidence that nuclear security guarantee formation is correlated with regime type, although traditional defense pact formation is not.

This chapter presents a new approach to the study of alliance formation in international politics. Despite the received wisdom that alliances form in response to external threat, there has been little effort to test empirically balancing theories of alliance formation. This chapter not only investigates how patterns of enmity may be related to alliance formation, but demonstrates that nuclear security guarantees may form for different reasons than other defense pacts, underscoring the fact that this is a unique type of alliance in international politics.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. I present a hypothesis on nuclear security guarantee formation, positing that for these alliances to form, different external threat conditions should prevail than those that are associated with more traditional defense pacts. I describe my alliance/rivalry dataset and then present the results of my data analysis. Consistent with my hypothesis, I find that shared rivalries between allies are good predictors of defense pact formation, but less valuable in explaining the formation of nuclear security guarantees. Exclusive rivalries are much stronger determinants of nuclear umbrella alliance formation.

### **Hypotheses on Nuclear Security Guarantee Formation**

The vast international relations literature on alliances has proffered a number of different reasons for why they are concluded. Perhaps the best-known explanation for the emergence of defensive alliances is that they are a form of balancing—efforts by states to

offset the capabilities or threats posed by adversaries.<sup>143</sup> Under a balance of power or balance of threat explanation for alliance formation, states form alliances when they share an enemy. As prominent scholars have observed, however, once states share an adversary, balancing theories are indeterminate on where exactly alliances should form.<sup>144</sup> Structure “generates pervasive fears and indeterminate options.”<sup>145</sup> A small number of quantitative studies have confirmed that a relationship exists between shared threats and alliance formation, but relatively little empirical work has investigated balancing hypotheses or how patterns of amity and enmity may shape alliance formation more broadly.<sup>146</sup>

Not only may balancing theories be underspecified theoretically and under-examined empirically, but it is also possible that the determinants of alliance formation vary with the type of defense pact in question. That is, different types of defensive alliances may form in response to different patterns of amity and enmity.

In this chapter and the next, I propose a hypothesis on the determinants of nuclear security guarantee formation. I posit that the ambiguous, unilateral nature of security guarantee commitments means that the requirements for forming them will be more exacting than those associated with more traditional defense pacts. A shared adversary may be a good predictor of defense pact formation, as balancing theories suggest, but a patron should require more than just a shared adversary to be willing to extend a security

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<sup>143</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Chapter 6; Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 21-26.

<sup>144</sup> Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 462. For a discussion of how this indeterminacy manifested itself with respect to pre-World War I alliance arrangements, see Jervis, *System Effects*, p. 244-245.

<sup>145</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 62.

<sup>146</sup> Michael F. Altfeld, “The Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test,” *Western Political Quarterly* Vol. 37, No.4 (1984), pp. 523-44; Zeev Maoz, Lesley G. Terris, Ranan D.Kuperman, and Ilan Talmud, “What Is the Enemy of My Enemy? Causes and Consequences of Imbalanced Relations, 1816–2001,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (February, 2007), pp. 100–115.

guarantee to a prospective client. Specifically, for a patron to be willing to extend a guarantee, it should not only share a rival with the client, but the client should *not* have rivals that the patron *does not* share. Because security guarantee treaties do not target specific adversaries, military contingencies, theaters of operations, or specify the type of aid that will be forthcoming, the patrons who extend them are on the hook for defensive aid broadly construed over an indefinite time horizon. This puts them at a higher risk of entrapment in their clients' conflicts than they would be if they extended more specific defensive commitments. Patrons should be able to anticipate this entrapment risk and make their security guarantee formation decisions accordingly.<sup>147</sup> If a prospective client has enemies that the patron does not count among its own, the possibility of becoming involved in an unwanted war should seem too great to make security guarantee formation worthwhile.<sup>148</sup> For a patron to extend a security guarantee to a client, then, we should expect that they have not only shared, but exclusive rivals, meaning the client does not have rivals that the patron does not also share. Exclusive rivals should be a superior predictor of security guarantee formation than the shared rival explanation posited by balancing theories.

The same should not hold true where other defense pacts are concerned, however. Because non-security guarantee defense pacts may rely upon more contingent treaty commitments, the conditions for forming them need not be so exacting. If an ally can

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<sup>147</sup> James D. Fearon, "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation," *International Organization* Vol. 52, No. 2 (1998), pp. 269-305; George W. Downs, David M. Rocke, and Peter N. Barsoom, "Is the Good News About Compliance Good News About Cooperation?," *International Organization* Vol. 50, No. 3 (1996), pp. 379-406.

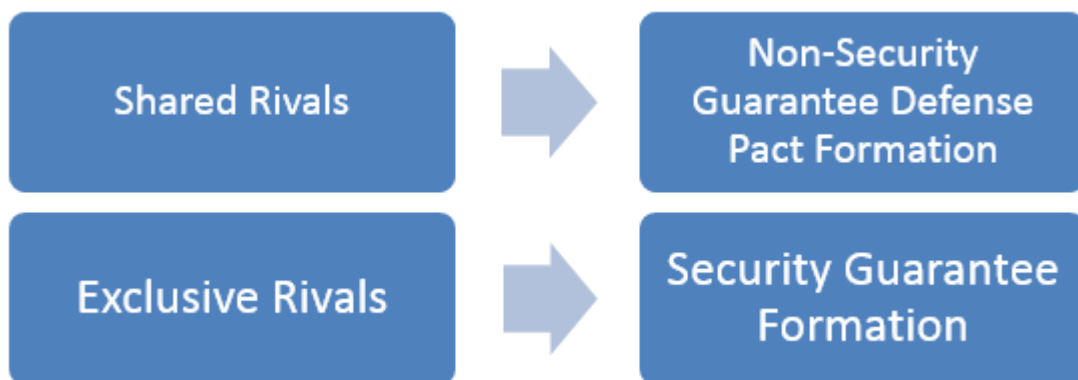
<sup>148</sup> For foundational work on the alliance tradeoffs between entrapment and abandonment, see: Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics Before and After Hiroshima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 151-152; Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, 1997, p. 43; Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* Vol. 36, No.4, (1984), pp. 461-495.

specify conditions of its military aid, it may be willing to form a defense pact even if the prospective partner has rivals that it does not share. The ability to provide targeted deterrence and military aid under circumscribed conditions should mean that exclusive rivals are not necessary for most defense pacts to form. Shared rivals should better explain the formation of non-security guarantee defense pacts. This yields my hypothesis:

**H1:** *For a security guarantee to form, client states should have rivals that are exclusively shared by the patron; for non-security guarantee defense pacts to form, shared rivals will be superior predictors of alliance formation.*

This hypothesis relies upon two dependent variables and two independent variables. The dependent variables are security guarantee formation and non-security guarantee defense pact formation. The independent variables are exclusive rivalry and shared rivalry. Hypothesis 1 expects that security guarantee formation will be better explained by the presence of exclusive rivalries between partners than it will be by shared rivalries. Per traditional balancing explanations, however, non-security guarantee defense pacts will be better explained by shared rivalries. The expected relationships are shown in the arrow diagram below.

*Figure 8- Hypothesis 1*



Because this hypothesis consists of two dependent and two independent variables, there are multiple ways it can be invalidated. That is, there is more than one null hypothesis. There are two null hypotheses that would suggest that the determinants of security guarantee formation are no different than those of traditional defense pact formation. First, consistent with balancing hypotheses, shared rivalries may explain both security guarantee and other defense pact formation better than exclusive rivalries. Second, exclusive rivalries may explain both security guarantee and other defense pact formation better than shared rivalries, which would suggest that traditional balancing hypotheses require refinement. Third, security guarantees and other defense pacts may indeed have different conditions for formation, but they may be the inverse of what I posit: exclusive rivalries may better explain the formation of traditional defense pacts, while shared rivalries alone may better explain security guarantee formation. These three null hypotheses are listed below.

**H1A1:** *Shared rivalries are stronger predictors than exclusive rivalries of both security guarantee and traditional defense pact formation;*

**H1A2:** *Exclusive rivalries are stronger predictors than shared rivalries of both security guarantee and traditional defense pact formation;*

**H1A3:** *Shared rivalries are the stronger predictor of security guarantee formation; Exclusive rivalries are the stronger predictor of non-security guarantee defense pact formation.*

In this chapter, I test quantitatively the relationship posited by Hypothesis 1 using a novel dataset. In the next chapter, I will test the same hypothesis qualitatively, using two in-depth historical case studies to demonstrate that the relationship holds for the reasons laid out here.

## Rivalry and Alliance Formation Data

To test Hypothesis 1 quantitatively, I construct an original dataset of shared and unshared rivalries and alliance formations. The dataset contains yearly information for all politically-relevant dyads from 1816 to 2000. The unit of analysis is the dyad-year.

Politically-relevant dyads (PRDs) are dyads in which at least one of the states is a major power, or the states are contiguous. Much if not most international systemic activity occurs within this population. The use of PRDs is prominent in international relations analysis of time series cross-sectional data with a binary dependent variable.<sup>149</sup> The principal advantage of drawing upon this universe of cases is feasibility: PRDs constitute approximately 10 percent of total dyads between 1816 and 2000.<sup>150</sup> Using PRDs gives me over 94,000 observations, whereas drawing upon all dyads over the same time period would have resulted in close to a million observations. Given that several variables under study in this chapter are coded by hand, politically-relevant dyads made for a more tractable research task.

The primary drawback to using PRDs is that this is a non-random sample of cases and may introduce some selection bias. Scholars have examined whether PRDs introduced measurement error and selection bias, and did not find that erroneous estimation resulted from the use of this data.<sup>151</sup> For my part, I try to minimize bias to the degree that I can. I obtain my sample of PRDs by extraction through EUGene, and set contiguity at its

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<sup>149</sup> Douglas Lemke, and William Reed. "The Relevance of Politically Relevant Dyads," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2001), p. 129.

<sup>150</sup> Lemke and Reed, p. 128.

<sup>151</sup> Lemke and Reed, pp. 140-141.



maximum possible level.<sup>152</sup> I am also conscious of the fact that this sample has already selected for major power status and geographic contiguity, so I do not add additional control variables to measure these in my statistical models.

Given the phenomenon under study, the population of PRDs is an appropriate choice. Because this chapter seeks to compare the determinants of security guarantee formation to those of non-security guarantee defense pacts, a population that samples great power alliances disproportionately is theoretically sound. Potential alliances that are not examined as a result of this PRD choice are predominately those formed between minor, non-contiguous powers (e.g., alliances between Latin American and African states). Balancing theories of alliance formation were developed to explain great power alliance formation. Nuclear security guarantees have only ever been extended by great powers. By not including minor power, non-contiguous dyads in my sample, I am essentially controlling for major power status. This dataset might best be termed a Major Power Rivalry and Alliance Formation dataset. Despite the fact that it includes only 10 percent of all possible dyads since 1816, it includes 900 of 2,155 total alliance formations during that time period, and thus nearly half of all international alliance activity.

As explained above, I examine two dichotomous dependent variables: security guarantee (*NSG*) formation, and non-security guarantee defense pact (*Defense*) formation. Each of these variables measures whether an alliance was formed in a given dyad-year, based on COW alliance data.<sup>153</sup> Because I am interested in the formation of security

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<sup>152</sup> At EUGene's Level 5 Contiguity, states need not share a land border and may be separate by up to 400 miles of water. Scott D. Bennett, and Allan Stam, "EUGene: A Conceptual Manual," *International Interactions*, Vol. 26 (2000), pp. 179-204.

<sup>153</sup> Alliance formations are coded from COW 4.1 alliance data. Nuclear security guarantees are coded by the author, and non-security guarantee defense pacts are a residual defense pact category.

guarantees as compared to other defense pacts, I do not include ententes or non-aggression pacts in this analysis. Because the unit of analysis is the dyad-year, I divide multilateral alliances into dyadic observations.<sup>154</sup> I also examine two dichotomous independent variables—shared rivalry (*SharedRival*), and exclusive rivalry (*ExclusiveRival*, meaning that a dyad shares a rival and neither state has a rival that the other member does not share).

Both independent variables are coded based on Klein, Goertz, and Diehl's rivalry data.<sup>155</sup> In this data, enduring rivalries are coded based on behavioral indicators—specifically, based on past disputes. Repeated conflicts create an expectation of future conflict. I rely upon this coding of enduring rivalries because it is straightforward and objective, although it is not without its drawbacks. Behavioral coding, for example, may miss rivalries that do not result in violent disputes. Another option would be to rely upon a perceptual approach to strategic rivalry, most closely associated with William R. Thompson's rivalry work. In this approach, rivalries are coded when historical documents indicate that key decision makers perceived another state to be an adversary. This approach, however, includes some assumptions about power symmetry as a condition for rivalry identification.<sup>156</sup> Because I am interested in a type of alliance that is fundamentally asymmetric, this is not an appropriate indicator for this analysis. Additionally, the Thompson data contains far fewer rivalries than the Klein, Goertz, and Diehl data.

The *SharedRival* variable is drawn directly from Klein, Goertz, and Diehl's data. It is coded as one if a dyad has a common rival in a given year, and zero otherwise. The

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<sup>154</sup> It is important to acknowledge that this may produce some bias. See: Paul Poast, "(Mis) using Dyadic Data to Analyze Multilateral Events," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (2010), pp. 403-425.

<sup>155</sup> James P. Klein, Gary Goertz, and Paul F. Diehl. "The New Rivalry Dataset: Procedures and Patterns." *Journal of Peace Research* 43, No. 3 (2006), pp. 331-348. No isolated (only enduring) rivalries are included. I am grateful to Raymond Kuo for his help in constructing the *Sharedriv* variable.

<sup>156</sup> William Thompson, *Handbook of International Rivalries: 1494-2010* (Washington: CQ Press, 2102), p. 1.

*ExclusiveRival* variable is coded through a two-stage process. I began by consulting the Klein, Goertz, and Diehl rivalry data for the presence of unshared adversaries in every dyad-year. I created a variable *UnsharedRival*, which is coded as one if one member of the dyad had an adversary that the other did not share in a given year. *UnsharedRival* was otherwise coded as zero. I then created the variable *ExclusiveRival*. *ExclusiveRival* is coded as one if and only if: a) the dyad has a common rival that year; b) the dyad has no unshared rivals that year. It is otherwise coded as zero. *ExclusiveRival* therefore captures the presence of a shared rival and the lack of an unshared rival, and may be thought of as a more restrictive subset of *SharedRival*.

To account for the unilateral nature of nuclear security guarantees, I make some specific adjustments to the coding of *UnsharedRival* and *ExclusiveRival*. If the dyad includes one or more nuclear patrons, then I am solely concerned whether the client state has rivals that the patron does not share. Because only one power possesses nuclear weapons and provides defensive protection in these pacts, we should expect that a patron may decline to extend a security guarantee to a client with unshared rivals. The client, however, may be much less concerned that its patron has other adversaries, because a security guarantee does not obligate it to provide military assistance to the patron in the case of war that does not involve its territory. The fact that the United States had a rivalry with North Korea beginning in 1950, for example, should not prevent Japan from accepting a security guarantee from the United States in 1951, because Japan has no treaty obligation to assist in a US-North Korean war.

Before the nuclear age, however, alliance partners did not conclude pacts that were so unilateral in their means of deterrence or their alliance obligations. Allies were expected

to assist one another in the case of conflict, and their means of doing so (conventional arms) were symmetric, even if they did not necessarily possess equivalent levels of conventional capabilities. And as discussed in Chapter 1, security guarantees are a post-World War II phenomenon, meaning that almost no previous alliances promised assistance that was truly unilateral in nature. Before 1945 then, the *UnsharedRival* is coded as 1 if *either* member of the dyad has a rival the other does not share. This also holds true after 1945 if neither member of the dyad is a nuclear power, capable of extending a unilateral guarantee. I bring this coding rule into effect for each of the five declared nuclear powers in the first year that it possessed nuclear weapons.<sup>157</sup> I employ this unilateral coding rule for *all* nuclear powers, regardless of whether or not they have ever opted to extend deterrence to allies. For example, dyads including France (beginning in 1960) and China (beginning in 1964) are coded according to this rule, even though neither has ever attempted to extend a nuclear security guarantee. These states' mere possession of nuclear weapons means that they theoretically could decide to form a unilateral nuclear security guarantee.

I also include several control variables, beginning with regime type. Numerous studies have examined whether states of similar regime type are more likely to form alliances.<sup>158</sup> Particularly relevant are findings that suggest that Cold War-era alliances may

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<sup>157</sup> This occurs in the following years: The United States (1945); The Soviet Union (1949); Great Britain (1952); France (1960); China (1964).

<sup>158</sup> Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73," *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (1991), pp. 369-395; Randolph M. Siverson and Juliann Emmons, "Birds of a Feather: Democratic Political Systems and Alliance Choices in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1991), pp. 285-306; Randolph M. Siverson and Harvey Starr, "Regime Change and the Restructuring of Alliances," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (1994), pp. 145-161; Michael W. Simon and Erik Gartzke, "Political System Similarity And The Choice of Allies: Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do Opposites Attract?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40 No.4, (1996), pp. 617-635; Brian Lai and Dan Reiter, "Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2000), pp. 203-227; Douglas M. Gibler and Scott Wolford,

be more likely than others to be correlated with regime type, which is likely explained by the US and Soviet alliance systems.<sup>159</sup> Recent findings suggest that democratic dyads are not, in fact, more likely to form alliances, and indeed, may be less likely to form them. Alliances in the Cold War period tended to occur among democratic dyads, however, with the alliances often preceding democratization.<sup>160</sup> Because there is ample evidence to suggest correlation between regime type and alliances during the Cold War, and because nearly all nuclear security guarantees were extended by the United States or Soviet Union to ideologically similar states, I expect that shared regime type will be strongly associated with security guarantee formation. I create a variable, *JointDemoc*, which is coded as one if the Polity2 scores of both members of a dyad are between 5 and 10, and zero otherwise.<sup>161</sup> I also create a variable *JointAutoc*, which is coded as one if both members of a dyad have Polity2 scores between -5 and -10, and zero otherwise. I then combine these variables to create a *JointRegime* variable, which is coded as one if a dyad is either jointly democratic or jointly autocratic, and zero otherwise.

Next, I control for the number of great powers in the international system. As discussed above with respect to regime type, alliances formed under bipolarity may be distinct from those that formed under multipolarity. Given that nuclear security guarantees have all been formed during the Cold War and after, I expect that the number of major

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"Alliances, Then Democracy: An Examination of the Relationship Between Regime Type and Alliance Formation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2006), pp. 129-153.

<sup>159</sup> Gartzke and Simon, p. 628.

<sup>160</sup> Lai and Reiter; Gibler and Wolford, p. 143.

<sup>161</sup> Polity2 (Version IVe) scores rely on the 21-point regime type scale, ranging from -10 for a full autocracy to 10 for a full democracy. Polity2 scores are appropriate for use with time series data. See: Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jaggers, "Polity IV Project: Dataset Users' Manual," 2005, available at: <http://www.stevendroper.com/polity.pdf>.

powers will be negatively correlated with NSG formation. The variable *NumGreatPowers*, a count variable of system-leading powers in a given year, allows me to minimize perturbations based on these systemic differences.<sup>162</sup> I do not, however, include a control to measure whether a specific dyad includes one or more great powers, as such a control would be duplicative and inadvisable given that my dataset is based on politically-relevant dyads.

Third, I control for the ratio of material capabilities within each dyad and create a variable *CapabilitiesRatio*, based on both states' CINC scores.<sup>163</sup> A state's national material capabilities may be a good indicator of its ability to provide military assistance and security to an alliance partner. Because nuclear security guarantees are unilateral in their promises of aid, we might expect that a higher capabilities ratios to be more closely associated with NSG formation. Because I am controlling for *CapabilitiesRatio*, however, I do not also include an additional variable to measure GDP, as these are highly correlated.<sup>164</sup>

Finally, I add controls for temporal dependence in both of my dependent variables. Researchers have increasingly recognized the importance of controlling for time dependence in time series cross sectional data with a binary dependent variable (BTSCS). Beck, Tucker, and Katz originally proposed using cubic splines or time dummies to control for time dependence in logistic regression to make a logit model equivalent to an event history model for BTSCS data.<sup>165</sup> Time dummies can introduce estimation problems,

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<sup>162</sup> This variable is extracted through EUGene. Bennett and Stam.

<sup>163</sup> CINC scores are extracted through EUGene. Bennett and Stam.

<sup>164</sup> Gibler and Wolford, p. 139.

<sup>165</sup> Nathaniel Beck, Jonathan N. Katz and Richard Tucker, "Taking Time Seriously: Times-Series-Cross-Section Analysis with Binary Dependent Variable," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Oct. 1998), pp. 1260-1288.

however, and cubic splines are difficult to implement.<sup>166</sup> An alternative is to control for time since the last occurrence of the dependent variable, introducing variables  $t$ ,  $t^2$ , and  $t^3$  into the regression.<sup>167</sup> This cubic polynomial approximation is simple to implement and to interpret.<sup>168</sup> I create variables *tnsg*, *tnsg2*, and *tnsg3*, which capture time since the last nuclear security guarantee formation. I also create *tdef*, *tdef2*, and *tdef3*, which capture time since the last non-security guarantee defense pact formation. These controls for temporal dependence are included in the bivariate and multivariate analyses below.

### Data Analysis

My central hypothesis is that exclusive rivalries between security patrons and clients explain the formation of nuclear security guarantees, while shared rivals are the stronger predictor of other defense pacts. I employ Rare Events Logistic Regression (ReLogit) models to test my claims about the correlates of security guarantee formation. ReLogit is a suite of programs for estimating rare events.<sup>169</sup> In this case, alliance formations are far rarer than non-formations.<sup>170</sup> ReLogit is able to model dichotomous dependent variables and to correct for biased estimates in rare events. I adjust robust standard errors for clustering by dyad.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> David B. Carter and Curtis S. Signorino, "Back to the Future: Modeling Time Dependence in Binary Data," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 271-292.

<sup>167</sup> These cubic polynomials are necessarily highly correlated, but this is not problematic in a dataset as large as the one used here. Carter and Signorino, pp. 282-283.

<sup>168</sup> For a detailed explanation of why the cubic polynomial is appropriate, see Carter and Signorino, pp. 282-283.

<sup>169</sup> RELOGIT Software is obtained via: Michael Tomz, Gary King, and Langche Zeng. 1999. RELOGIT: Rare Events Logistic Regression, Version 1.1 Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, October 1, available at: <http://gking.harvard.edu/>.

<sup>170</sup> Traditional defense pact formations occur in 800 and security guarantees in 51 of 94,341 observations.

<sup>171</sup> Gary King and Langche Zeng, "Logistic Regression in Rare Events Data," Department of Government, Harvard University, (1999a), available from <http://GKing.Harvard.Edu>.

Multiple forms of analysis are useful in evaluating the evidence for and against Hypothesis 1. To begin, I examine the simple bivariate relationships between key independent variables and nuclear security guarantee and non-security guarantee defense pact formation (Table 2). For each bivariate relationship, I include controls for time dependence. The bivariate analysis is only a first step, however. To control for some of the potentially-confounding factors I described above, I then conduct multivariate analysis, including control and time dependence variables (Table 3). Finally, I examine the substantive effects of each independent variable on the predicted probability of the dependent variable (Table 4).

### ***Correlates of Alliance Formation: Bivariate Analysis***

I begin by examining the bivariate relationships between nuclear security guarantee formation (*NSG*) and the independent variables of interest. Turning to the first set of bivariate relationships, we see that the correlation between exclusive rivalry (*ExclusiveRival*) and nuclear security guarantee (*NSG*) formation is positive and highly significant. There is also a strong correlation between shared rivalry (*SharedRival*) and nuclear security guarantee formation, although it is somewhat less so. As anticipated, joint regime type (*Joint Regime*) and the alliance capabilities ratio (*CapabilitiesRatio*) each have a positive and statistically significant effect on *NSG* formation, and the number of great powers in the system (*NumGreatPowers*) has a negative and statistically significant effect in these bivariate models. Turning to the second set of bivariate relationships where the dependent variable is non-security guarantee defense pacts (*Defense*), we find slightly different results. *ExclusiveRival* has a positive and statistically significant relationship to



*Defense*, but *SharedRival* appears to be the stronger relationship of the two. *JointRegime* is still positively and significantly associated with defense pact formation. The number of great powers in the system is still negatively and significantly correlated with *Defense* formation. Finally, the capabilities ratio in the dyad is not significant where defense pact formation is concerned.

Table 3- Bivariate Models

Independent Variable	NSG DV	
	Coefficient	t-statistic
<b>Exclusiverival</b>	3.889***	(13.79)
<b>Sharedrival</b>	2.586***	(8.98)
<b>JointRegime</b>	2.281***	(6.24)
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	-1.684***	(-3.72)
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	0.0000450*	(2.01)
	Defense DV	
<b>ExclusiveRival</b>	0.546**	(2.81)
<b>SharedRival</b>	0.731***	(7.80)
<b>JointRegime</b>	0.179*	(2.44)
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	-0.229***	(-5.63)
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	-0.0000105	(-0.77)

t statistics in parentheses  
 \* p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

### ***Correlates of Alliance Formation: Multivariate Results***

I now turn to the results of the multivariate models. In Models 1-3, *NSG* is the dependent variable and *Defense* is the dependent variable in Models 4-6. I begin by commenting on the correlates of *NSG* formation. In Model 1, *ExclusiveRival* is positive and highly significant, but in Model 2, *SharedRival* is also positive and highly significant. When I introduce both of these independent variables into Model 3, I find that *ExclusiveRival* remains positive and significant at the .001 level, while *SharedRival* loses significance altogether. This suggests that *ExclusiveRival* holds the explanatory power where *NSG*

formation is concerned, and is a better predictor than *SharedRival* for this dependent variable, consistent with Hypothesis 1. Control variables perform as expected in Models 1-3: *JointRegime* is positive and highly significant, *NumGreatPowers* is negative and significant, and *CapabilitiesRatio* is positive and significant in each of these first three models. My controls for time dependency are not significant in Models 1-3.

The correlates of non-security guarantee defense pacts (*Defense*) appear to be quite different (Models 4-6). In Model 4, *ExclusiveRival* is positive and significant, while *SharedRival* is positive and significant in Model 5. When the two independent variables of interest are introduced into Model 6 however, *SharedRival* remains positive and highly significant. *ExclusiveRival*, however, not only loses its significance but takes on a negative sign! These results suggest that where *Defense* formation is concerned, *SharedRival* is the far stronger correlate, consistent with Hypothesis 1. Exclusive rivals are not a strong predictor of non-security guarantee formation. Control variables also perform differently when *Defense* is the dependent variable. *NumGreatPowers* remains negatively correlated and significant. *JointRegime* is not, however, significant, in any of Models 4-6, consistent with previous findings that joint regime type is a correlate of alliance formation only where US and Soviet Cold War alliances are concerned. *CapabilitiesRatio* is not significant in any of Models 4-6, consistent with my conjecture that capabilities may be a more important determinate of alliance formation when defense pacts are unilateral guarantees.

Controls for time dependency are significant in Models 4-6. This is not entirely surprising. As noted throughout this project, non-security guarantee defense pacts may be much more specific and bounded than security guarantees. As a result, the fact that a dyad has one defense pact may mean there are other adversaries or contingencies for which it

might like to form additional alliances, and we would expect states that were already allied to be more likely to conclude additional alliances. This is not so where NSGs are concerned: A patron need only extend this type of unilateral guarantee once, as it covers all of the client states' defensive contingencies. We should not expect multiple NSGs within a dyad.<sup>172</sup> Because these time polynomials have been included in the models, however, there is no need to take additional measures to account for time dependency.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Obvious exceptions to this expectation would include Soviet/Russian cases, where one NSG alliance was terminated with the fall of the Soviet Union, and begun anew with Russia as the patron in subsequent years.

<sup>173</sup> Beck, Tucker, and Katz, pp. 1281-1282.

Table 4-Multivariate Models

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	NSG	NSG	NSG	Defense	Defense	Defense
<b>ExclusiveRival</b>	3.507*** [12.35]		2.898*** [4.87]	.507* [2.55]		-0.171 [-.73]
<b>SharedRival</b>		2.452*** [8.53]	0.659 [1.10]		.726*** [5.78]	.766*** [5.34]
<b>JointRegime</b>	1.793*** [4.95]	1.966*** [5.40]	1.787*** [4.93]	0.103 [1.30]	0.0854 [1.08]	0.0899 [1.13]
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	-1.703** [-2.89]	-1.773** [-2.92]	-1.711** [-2.89]	-.221*** [-4.86]	-.225*** [-5.04]	-.225*** [-5.04]
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	.00008*** [5.20]	0.00008*** [5.58]	0.00008*** [5.29]	-.000007 [-.61]	-.000004 [-.43]	-.000004 [-.42]
<b>tmsg</b>	0.00782 [-0.25]	0.0127 [.38]	0.00836 [-.27]			
<b>tmsg2</b>	0.000198 [.34]	0.000281 [.45]	0.000205 [0.35]			
<b>tmsg3</b>	0.000001 [-.35]	0.0000001 [-.44]	0.000001 [-.36]			
<b>tdef</b>				-.0899*** [-10.51]	-.0910*** [-10.67]	-.0909*** [-10.66]
<b>tdef2</b>				.00139** [6.57]	.00140*** [6.66]	.00140*** [6.66]
<b>tdef3</b>				-.000006*** [-4.76]	.000006*** [4.81]	.000006*** [4.82]
<b>_cons</b>	-.203 [-.07]	0.000132 [.00]	-.201 [.07]	-2.544*** [-9.95]	-2.585*** [-10.09]	-2.587*** [-10.11]
<b>N</b>	94,316	94,316	94,316	94,316	94,316	94,316

t statistics in brackets

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Using a standard logit or logistic regression model in lieu of a ReLogit model does not meaningfully alter any of the findings reported here (see Chapter 2 Appendix, Tables 6 and 7 for logit and logistic results). Additionally, given that we might expect joint regime type to be correlated with exclusive or shared rivalry, I run a robustness check with

*JointRegime\_excluded* from the models. Excluding this variable appears to increase the explanatory power of *SharedRival* and *ExclusiveRival* (see Chapter 2 Appendix, Table 8). Given that nuclear security guarantees all involve at least one major power, I also run all six models only on those dyads that include at least one great power, as this may make for a more apt comparison. I find that the results are unchanged (see Chapter 2 Appendix, Table 9).

Table 5 examines the substantive effects of each of the independent variables on *NSG* and *Defense* formation, using multivariate Models 3 and 6 (Table 4).<sup>174</sup> Table 5 shows the first differences, or the change in the probability of *NSG/Defense* formation as a function of each covariate.<sup>175</sup> I calculate the marginal effects of each independent variable, showing how a one-unit increase in each affects the predicted probability of *NSG/Defense* formation, holding all other variables at their means. Beginning with Table 5, Model 1, I discuss the effects of each independent variable on the probability of *NSG* formation. The presence of an exclusive rivalry makes the formation of a nuclear security guarantee nearly 300 percent more likely! The presence of a shared rivalry makes the formation of a security guarantee 65 percent more likely, but *SharedRival* is not significant in this model. Shared regime type makes a dyad nearly twice as likely to form a security guarantee, and each additional great power in the international system makes an *NSG* 171 percent *less* likely to form. Finally, because the capabilities ratio is a continuous variable, this marginal effect

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<sup>174</sup> Marginal effects are calculated on the basis of Models 3 and 6, and therefore include controls for time dependency, although these are not shown here.

<sup>175</sup> On the importance of presenting first differences when interpreting ReLogit models, see King and Zeng, p. 141.

measures the instantaneous rate of change, and cannot be interpreted in the same way as the other independent variables, which are categorical.

*Table 5- Substantive Effects of Variables on the Likelihood of Alliance Formation*

	[1] NSG	[2] Defense
<b>ExclusiveRival</b>	2.898*** [4.87]	-0.171 [0.73]
<b>SharedRival</b>	0.659 [1.10]	0.766*** [5.34]
<b>JointRegime</b>	1.787*** [4.93]	0.0899 [1.13]
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	-1.711** [-2.89]	-0.225*** [-5.04]
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	0.0000807*** [5.29]	-0.00000466 [-0.42]
<b>N</b>	94316	94316

t statistics in brackets

\* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<.001

Turning to Table 5, Model 2, I consider the effects of the independent variables on non-security guarantee defense pact formation. In this model, the presence of an exclusive rivalry actually makes defense pact formation 17 percent *less* likely. The presence of a shared rivalry, however, makes alliance formation about 77 percent *more* likely. Shared regime type makes defense pact formation about nine percent more likely, although this variable is not significant in the model. An increase of one in the number of great powers in the system reduces the likelihood of defense pact formation by 22.5 percent. Once again, the marginal effects of *CapabilitiesRatio* represent an instantaneous rate of change, and in this model the variable is not significant.

## Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter has sought to illuminate the conditions under which states form nuclear security guarantees, and how those conditions differ from those of traditional defense pact formation. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, I found that the conditions for *NSG* formation do differ from those of *Defense* formation: exclusive rivalries are strong predictors of the former, while shared rivalries are superior predictors of the latter. I found no evidence to suggest that both types of defense pacts might be explained by the same pattern of enmity (H1A1 and H1A2), and none to support a conclusion that exclusive rivalries explain *Defense* formation, while shared rivals explain *NSG* formation (H1A3).

Additionally, these empirical results appear to go beyond a simple validation of Hypothesis 1. In multivariate analysis when both independent variables of interest are included, not only is an exclusive rivalry the superior predictor of *NSG* formation, but shared rivalries are actually not statistically significant correlates at all. Exclusive rivalries, however, make security guarantee formation nearly three times more likely than it would be otherwise. Even more surprisingly, in multivariate analysis of *Defense* formation, not only was *SharedRival* the superior predictor, but *ExclusiveRival* actually took on a negative sign! Where non-security guarantee defense pact formation is concerned, shared rivalries increase the chance of a pact significantly, but the presence of exclusive rivalries actually reduces the likelihood of an alliance. This analysis therefore provides support for the relationship between shared rivalries and alliance formation proffered by balancing theories, as long as the defense pacts in question are not security guarantees. These

differences underscore the importance of studying nuclear security guarantees as a unique type of alliance.

These findings may also have some tentative implications the body of work on the relationship between regime type and alliance formation. Recent scholarship has found that regime type is closely correlated with alliance formation only where the United States and Soviet Union's Cold War alliances are concerned.<sup>176</sup> In subsequent research, scholars should explore whether it is *all* US and Soviet alliances, or just US and Soviet security guarantees that are driving this relationship. If it is the latter, then regime type affinity may be one additional characteristic that sets nuclear security guarantees apart from other defensive alliances.

This chapter has established that there exists a strong empirical relationship between exclusive rivalries and nuclear security guarantee formation, and support for the long-accepted link between shared rivals and defense pact formation. I have not yet established, however, that these relationships are correlated for the precise reasons I have proffered: namely, that the asymmetric, ambiguous nature of security guarantees raises the risk of entrapment if unshared adversaries are present, while the possibility of circumscribing other defense pacts means that shared, but not exclusive rivalries, should permit their formation.

To explore the validity of this logic, I also conduct qualitative analysis of the same hypothesis in the next chapter. Using process tracing and the comparative method, I examine the formation of the Franco-Russian alliance of 1894, and the United States'

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<sup>176</sup> Gartzke and Simon, pp. 617-635; Lai and Reiter, pp. 203-222; Gibler and Wolford, pp. 129-153.



decision not to extend a security guarantee to Israel in 1963. Does Hypothesis 1 explain the formation of the Franco-Russian pact and the non-formation of a US-Israel security guarantee? And if so, is this attributable to the different signaling requirements of a security guarantee compared to a traditional defense pact?

## Chapter 2 Appendix

*Table 6- Logit Models*

	(1) NSG	(2) NSG	(3) NSG	(4) Defense	(5) Defense	(6) Defense
<b>ExclusiveRival</b>	3.514*** (12.38)		3.052*** (5.13)	0.490* (2.47)		-0.183 (-0.78)
<b>SharedRival</b>		2.459*** (8.55)	0.515 (0.86)		0.723*** (5.76)	0.761*** (5.30)
<b>JointRegime</b>	1.819*** (5.02)	2.005*** (5.50)	1.814*** (5.00)	0.102 (1.29)	0.0843 (1.06)	0.0887 (1.12)
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	-1.756** (-2.98)	-1.813** (-2.99)	-1.764** (-2.98)	-0.222*** (-4.88)	-0.226*** (-5.06)	-0.226*** (-5.06)
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	0.0000478** (3.09)	0.0000514*** (3.56)	0.0000484** (3.17)	-0.0000106 (-0.88)	-0.00000804 (-0.72)	-0.00000792 (-0.71)
<b>tnsg</b>	-0.0115 (-0.38)	-0.0154 (-0.46)	-0.0120 (-0.39)			
<b>tnsg2</b>	0.000277 (0.47)	0.000343 (0.55)	0.000284 (0.48)			
<b>tnsg3</b>	-0.00000149 (-0.51)	-0.00000177 (-0.57)	-0.00000152 (-0.51)			
<b>Tdef</b>				-0.0902*** (-10.55)	-0.0914*** (-10.70)	-0.0913*** (-10.70)
<b>tdef2</b>				0.00140*** (6.61)	0.00141*** (6.71)	0.00141*** (6.71)
<b>tdef3</b>				- 0.00000603*** (-4.81)	- 0.00000601*** (-4.87)	- 0.00000601*** (-4.87)
<b>_cons</b>	0.0238 (0.01)	0.142 (0.05)	0.0207 (0.01)	-2.538*** (-9.93)	-2.579*** (-10.07)	-2.580*** (-10.08)
<b>N</b>	94316	94316	94316	94316	94316	94316

t statistics in parentheses

\* p<0.05

\*\* p<0.01

\*\*\* p<0.001

Table 7- Logistic Models

	[1] NSG	[2] NSG	[3] NSG	[4] Defense	[5] Defense	[6] Defense
<b>ExclusiveRival</b>	33.59274 *** [12.38]		21.16515 *** [5.13]	1.632454 * [2.47]		0.8325707 [-0.78]
<b>SharedRival</b>		11.68915 *** [8.55]	1.674072 [0.86]		2.059722 *** [5.76]	2.140961 *** [5.3]
<b>JointRegime</b>	6.163286*** [5.02]	7.423843 *** [5.50]	6.133044*** [5.00]	1.10766 [1.29]	1.087929 [1.06]	1.092807 [1.12]
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	.17276 ** [-2.98]	.1631232 ** [-2.99]	.1714085 ** [-2.98]	.8007993*** [-4.88]	.7979296 *** [-5.06]	.7977864 *** [-5.06]
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	1.000048 ** [3.09]	1.000051 *** [3.56]	1.000048 ** [3.17]	0.9999894 [-0.88]	0.999992 [-0.72]	0.9999921 [-0.71]
<b>tnsg</b>	0.9885243 [-0.38]	0.984693 [-0.46]	0.9880294 [-0.39]			
<b>tnsg2</b>	1.000277 [0.47]	1.000343 [0.55]	1.000284 [0.48]			
<b>tnsg3</b>	0.9999985 [-0.51]	0.9999982 [-0.57]	0.9999985 [-0.51]			
<b>tdef</b>				.9137196 *** [-10.55]	.91267 *** [-10.70]	.9127519 *** [-10.70]
<b>tdef2</b>				1.001403 *** [6.61]	1.001409 *** [6.71]	1.001408 *** [6.71]
<b>tdef3</b>				.999994 *** [-4.81]	.999994 *** [-4.87]	.999994 *** [-4.87]
<b>_cons</b>	1.024044 [0.01]	1.152829 [0.05]	1.020899 [0.01]	.0790131 *** [-9.93]	.0758726 *** [-10.07]	.0757475 *** [-10.08]

t statistics in brackets  
\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

Table 8- ReLogits, No Regime Control

	(1) NSG	(2) NSG	(3) NSG	(4) Defense	(5) Defense	(6) Defense
<b>ExclusiveRival</b>	3.795*** (13.27)		3.111*** (5.16)	0.531** (2.67)		-0.154 (-0.65)
<b>SharedRival</b>		2.602*** (8.91)	0.741 (1.23)		0.733*** (5.84)	0.770*** (5.35)
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	-1.757** (-3.06)	-1.798*** (-3.38)	-1.764** (-3.06)	-0.226*** (-4.99)	-0.229*** (-5.15)	-0.229*** (-5.16)
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	0.000073** (2.61)	.00007*** (3.67)	0.000074** (2.72)	-0.000008 (-0.68)	-0.0000055 (-0.49)	-0.0000056 (-0.49)
<b>tnsg</b>	-0.00841 (-0.28)	-0.00449 (-0.14)	-0.00869 (-0.29)			
<b>tnsg2</b>	0.000158 (0.28)	0.0000841 (0.15)	0.000160 (0.29)			
<b>tnsg3</b>	-0.0000007 (-0.25)	-0.0000004 (-0.13)	-0.0000007 (-0.25)			
<b>tdef</b>				-0.0900*** (-10.55)	-0.0911*** (-10.70)	-0.0910*** (-10.69)
<b>tdef2</b>				0.0014*** (6.59)	0.0014*** (6.68)	0.0014*** (6.68)
<b>tdef3</b>				-0.000006** (-4.77)	-0.00000594*** (-4.82)	-0.00000594*** (-4.82)
<b>_cons</b>	1.103 (0.39)	1.206 (0.47)	1.090 (0.38)	-2.480*** (-9.91)	-2.532*** (-10.08)	-2.531*** (-10.08)
<b>N</b>	94316	94316	94316	94316	94316	94316

Table 9- ReLogits, At Least One Major Power

	(1) NSG	(2) NSG	(3) NSG	(4) Defense	(5) Defense	(6) Defense
<b>ExclusiveRival</b>	3.284*** (11.51)		2.960*** (4.23)	0.728** (2.92)		-0.427 (-1.48)
<b>SharedRival</b>		2.328*** (8.13)	0.331 (0.46)		1.275*** (7.88)	1.377*** (7.61)
<b>JointRegime</b>	1.816*** (4.99)	1.959*** (5.42)	1.814*** (4.95)	0.395** (3.24)	0.318** (2.64)	0.338** (2.80)
<b>NumGreatPowers</b>	-1.925** (-3.29)	-2.037*** (-3.49)	-1.927** (-3.29)	-0.163* (-2.34)	-0.175** (-2.59)	-0.178** (-2.63)
<b>CapabilitiesRatio</b>	0.0000835*** (4.39)	0.0000837*** (4.85)	0.0000835*** (4.40)	0.0000103 (1.54)	0.0000132* (2.17)	0.0000134* (2.22)
<b>tmsg</b>	-0.00804 (-0.24)	-0.00786 (-0.23)	-0.00808 (-0.24)			
<b>tmsg2</b>	0.000183 (0.26)	0.000158 (0.23)	0.000183 (0.26)			
<b>tmsg3</b>	-0.00000102 (-0.28)	-0.000000880 (-0.25)	-0.00000102 (-0.28)			
<b>tdef</b>				-0.0967*** (-8.57)	-0.0991*** (-8.88)	-0.0987*** (-8.90)
<b>tdef2</b>				0.00166*** (6.68)	0.00166*** (6.91)	0.00165*** (6.94)
<b>tdef3</b>				-0.00000784*** (-5.29)	-0.00000766*** (-5.47)	-0.00000762*** (-5.50)
<b>_cons</b>	1.273 (0.43)	1.723 (0.59)	1.278 (0.43)	-3.478*** (-8.59)	-3.540*** (-8.63)	-3.535*** (-8.65)
<b>N</b>	70617	70617	70617	70617	70617	70617

### CHAPTER 3 - ENEMY OF MY FRIEND: THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN AND US-ISRAEL CASES

“We must stand on our feet and be able to touch the umbrella.”

-Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol<sup>177</sup>

#### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I used ReLogit models to test a hypothesis on nuclear security guarantee formation. I posited that while the formation of many defense pacts may be well-explained by a common rival among the prospective allies, nuclear security guarantees should have more exacting conditions for formation. I hypothesized that security guarantee formation should be better explained by the presence of exclusive rivalries between a patron and client, rather than simple shared rivalries. Because security guarantee treaties do not target specific adversaries, military contingencies, theaters of operations, or identify the type of aid that will be forthcoming, the patrons who extend them are on the hook for defensive aid broadly construed over an indefinite time horizon. This puts them at a higher risk of entrapment in their clients' conflicts than they would be if they extended more specific defensive commitments, and they should be wary to form security guarantees if the client has rivals that the patron does not share.

In Chapter 2 I found substantial statistical support for the relationship between exclusive rivalries and security guarantee formation and shared rivalries and traditional defense pact formation. To determine that these relationships hold for the reason that I posit—namely, that security guarantees formation requires exclusive rivalries because the broad and unilateral nature of these pacts and their attendant signaling requirements—I

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<sup>177</sup> Eshkol made this statement in a meeting with American Ambassador Barbour, and White House Liaison Meyer Feldman. “Incoming Telegram, Department of State, From: Tel Aviv,” Barbour to Rusk, April 7, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL.

must also test this hypothesis qualitatively. I do so in this chapter by examining two case studies: The United States' decision not to extend to Israel a formal security guarantee in 1963-64, and France and Russia's 1894 decision to ally despite their unshared adversaries.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. I review my hypothesis on nuclear security guarantee formation, as well as the alternative hypotheses. Because I am testing this hypothesis qualitatively, I also discuss the observable implications that will substantiate my claim and disprove the others. I explain my case selection, before moving on to the case studies and analysis.

For each case study, I begin by summarizing the relevant facts surrounding the alliance formation decision. I look for evidence that calculations about unshared adversaries entered into the alliance negotiations, and examine whether and how prospective allies' entrapment fears manifested. Where evidence of entrapment fears can be found, I go on to analyze how these were linked to the presence of unshared adversaries and the signaling requirements of the prospective alliance. I also consider the alternative hypothesis that these alliance can be explained by a more common shared rivals/balancing explanation.

I find that the United States' decision not to extend a security guarantee to Israel provides ample support for my first hypothesis and reveals a great deal about the conditions that are necessary to security guarantee formation and sufficient to prevent it. I also find that despite the presence of shared adversaries, France and Russia managed to form an alliance in 1894 because their commitment was highly contingent, consistent with the expectations of Hypothesis 1.

## Hypothesis 1: A Review

In the previous chapter I derived and found statistical support for the following hypothesis:

**H1:** *For a security guarantee to form, client states should have rivals that are exclusively shared by the patron; for non-security guarantee defense pacts to form, shared rivals will be superior predictors of alliance formation.*

I also derived and tested several alternative hypotheses:

**H1A1:** *Shared rivalries are stronger predictors than exclusive rivalries of both security guarantee and traditional defense pact formation;*

**H2A2:** *Exclusive rivalries are stronger predictors than shared rivalries of both security guarantee and traditional defense pact formation;*

**H2A3:** *Shared rivalries are the stronger predictor of security guarantee formation; Exclusive rivalries are the stronger predictor of non-security guarantee defense pact formation.*

In Chapter 2, I found substantial support for H1: Exclusive rivalries have significant explanatory power when it comes to the formation of security guarantees, while shared rivalries do not predict these well. Shared rivalries, however, provide significant explanatory power when it comes to the formation of other defense pacts, consistent with the expectations of more traditional balancing theories.

It remains to be seen whether or not this relationship holds for the reasons that I posited in Chapter 2. Do nuclear security patrons chose to extend security guarantees only to those clients with whom there are no unshared adversaries because they understand the taxing requirements of upholding these ambiguous, unilateral pacts? Do patrons fear entrapment when unshared rival exists with a client to whom it otherwise might have formed a security guarantee? And do allies in more traditional defense pacts form them on



the basis of shared rivalries rather than exclusive rivalries because they can make more contingent, circumscribed commitments?

To answer these questions, I must investigate the same hypothesis using qualitative case studies. The dependent variable under study remains alliance formation. The independent variable remains a shared/exclusive adversary. To understand the conditions under which states may form nuclear security guarantees, however, it is insufficient to examine cases in which these alliances have formed or have endured. Cases of successful nuclear umbrellas are likely overdetermined. There may be many reasons that allies choose to formalize security guarantee relationships, including compatible defense concerns, general policy affinity, shared values, and similar domestic systems. There may be even more reasons that those relationships last once they are in place. Examining cases of successful umbrella pacts may provide us with many different variables that are associated with guarantee formation and persistence. These may, however, be factors that are epiphenomenal, rather than necessary or sufficient conditions of guarantee formation. To identify whether exclusive rivalries are a necessary condition for security guarantee formation, then, I focus on a case in which a security guarantee was seriously considered but never formed. Because of the structure of the hypothesis I test here, however, I also select a case in which a traditional defense pact was formed, to examine whether this occurred despite the presence of unshared adversaries between the prospective allies.

There are some important observable implications that can be derived from this hypothesis. First, if H1 holds true, historical evidence should reveal that patron state leaders did not extend a security guarantee because the client had a likely adversary that the patron did not share. Concerns about polarizing relations with or becoming entrapped

in a conflict with this third party should feature prominently in decision-making. We should not only expect to see concerns about the adversary, however, but worries about the patron state's ability to engage in signaling on behalf of the client. Specifically, leaders of the patron state should be wary of making public statements, deploying troops, conducting joint exercises, or undertaking other observable forms of military cooperation because of the potential perverse effects. These effects may include, but are not limited to the potential to be entrapped in a war between the client and the unshared adversary, or simple concerns about creating an adversary where one did not exist before.

In the case of traditional defense pact formation, however, the presence of unshared adversaries between prospective allies should be surmountable. If two states are considering defense pact formation and have a shared rival but also have unshared rivals between them, historical evidence should reflect that they acknowledged this state of affairs and constructed a more specific, contingent alliance to minimize associated risks. The presence of unshared adversaries in a prospective defense pact dyad should not impede alliance formation.

Despite the fact that I did not find statistical support for the alternative hypotheses offered in Chapter 2, I will consider one of them again in this qualitative examination. It is possible that shared rivalries provide a good explanation for security guarantee and traditional defense pact formation decisions. Case studies allow me to examine this alternative hypothesis in a way that my statistical treatment could not. It is possible, for example, that a more traditional shared rivalries explanation for security guarantee formation may prevail in a way that statistical analysis could not capture: Patrons may base their security guarantee formation decisions on whether or not that new alliance would

serve its interest with respect to its primary adversary. If the United States declined to extend a security guarantee to a client because it would negatively impact its relationship with the Soviet Union, for example, rather than because of concerns about a client's unshared rivals, then a more traditional balancing explanation would be born out. Even in traditional defense pacts, it is possible that a shared rivals/traditional balancing explanation prevails for different reasons than posited. If prospective allies conclude a treaty solely on the basis of a shared rival and give little thought to unshared rivals that may exist between them, this would also invalidate my hypothesis.

If H1A1 is substantiated with respect to the security guarantee case, we would expect leaders in the patron state to be concerned that an alliance with the prospective client may be unwise because of the way it could negatively impact a shared rivalry. If H1A1 is born out with respect to the traditional defense pact, there should be little historical evidence to suggest that the prospective allies considered and found ways to surmount the presence of unshared adversaries between them.

In Chapter 2 there was no statistical evidence to substantiate H1A2 or H1A3, however, and there is no logical reason to believe that either one of these alternatives is likely to be born out in the qualitative evidence. For the remainder of this chapter, I therefore set these aside.

### **Case Selection**

Using primary sources collected from extensive archival research, I trace American leaders' decisions to reject a security guarantee request from Israel. This approach provides me with a few advantages. First, because I examine a negative case, I am able to identify conditions that are sufficient to impede security guarantee formation. Second, I

focus on a country, Israel, with whom the United States has maintained a longstanding, strong political and military alignment. This is a case in which we might reasonably expect to see a formal security guarantee. Explaining why the United States did not extend its nuclear umbrella to Israel is a more helpful endeavor than explaining why it did not extend it to North Korea, as it allows me to focus on the causal factors that inhibited formal alliance formation despite strong affinities.

Beyond these methodological explanations, there are also important substantive reasons to focus on the prospective US security guarantee to Israel. Only two scholars have ever discussed the fact that the United States seriously considered granting a security guarantee to Israel, and neither of these studies examines closely why the guarantee was rejected.<sup>178</sup> This case study draws on declassified documents that have not previously been cited by scholars. Thus, from a historical perspective, this case is valuable. Finally, because the United States maintains close ties with Israel and is still militarily engaged in the region, the decision against formal alliance relations continues to have policy reverberations today.

The Israel case is not an empirical anomaly, however: There are other instances of security guarantees that were considered but not extended. The United States considered extending a security guarantee to India during the Kennedy and Johnson eras, and to Pakistan in the Kennedy, Johnson and Carter years. There is also some anecdotal evidence

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<sup>178</sup> These studies are: Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the US-Israel Alliance*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2003).

that a security guarantee to the PRC was briefly discussed.<sup>179</sup> To the degree that Hypothesis 1 is born out then, it should provide insights on these cases as well.

To examine the enmity patterns that affect the formation of traditional defense pacts, I analyze the birth of the Franco-Russian alliance, which was formalized in 1894. Leading scholars have noted that when it formed, the Franco-Russian pact was a highly unlikely one, and yet it became one of the most consequential relationships in alliance history.<sup>180</sup> Was this partnership unlikely because France and Russia had unshared adversaries? And if so, how did they overcome this potential risk? To explore whether Hypothesis 1 can be verified qualitatively and for the reasons I posit, I turn to the case studies.

## **The United States and Israel: “To Touch the Umbrella”**

### ***Introduction***

The Israeli request for a security guarantee from the United States is a fascinating nuclear counterfactual. Between May and October 1963, the Kennedy administration carefully considered and ultimately rejected a plea by Prime Minister David Ben Gurion to bring the country under the US nuclear umbrella. The process by which Kennedy came to that decision generates important insights on the conditions that are necessary to form a security guarantee, and those that are sufficient to impede one. I begin this inquiry with a summary of the Israeli case. I then move on to explore the details of this case through the

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<sup>179</sup> For evidence of US interest in guarantees to the Indians and the Pakistanis see: Komer to Bundy, December 6, 1963, Robert W. Komer Papers, Box 3, LBJL; RW Komer, “Memorandum for Arthur Dean,” November 18, 1965, NSF Box 6, LBJL; “Draft National Security Action Memorandum: Review of US Nuclear Policy Towards India,” December 1965, NSF Box 6, LBJL. On China, see Marc Trachtenberg, *The Cold War and After* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 179-182.

<sup>180</sup> Jervis, *System Effects*, p. 243; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 125, 166.

lens of Hypothesis 1, examining the extent to which the observable implications are present in this instance. I evaluate whether or not the presence of an unshared adversary factored into the US decision to withhold a guarantee whether the US was worried about entrapment in a war on behalf of Israel, and how peacetime alliance signaling factored into this decision. I find substantial support for Hypothesis 1.

### ***Case Summary***

On April 17, 1963, Egypt, Syria and Iraq issued a declaration of unity that marked the expansion of the United Arab Republic. In addition to announcing their federation, the countries vowed to “liberate Palestine.”<sup>181</sup> To Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, the UAR statement was “the first time that an official Arab constitutional document lay[ed] down as one of its principle objectives the obliteration of Israel.”<sup>182</sup> On April 25, Ben Gurion made a request to John F. Kennedy that the United States grant his country a security guarantee.<sup>183</sup> Ben Gurion’s first proposal asked for a joint declaration of guarantee from the United States and the Soviet Union, but he knew that the US president would reject this as politically infeasible, as Kennedy quickly did.<sup>184</sup> Ben Gurion followed up on May 12 with a request for a bilateral security guarantee from the Americans alone. Israel had thrice

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<sup>181</sup> See Bass, p. 211 for more on the declaration and Israel’s reaction.

<sup>182</sup> David Ben Gurion to John F. Kennedy, April 25, 1963, POF 119a, JFKL, p. 3.

<sup>183</sup> David Ben Gurion to John F. Kennedy, April 25, 1963, POF 119a, JFKL, p. 5. According to Ben-Gurion’s first proposal, any Middle Eastern state that threatened its neighbors would lose superpower aid of any kind.

<sup>184</sup> Ben Gurion had proposed a joint US-USSR declaration in 1961. A State Department assessment had determined in 1961 that there was “little likelihood” the Soviets would agree to such a thing, and that it would be “unwise” and “not necessary” as far as US interests were concerned, so the Prime Minister had little reason to believe that this idea would be better received a second time. Memorandum of Conversation: Conversation Between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Ben Gurion,” May 30, 1961, NSF 118, JFKL, p. 5. Kennedy’s immediate response to Ben Gurion’s April 27, 1963 letter was that a joint declaration with the Soviets would be impossible. The issues that divided the US and USSR were simply too many. “Department of State Outgoing Telegram 02544, Eyes Only For Ambassador, Tel Aviv,” May 4, 1963, POF119a, JFKL.”

before requested a security guarantee from the United States, and the United States had given Israel a private, informal assurance that it would come to its defense if it were attacked.<sup>185</sup> But the Kennedy administration took seriously the Israeli request for a formal guarantee in the spring of 1963 for two reasons: First, despite the fact that the United States thought that Israeli concerns over UAR expansion were “overdrawn,” Ben Gurion was near hysteria and the Americans thought this disadvantageous for regional stability<sup>186</sup>; Second, the Kennedy believed that a security guarantee might provide a solution to Israel’s nascent nuclear program.

The United States had first discovered Israel’s nuclear facility at Dimona in late 1960.<sup>187</sup> Two American scientists were permitted to visit the reactor in mid-May of 1961.<sup>188</sup> The inspectors reported that the reactor did not appear to have military purposes at that time.<sup>189</sup> At a May 1961 meeting between Kennedy and Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister gave the President an informal promise that Israel would not seek nuclear weapons. But Dimona had not been inspected since, and by early 1963 Kennedy had grown concerned that there were no safeguards on the Israeli program. He ordered National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 231, which considered possible arms control

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<sup>185</sup> The first occasion was the aforementioned 1961 proposal by Ben Gurion for a joint guarantee; the second was a 1962 request for a bilateral agreement by Israeli Minister Mordechai Gazit; the third was an inquiry from Golda Meir at a December 1962 meeting with Kennedy. Kennedy gave Meir a private, informal assurance at this meeting. Memorandum for the Record: Lunch with Israeli Minister Gazit, June 4, 1962,” Robert Komer, June 7, 1962, NSF 407, JFKL; “Outgoing Telegram, Department of State, 01087,” January 4, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL. This telegram contains the memorandum of conversation from the Meir-Kennedy Meetings.

<sup>186</sup> “Arab Unity: Summary,” May 9, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>187</sup> “Memorandum for the President: Subject: Israel’s Atomic Energy Activities,” Dean Rusk, January 30, 1961, POF 119a, JKLF.

<sup>188</sup> “Memorandum For the President: Subject: Visit to Israeli Reactor,” Dean Rusk, May 5, 1961, POF 119a, JFKL.

<sup>189</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation: Conversation between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Ben Gurion,” May 30, 1961, NSF 118, JFKL, p. 2.

arrangements in the Middle East. Kennedy also sent a request to Ben Gurion that the Dimona facility be inspected semiannually, beginning in May of 1963, and again that October.<sup>190</sup> The Prime Minister and his successor Levi Eshkol were deeply reluctant to grant the US access to Dimona, and negotiations over inspections dragged on through the spring and summer. The Israeli request for and US consideration of a security guarantee therefore occurred in the context of a broader standoff over the future of the Israeli nuclear program.

To quell mounting Arab-Israeli tensions over the UAR expansion announcement, Kennedy issued a presidential statement on May 8. In his speech Kennedy reiterated the 1950 Tripartite Declaration, a statement issued by the United States, United Kingdom and France, which expressed their “deep interest” in the “maintenance of peace and stability” between the Arab states and Israel in the Near East. It declared that plans by any state to violate borders in the region would cause the three powers to immediately “take action.”<sup>191</sup> The statement was intended to give some limited reassurance to Israel, while signaling to Arab states, and particularly Egypt, that US policy in the region had not changed.

The Israeli Prime Minister was not impressed by the statement, and told Kennedy: “The Tripartite Declaration of 1950 was of no value and a reaffirmation of such a declaration does not meet the situation.” Instead, the Prime Minister suggested a bilateral security treaty between the US and Israel “with which allies of the United States would be invited to associate themselves.”<sup>192</sup> Three days later, Israeli Minister Mordechai Gazit followed up with the Nation Security Council’s Robert Komer, pushing for an “open defense

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<sup>190</sup> Cohen, p. 118.

<sup>191</sup> “Tripartite Agreement, 1950,” NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>192</sup> Ben Gurion to JFK, May 12, 1963, POF 119a, JFKL.



arrangement” and a standing diplomatic and military dialogue between to two states. In his record of the meeting, Komer concluded, “the Israelis were determined to get something out of the US in the way of greater security reassurances.”<sup>193</sup> Kennedy ordered his chief national security aide, McGeorge Bundy, to begin investigating possibilities for a US guarantee. A handful of close advisors began a methodical investigation into whether the United States could and should expand its security commitment to Israel.

Because Kennedy was deeply interested in containing nuclear and missile technology in the Middle East, the group devised a “highly secret probe” of Israeli and UAR willingness to cooperate on regional arms control. This would be linked to a possible security guarantee for Israel. The plan was a result of the recent NSAM 231, and according to it a special envoy would approach Nasser and Ben Gurion to gauge each leader’s willingness to forgo nuclear weapons and offensive missiles.<sup>194</sup> Because the Israelis had a far more advanced nuclear program and were deeply concerned about the recent UAR declaration, they might be the more difficult party to persuade. A bilateral security guarantee would be considered as a tool for inducing Israeli cooperation on arms control, assuming the Israelis were willing to forswear nuclear weapons completely.<sup>195</sup> The approach did not envision a formal agreement between the UAR and Israel, but rather bilateral arrangements between each party and the United States. Several US Middle East experts encouraged the probe, convinced that “Israel will go ahead with nuclear weapons unless we give her a security guarantee.” The arrangement aimed to assuage Israel’s

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<sup>193</sup> “MEMORADUM FOR THE RECORD: Conversation with Israeli Minister Gazit, 14 May 1963,” Robert Komer, May 15, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>194</sup> “Subject: Arms Limitation in the Near East,” Talbot to Rusk, May 14, 1963, POF 119a, JFKL.

<sup>195</sup> “Subject: Near East Arms Limitation and Control Arrangement—Plan of Action,” POF 119a, JFKL.

defense concerns and US proliferation fears at once by rewarding Israel with a security guarantee in exchange for abandoning its nuclear quest.<sup>196</sup>

The initiative was codenamed operation CANE<sup>197</sup>, and John J. McCloy was selected as the emissary.<sup>198</sup> The CANE staff envisioned a very specific timeline for the probe: McCloy was to meet with Nasser and with Ben Gurion in the month of June; US officials would receive the results of these meetings and assess how to proceed in mid-July. A second round of negotiations would then take place. If no progress had been achieved by fault of the UAR by February of 1964, the US would revert to negotiations with Israel alone on the subject of a security guarantee. By June 1964 there was to be in place either a UAR-Israel arms limitation agreement and security assurance to Israel, or a unilateral security assurance to Israel.<sup>199</sup> If Egypt refused to cooperate with the initiative, the Americans would be justified in granting Ben Gurion the 105guarantee he wanted.<sup>200</sup> The proposed arms deal itself was amorphous but the CANE endgame was clear: One way or another there was a good chance that the US would extend its umbrella to Israel by the spring of 1964.

McCloy's mission was to obtain from the UAR and from Israel an agreement not to acquire nuclear weapons or surface-to-surface strategic missiles, with consent by both

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<sup>196</sup> "Memorandum for the President," Robert W. Komer, May 16, 1963, POF 119a, JFKL.

<sup>197</sup> Thanks to Martin Malin for his help in tracking down the origins of CANE. For a more detailed explanation, see: "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Arab Republic," May 27, 1963, Note 1, *FRUS 1961-63*, Vol. XVIII, Near East, Doc. 257.

<sup>198</sup> McCloy was a protégé of Henry Stimson, and in 1963 was a senior partner at a major New York Law firm where he often represented oil companies. As such, he was familiar with the Middle East, and had met Nasser in 1956 during negotiations to reopen the Suez Canal. For more on McCloy and his selection, see Bass, p. 224-225.

<sup>199</sup> Framework and Tactics for Negotiation," p. 6.

<sup>200</sup> Framework and Tactics for Negotiation," p. 6.

parties to have the US monitor compliance.<sup>201</sup> His preparatory materials did not include any mention of a security guarantee, as Kennedy was wary of suggesting one before he had received a promise of nuclear cooperation and compliance from Israel. “If we give Israel stronger security assurances we cannot afford to do so unless she renounces nuclear weapons,” Robert Komer advised in a memo.<sup>202</sup> Israel would not renounce nuclear weapons unless Nasser did the same, so it was crucial to approach him first, before any sort of assurance was presented to Tel Aviv.<sup>203</sup> Shortly before McCloy departed for the region, the administration received the news that Ben Gurion had resigned and been replaced by Finance Minister Levi Eshkol, which would delay McCloy’s travels to Tel Aviv.

McCloy spent June 26-29 in Cairo, and met with Nasser on two separate occasions. Nasser was uninterested in a public, bilateral arms control deal with the US because it would “really amount to a limitation in Egyptian sovereignty through agreement with a foreign power,” and would be looked upon as a “protectorate” or “satellite” relationship.<sup>204</sup> He was not opposed to an arms control deal in principle, however, and would be willing to forswear strategic missiles and nuclear weapons in a “‘collective’ setting such as the UN.”<sup>205</sup> Nasser insisted to McCloy that he had no interest in nuclear weapons and no desire to attack Israel, and asked the emissary to convey that message to Kennedy. The Egyptian

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<sup>201</sup> “Memorandum for Presidential Emissary,” June 1963, POF 119a, JFKL.

<sup>202</sup> Komer to JFK, italics are underlined in the original.

<sup>203</sup> “Memorandum for the President,” Robert W. Komer, May 17, 1963, NSF 427, JFKL.

<sup>204</sup> “Department of State Incoming Telegram, From: Cairo To: Sec State, No. 2491,” June 30, 1963, PWR 8, JFKL. Nasser first stated this point in a June 27 meeting and repeated it to McCloy on June 29.

<sup>205</sup> “Department of State Incoming Telegram, From: Cairo To: Sec State, No. 2491,” June 30, 1963, PWR 8, JFKL

President also stated that he might be willing to put these promises in writing and have them made public.<sup>206</sup>

Much to the dismay of several CANE staffers, McCloy did not spend much time on the subject of the Israeli nuclear program. Specifically, he neglected to tell the Egyptian President that the arms deal had been initiated because of American concerns over Israeli nuclear progress. McCloy also failed to emphasize that Israel was far ahead of the Egyptians in the nuclear field, making arms control advantageous for Nasser.<sup>207</sup> McCloy left Egypt after his second meeting with Nasser, having not conveyed the CANE message in full. The Kennedy administration decided that he should return to Washington rather than travel to Tel Aviv so that CANE could be recalibrated. Several US officials urged the President to consider Nasser's proposals for arms control through the UN or through public letters of intention.<sup>208</sup> American Ambassador to Cairo, John S. Badeau, also urged Washington to decouple ballistic missile control and nonproliferation efforts: The Egyptians did not seem to have any nuclear aspirations, so the nuclear question should be put to the Israelis exclusively.<sup>209</sup> "None of us are too discouraged with these initial results," Robert Komer told the President. "There is still a chance we can get Nasser signed on to some sort of scheme."<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> "Department of State Incoming Telegram, From: Cairo To: Sec State, No. 2470," June 28, 1963, PWR 8, JFKL.

<sup>207</sup> Robert Komer highlighted these oversights for Kennedy in his weekend reading packet. "Memorandum for the President," July 3, 1962, Robert W. Komer, PWR 8, JFKL.

<sup>208</sup> US Ambassador to Cairo John S. Badeau and Secretary of State Dean Rusk both urged the President to evaluate the options that Nasser had presented: "Department of State Incoming Telegram, From: Cairo To: Sec State, No. 11," Badeau, July 1, 1963, PWR 8, JFKL; Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy," July 23, 1963, *FRUS 1961-63*, Volume XVIII, Document 301.

<sup>209</sup> "Department of State Incoming Telegram, From: Cairo To: Sec State, No. 11," Badeau, July 1, 1963, PWR 8, JFKL.

<sup>210</sup> "Memorandum for President," Robert W. Komer, July 3, 1964, PWR 8, JFKL.

Shortly after McCloy left Egypt, Kennedy delivered to the new Israeli Prime Minister a letter that had been intended for Ben Gurion on the day of his resignation. He congratulated Eshkol on his position, but immediately pushed for semi-annual US access to Dimona. He also repeated a thinly veiled threat that Kennedy had already made to Ben-Gurion: “This Government’s commitment to and support of Israel could be seriously jeopardized if it should be thought that we were unable to obtain reliable information [on the nuclear program].”<sup>211</sup> The United States might not only withhold the formal guarantee Israel wanted, but the informal security relationship would suffer if access to Dimona was not granted. Eshkol replied on July 19, promising to give the matter careful study as he got his political bearings. Robert Komer argued in a memo to the President that Eshkol’s reply “confirms that Israelis regard Dimona inspection as a bargaining card on security guarantees.” “Israel will almost certainly insist on some form of greater security reassurance as its price for not going nuclear.”<sup>212</sup>

Kennedy and the CANE staff reconvened in Washington to discuss next steps on July 23. The President was amenable to Nasser’s suggestions for arms control, but at the end of the meeting Kennedy made an unexpected decision: He did not want to pursue the CANE overture any further, and was only willing to continue negotiating with Eshkol over access to Dimona.<sup>213</sup> The “nuclear and security guarantee questions should be kept separate,” he

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<sup>211</sup> “Department of State Outgoing Telegram, Amembassy Tel Aviv,” July 4, 1963, POF119a, JFKL. This telegram contains the verbatim text of Kennedy’s first letter to Eshkol. On May 18, Kennedy had written to Ben Gurion that the US commitment to Israel “would be *seriously jeopardized* in the public opinion in this country and the West as a whole if it should be thought that this Government was unable to obtain reliable information on a subject as vital to peace as the question of the character of Israel’s efforts in the nuclear field.” “Department of State Outgoing Telegram, Amembassy Tel Aviv, Embtel 894,” May 18, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>212</sup> “Memorandum for the President,” RW Komer, July 19, 1963, NSF 427, JFKL.

<sup>213</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Subject: McCloy’s Near East Arms Limitation Probe; Security Guarantee for Israel,” July 23, 4:30 pm, *FRUS*, 1961-63, Volume XVIII, Document 303.

decided.<sup>214</sup> Throughout the summer, administration officials including Robert Komer of the NSC, Dean Rusk, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff all conducted independent analyses on the costs and benefits of a US guarantee to Israel. These would all be used to help support the President's final decision to deny Ben Gurion's request.

On October 2, 1963, Kennedy wrote a formal reply to Eshkol. He alerted the Prime Minister that he had considered whether the advantages of more explicit ties over "existing informal arrangements" outweighed the disadvantages and decided they did not.<sup>215</sup> Well before Kennedy had a chance to send his final reply to Eshkol, however, the Israelis appear to have anticipated the rejection of their request, and they began to lobby for support from the Americans short of a formal treaty. CANE was revived in late February 1964, under President Lyndon Johnson. A new emissary visited Cairo in early March.<sup>216</sup> This time, however, the United States was solely interested in striking an arms control deal between Israel and Egypt. No security guarantee was on the table. Nasser was once again moderately receptive to some sort of deal, but Eshkol was unwilling to let the Americans share their Dimona inspection reports with Nasser or give him specifics about Israeli nuclear progress.<sup>217</sup> Without a promise of US protection, he would not budge. Israel "seeks

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<sup>214</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Subject: McCloy's Near East Arms Limitation Probe; Security Guarantee for Israel," July 23, 4:30 pm, *FRUS*, 1961-63, Volume XVIII, Document 303.

<sup>215</sup> "Outgoing Telegram, Department of State, Amembassy Tel Aviv 309," Oct 2, 1963, POF, Box 119a, JFKL. This telegram contains the verbatim text of JFK's reply to Eshkol.

<sup>216</sup> The emissary was Assistant Secretary of State Phillip Talbott. Komer to Bundy, February 26, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL.

<sup>217</sup> Komer explained to Johnson that the US needed permission to share the Dimona reports with Nasser to reassure him. Memorandum for the President," Robert W. Komer, February 26, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL; Barbour reported to Badeau, however, that Eshkol "holds the view that removal from Nasser's mind of uncertainty regarding Israel's deterrent capacity [is] contrary to best interests of both US and Israel. "Incoming Telegram, Department of State, From: Tel Aviv, to: Cairo," Barbour to Badeau, March 4, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL. The same sentiment was repeated two weeks later to Rusk: "Incoming Telegram, Department of State, From: Tel Aviv," Barbour to Rusk, March 23, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL.

a close military identification with us to serve as a deterrent to the Arabs,” Rusk explained to Johnson in early 1964. But on the question of a security guarantee, the Secretary of State insisted, Israel’s appetite “exceeds its needs.”<sup>218</sup>

Israel’s security desires, as well as the underlying motivation for Kennedy’s final decision will be discussed below, as I turn to the roles that an unshared adversary, the risk of entrapment, and peacetime alliance signaling played in this case.

### ***Know Your Audience: An Unshared Adversary***

When Kennedy restated the Tripartite Declaration on May 8, he did so partially to reassure Israel, and partially to communicate to Nasser that American feelings towards Egypt had not changed. The President, who had already devoted substantial energy to improving US relations with Egypt, personally suggested he send a separate letter to Nasser, to explain that the United States was in no way turning against the Arab world.<sup>219</sup>

Once the administration began to evaluate seriously the possibility of extending a guarantee, analysts considered what the negative ramifications of a US-Israeli pact would be. Of primary concern was “[p]ublic hostility throughout the Arab world,” and antagonizing Nasser in particular.<sup>220</sup> And while the United States was most worried about ruining its relationship with Egypt, it also feared backlash from other states such as Jordan,

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<sup>218</sup> “Memorandum for the President,” Dean Rusk, January 16, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL.

<sup>219</sup> “TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO (EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR),” May 10, 1963, NSF 427, JFKL. In a May 10 memo to McGeorge Bundy, Robert Komer suggests that Kennedy had personally insisted on reassuring Nasser. “Komer to Bundy,” May 10, 1963, NSF 407, JFKL.

<sup>220</sup> Framework and Tactics for Negotiation,” p. 4-5.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>221</sup> Additional concerns included “Reduced US diplomatic effectiveness generally,” in the region, as well as the harassment of oil companies.<sup>222</sup>

The United States’ deference to Nasser was evident in the way it conducted the CANE probe. Although early CANE analysis suggested a willingness to press on with a security guarantee to Israel even if Nasser rejected an arms control agreement, it was clearly preferable to have him on board. Nasser was a leader in the Arab world, and his accession to an arms control agreement would likely mitigate the backlash from other states. The Egyptian president’s assent to a CANE bargain would not only help to prevent an arms race in the Middle East, but would make US policy towards Israel acceptable.<sup>223</sup>

Notably, concerns about alienating Egypt and the Arab world more broadly dominated the assessments that Kennedy received shortly before he drafted his reply to Eshkol. Rusk argued that a security arrangement with Israel would almost certainly harm US interests, unraveling “carefully built influence with the Arab states.”<sup>224</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff asserted the same. If the United States and Israel were to deepen their relationship, the Chiefs recommended, new ties should take the form of political discussions so as not to appear as military planning efforts against Arab states.<sup>225</sup>

Finally, American relations with the Arab world had a prominent place in Kennedy’s reply to Eshkol. Kennedy explained to the Prime Minister that US relations with Arab countries had improved considerably in recent years, and both Israeli interests and US

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<sup>221</sup> Framework and Tactics for Negotiation,” p. 4.

<sup>222</sup> Framework and Tactics for Negotiation,” p. 4.

<sup>223</sup> Framework and Tactics for Negotiation,” p. 3.

<sup>224</sup> “Subject: Israel Security Guarantee, Reply to Ben-Gurion’s May 12 Letter,” Dean Rusk, September 26, 1963, PWR 9, JFKL.

<sup>225</sup> “Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: Implications to DOD of a US Security Assurance to Israel,” The Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 7, 1963, NSF, Box 119, JFKL.



were advanced by the maintenance of those relationships. A formal guarantee from the US would cause backlash in the region. Kennedy's conclusions also noted his fears of "provoking a hostile Arab reaction...any such move would be widely viewed as an abrupt departure from established United States policy, arousing suspicion and concern both in the Near East and the world at large."<sup>226</sup> Finally, in early 1964, Dean Rusk explained to the new US President why he should not reconsider Kennedy's decision to deny the security guarantee: "Such a relationship would not only destroy the influence we need to maintain with the Arabs but stimulate closer Arab-Soviet ties and reduce our ability to bring about an eventual peaceful solution to the Arab -Israeli dispute."<sup>227</sup>

### ***Anticipating Entrapment***

There is strong evidence that Kennedy's concerns about alienating the Arab world were closely linked to a fear of entrapment, as Hypothesis 1 suggests. Specifically, Kennedy was concerned about a war between Egypt and Israel over the latter's nuclear program. In the McCloy-Nasser meetings, Ambassador Badeau inquired how Nasser would react "if he learned that the Israelis were misusing their reactor for the manufacture of weapons material." The Egyptian President replied quickly, "Protective war. We would have no other choice."<sup>228</sup> Kennedy learned of Nasser's "protective war" threat for the first time in the July 23 CANE meeting. "[W]hy had he not stated this earlier?" Kennedy demanded, suggesting

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<sup>226</sup> "Outgoing Telegram, Department of State, Amembassy Tel Aviv 309," Oct 2, 1963, POF, Box 119a, JFKL. This telegram contains the verbatim text of JFK's reply to Eshkol.

<sup>227</sup> Memorandum for the President," Dean Rusk, January 16, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL.

<sup>228</sup> "Department of State Incoming Telegram, From: Cairo To: Sec State, No. 2491," June 30, 1963, PWR 8, JFKL.

that this new information was of particular importance.<sup>229</sup> Ambassador Badeau suggested that the previous US inspection at Dimona had done a great deal to appease Nasser. Without adequate inspections or information about the Israeli nuclear program since 1961, he was getting jittery. Paul Nitze, then an Assistant Secretary of Defense, shared a Pentagon assessment that the UAR was unlikely to mount a successful attack against Israel as a whole, but might conduct limited airstrikes against the facility. Shortly thereafter, Kennedy stated that he could not move beyond the assurances in the Tripartite Declaration, and wished to continue negotiations with the Israelis over Dimona inspections only. The prospect of an Egyptian attack on the Israeli nuclear program had clearly distressed Kennedy. What's more, Eshkol's letter four days prior had indicated continued Israeli intransigence over inspections. Kennedy staffers had recommended that the President only pursue a security guarantee if Tel Aviv was willing to forswear nuclear weapons completely. Without having concluded that such a quid-pro-quo was impossible, however, Kennedy decided against deepening US ties with Israel. Nasser had indicated that he was amenable to forswearing nuclear weapons, so the CANE probe had not been followed through to its conclusion. Yet the Egyptian president's suggestion that he might strike Dimona appeared to end Kennedy's serious consideration of the security guarantee.

Beyond Nasser's threat of "protective war" against Dimona, the Americans had other reasons to believe that entrapment was a risk. On a September 11 meeting between Mordechai Gazit and Roger Davies of the State Department, the Israeli minister bemoaned the nature of the private security assurances that the United States had given to Israel. The

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<sup>229</sup>"Memorandum of Conversation: Subject: McCloy's Near East Arms Limitation Probe; Security Guarantee for Israel," July 23, 4:30 pm, *FRUS 1961-63*, Volume XVIII, Document 303.

Americans had made verbal promises of aid if Israel were invaded, Gazit noted, but his government would find those promises much more reassuring if it did not always use the “qualifying adjective” “unprovoked attack.”<sup>230</sup> The Israelis wanted a commitment of US military aid even in cases where they might appear to be the aggressor. Even before Gazit made these comments, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had flagged this risk in their analysis. They worried that Israel was in search of a security guarantee that was not limited to aggression against Israel. A security guarantee itself is, of course, already a rather broad defensive promise, but the Israeli desire for military support in an even wider range of contingencies made defense cooperation very risky in the eyes of the JCS. The Chiefs urged Kennedy not to extend a security guarantee for these reasons.<sup>231</sup>

### ***The Costs of a Guarantee: Signaling the US-Israeli Relationship***

The presence of an unshared adversary in Egypt and US fears of entrapment also made peacetime alliance signaling a key consideration in the decision to reject the Israeli bid. Shortly after Ben Gurion requested a guarantee in April 1963, the Israelis began to elaborate on their alliance desires. In April, Secretary of State Dean Rusk met with Israeli Ambassador Avraham Harman and Deputy Minister Abba Eban. The Israelis were interested in “stronger, more watertight, more public” statement of alliance from the US, the ministers informed him. They also wanted to begin regular joint military planning with

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<sup>230</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: United States Security Assurance for Israel,” September 11, 1963, NSF 199, JFKL.

<sup>231</sup> “Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: Implications to DOD of a US Security Assurance to Israel,” The Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 7, 1963, NSF, Box 119, JFKL.

the Americans.<sup>232</sup> Two weeks later, Robert Komer warned McGeorge Bundy that the Israelis wanted more than just a bilateral security guarantee. They were interested in “joint military and political planning to give them confidence we could move fast enough to help them in event of attack.”<sup>233</sup> In a May document, CANE staffers evaluated “What Israel Seeks from the United States.” Israel’s top two goals were: “A special, public guarantee of Israel’s Security,” and “Joint military planning and regular intelligence exchange.”<sup>234</sup>

Initial CANE analysis focused primarily on the type of guarantee that the US might consider—a signal of intent— rather than alliance signals of capability in the form of joint military planning. As staffers began to investigate their options, they prepared a document entitled “Possible United States-Israel Security Assurances.” The primary question was whether the assurance should come in the form of a treaty or an executive agreement, and officials appeared to agree roundly that the latter option was preferable. The chief reasons to support an executive agreement were that it would drum up less publicity and would not require Congressional ratification. But executive agreements could still take many different forms. One option was a unilateral statement of policy that would have no binding legal force; another was a diplomatic note incorporating a unilateral statement of policy; a third was a bilateral executive agreement between the US and Israel, which would, effectively, be legally binding.<sup>235</sup> State Department officials favored the less binding presidential letter over an executive agreement, but warned that Israel would push for the maximum possible commitment and be eager for a full-fledged treaty.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> “State Department Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Near East Tour d’Horizon,” April 25, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>233</sup> Komer to Bundy, May 8 1963, NSF 427, JFKL.

<sup>234</sup> “Framework and Tactics for Negotiation,” p. 3.

<sup>235</sup> “Possible US-Israel Security Assurance”, p. 2.

<sup>236</sup> “Possible US-Israel Security Assurance”, p. 3-4.

There was also the question of whether an assurance should be classified or unclassified. Analysis wholeheartedly supported an overt assurance for its “[m]aximum public utility and deterrent effect.” It was highly unlikely that a US-Israel security agreement would stay secret forever, and Arab countries were more likely to be upset if a furtive pact was eventually leaked. And if the US were to extend a guarantee, it would prefer Arab countries to know precisely what it had promised.<sup>237</sup> The prospective guarantee might not come in the form of a formal treaty, but it would be public, and in no way limited in its scope.

As the summer of 1963 dragged on and Kennedy had not yet replied to Ben Gurion’s request, Israeli officials began to pressure their American counterparts. On July 25, Israeli Minister Mordechai Gazit dropped in on Robert Komer to probe the security guarantee question. If the US was going to reject the security guarantee request, he suggested, why not begin discussions of alternatives that might “partly help meet Israel’s security needs?”<sup>238</sup> At an August 9 meeting Gazit pressed Deputy Assistant Secretary Jeffrey Kitchen further. Gazit insisted that there was “little physical evidence” to support the US’s promise to aid Israel in case of attack. Reassurances “had not had a useful political effect” in Israel. Gazit suggested that a “private but formal assurance to Israel, which might accomplish the desired political effect within the Israeli leadership” would be better than none at all. He also pushed for meetings between Israeli and American military officers to plan for Israel’s defense.<sup>239</sup> Three weeks later, Israeli Ambassador Avraham Harman met with Komer to

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<sup>237</sup> Possible US-Israel Security Assurance”, p. 3.

<sup>238</sup> “Memorandum for the Record,” Robert W. Komer, July 25, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>239</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: US Military Reassurances for Israel,” August 9, 1963, NSF 427, JFKL.

suggest “more effective exchange of information” between the two countries. “What harm would a greater exchange of intelligence assessments do?,” he asked Komer. “What Israel wanted,” he continued, “was to institutionalize such discussions.”<sup>240</sup>

On September 9 and 11, Gazit again lobbied for a guarantee. He noted that if Israel got into a war with her neighbors, there would be little time to react. As a result, the US and Israel needed to begin coordinating plans for defense.<sup>241</sup> A few days later, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Abba Eban met with US Ambassador Barbour to discuss the deficit in Israel’s “political/psychological deterrent.” Once again pushing for a guarantee, he explained “history shows there has never been an attack on an area protected by a formal US security treaty, while situations in which ambiguity of US attitude existed, such as Korea, have been subject to such aggression.” If the US planned to reject the Israeli request, he continued, joint contingency planning would at least be a step in the right direction.<sup>242</sup>

Overt military cooperation was not an exclusively Israeli concern. Although the CANE staff was aware of Israel’s interest in joint planning, it did not initially conduct much cost/benefit analysis on the matter of defense cooperation. As the administration more closely scrutinized the guarantee option, however, defense cooperation and its implications featured prominently in high-level assessments. Dean Rusk prepared a memo explaining why Kennedy should decline the request. What Israel really wanted from the US was the political advantage that would come from a formal guarantee and “open military

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<sup>240</sup> “Memorandum for Record,” Robert W. Komer, August 28, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>241</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: United States Security Assurance for Israel,” September 11, 1963, NSF 199, JFKL.

<sup>242</sup> “State Department Incoming Telegram No. 344 From: Tel Aviv To: Sec State,” September 14, 1963, PWR9, JFKL.

support.”<sup>243</sup> Rusk recommended rejecting the Israeli request, adding the extra warning that “alternatives such as joint military planning [...] might cause difficulties as great or greater than the formal security guarantee.”<sup>244</sup>

In August, the Joint Chiefs of Staff conducted an analysis for the Secretary of Defense in which they considered the proposed security guarantee, as well as the general idea of closer military coordination with Israel. Joint planning was “not essential to assist Israel effectively” they argued. If Israel was attacked, the US was most likely to give aid in the form of air strikes, and coordination would provide no operational advantage. Stronger US military ties with Israel would likely polarize the region, the Joint Chiefs argued, and that was antithetical to US interests. In summary, the Joint Chiefs recommended that: “a. No US security assurance to Israel be given beyond that enunciated by the President on 8 May, 1963; b. Joint contingency planning with Israel not be undertaken.”<sup>245</sup>

Kennedy’s final reply to Eshkol stated that the United States had carried out an assessment of its own ability to “deter or halt swiftly any aggression against Israel” and found that “existing informal arrangements” were sufficient. “To formalize our known intentions and commitments—to go further into special security arrangements with Israel at this point—would contribute little to deterrence,” he concluded.<sup>246</sup> The administration was prepared to intervene on Israel’s behalf if it was in serious danger, but it was quite

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<sup>243</sup> “Subject: Israel Security Guarantee, Reply to Ben-Gurion’s May 12 Letter,” Dean Rusk, September 26, 1963, PWR 9, JFKL.

<sup>244</sup> “Subject: Israel Security Guarantee, Reply to Ben-Gurion’s May 12 Letter,” Dean Rusk, September 26, 1963, PWR 9, JFKL.

<sup>245</sup> “Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Subject: Implications to DOD of a US Security Assurance to Israel,” The Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 7, 1963, NSF, Box 119, JFKL.

<sup>246</sup> “Outgoing Telegram, Department of State, Amembassy Tel Aviv 309,” Oct 2, 1963, POF, Box 119a, JFKL. This telegram contains the verbatim text of JFK’s reply to Eshkol.

unwilling to make a public commitment to do so, either in the form of an alliance treaty or joint military cooperation.

Kennedy's official rejection letter only prompted more Israeli requests for closer military ties. Gazit told Komer that the "existing informal arrangements" to which Kennedy had referred to were not arrangements at all, but "repeated indications of generalized US support."<sup>247</sup> Shaul Bar-Haim, another Israeli Embassy official, told a State Department colleague that it was "a political fact that Israeli leaders did not feel reassured and that they believed Israel remained vulnerable." He too pushed for coordination of military plans and intelligence sharing.<sup>248</sup> And in his reply to Kennedy's rejection letter, Prime Minister Eshkol declared that Israel would have to seek a different sort of "balancing deterrent capability."<sup>249</sup>

At a November meeting with US officials, Deputy Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin explained to Robert Komer why Israel regarded unofficial US guarantees as qualitatively different than those given to other allies. "[W]e had open formal treaty commitments to our other allies but not to Israel. These open commitments were a stronger deterrent," Rabin argued. Additionally, "we did joint planning under our other alliances, and this was essential to make them militarily effective."<sup>250</sup> President Kennedy was killed four days after the Rabin meeting. Under Lyndon Johnson, the US-Israeli defense relationship grew closer in 1964 as the Americans agreed to M-48 tank and A4F aircraft sales. The new

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<sup>247</sup> "Memorandum for the Record: Luncheon Conversation with Israeli Minister Gazit," Robert W. Komer, October 24, 1963.

<sup>248</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation, Subject: Israel's Quest for Security," October 29, 1963, NSF 427, JFKL.

<sup>249</sup> Eshkol to Kennedy, November 4, 1963, NSF 119, JFKL.

<sup>250</sup> "Memorandum for Record," Robert W. Komer, November 18, 1963, NSF 119, 1963.



president, however, continued to resist public military cooperation.<sup>251</sup> To the Israelis, private security assurances and arms sales were still not enough.

### ***Explaining US-Israel Alliance Non-Formation***

As of mid-May, 1963, it seemed that there was a good chance that an American security guarantee to Israel would be in place by 1964. If CANE failed, the administration expected to resume bilateral negotiations with Israel. Yet without ever officially approaching the Israelis, the overture was scuttled. What happened? The US rejection of the Israeli bid for a security guarantee appears to provide strong support for Hypothesis 1. The United States initially considered a security guarantee to Israel in hopes of gaining leverage over its nuclear program, and looked for a relatively low-cost way of providing one, in the form of a unilateral executive agreement. As time passed, however, officials began to argue that a security guarantee would be inimical to US interests because it would alienate the Arab world. Moreover, as the summer drew on, Nasser's threats of "protective war" gave the United States reason to fear entrapment between Egypt and a nuclear Israel if they went ahead with a guarantee. These risks were ultimately decisive because there was little the United States could do to circumscribe a defense relationship with the Israelis. Tel Aviv wanted the most binding alliance it could get, coupled with peacetime defense cooperation. The United States knew there would be no purpose to an alliance unless it was made public, but the prospect of provoking Arab states and risking entrapment made this commitment too costly.

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<sup>251</sup> In a telegram on January 1, 1965, Rusk explained to Barbour that it remains the US position to continue to oppose public military cooperation such as joint consultations and contingency planning. "Incoming Telegram, Department of State, Amembassy Tel Aviv," Rusk to Barbour, January 1, 1965, NSF 138, LBJL.

As Hypothesis 1 expects, the presence of Israeli adversaries that the United States did not share helps to explain why the Americans could not allow greater defense cooperation and therefore could not extend a guarantee. Kennedy had spent a great deal of time cultivating positive relations with Nasser, and believed that alienating the Egyptian President might mean the total demise of US influence in the Arab world. The reason that defense cooperation with Israel would have been so costly was because the guarantee itself could not be structured to make a US-Israeli alliance less threatening to Egypt. Furthermore, the enmity between Israel and Egypt was why Kennedy had to consider the risk of US entrapment in a war. Nasser's statement that he would strike Dimona if Israel was developing nuclear weapons led Kennedy to halt the CANE probe. Although Nasser had expressed a willingness to forswear nuclear weapons and strategic missiles, potentially fulfilling step one of the plan, the administration knew that a security guarantee would be necessary to get Israel out of the nuclear business. Had the United States extended a guarantee, however, Nasser's hypothetical strike would have brought the Americans into a war against Egypt that they might otherwise have avoided. In all likelihood, Kennedy stopped Operation CANE before he knew whether he might convince the Tel Aviv to give up its program for this very reason.

As Robert Komer observed, Israel hoped to receive a "full-fledged alliance, with all the trimmings" from the Americans.<sup>252</sup> The Americans, however, were not eager to grant such a formal guarantee. Even in the May CANE analysis, which took a relatively favorable view on an increased US commitment to Israel, officials seemed to agree that a formal

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<sup>252</sup> "Memorandum from Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Kennedy," July 23, 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-63, Volume XVIII, Document 300.

security treaty was not desirable. They preferred instead to consider a public, unilateral, executive agreement. There was, however, no sign that the Kennedy administration contemplated any serious limitations on the scope of the agreement. That would, of course, have been inimical to the general purpose of the guarantee.

Once the United States began to consider the possibility of joint military cooperation, however, the potential costs of a guarantee became excessive. Israeli requests for joint military planning began in the spring, but as the summer progressed and it seemed less likely that Kennedy would grant Ben Gurion's request, officials increased the pressure for defense cooperation. Even after Kennedy wrote to Eshkol to officially decline Ben Gurion's request, the Israelis continued to press this issue, explaining the lack of observable military cooperation with the US made American promises significantly less credible than those to formal allies with whom they did publicly train and plan.

For the Americans, the prospect of enhanced defense cooperation with Israel was a major sticking point. Although Kennedy officials anticipated that Israel would want these sorts of arrangements when they began the CANE initiatives, it was not until the summer that key officials analyzed and emphasized the detrimental effects that observable military coordination could have. Tellingly, reports from the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of State came down strongly opposed to joint military planning or training with the Israelis. Both noted that this type of signaling could trigger as much or more backlash as a treaty itself, and ruled defense cooperation to be destructive to US interests in the region. Significantly, although US officials began the CANE probe to investigate the utility of a formal guarantee, they do not appear to have seriously considered whether a formal defense pledge without "the trimmings" would have been possible. Most high-level analyses appear to assume that

a security guarantee and defense cooperation were inextricable. A stronger public commitment to deter on Israel's behalf would have to be backed up with signs of the United States' capability to do so.

### ***Alliance Alternatives?***

American thinking about the costs and benefits of a security guarantee certainly focused on whether the United States was willing to signal a commitment to Israel, and how this would affect its relations with the Arab world, and Egypt in particular. But a corollary to these concerns was how antagonizing the Arab states might, in turn, increase Soviet influence in the region. In the administration's early analyses, officials worried that an open, public, guarantee to Israel would polarize Egypt and its neighbors. Those states might then turn to the Soviets for a counter-guarantee.<sup>253</sup> This is somewhat consistent with the alternative hypothesis.

Following McCloy's trip to Egypt, as the Kennedy administration considered the new arms control options Nasser had laid out, Robert Komer reminded him that the Israelis would not comply unless they got something from the Americans in return. He urged the President to consider "the minimum we may be able to get away with, while still limiting risk of strong Arab reaction and Soviet response."<sup>254</sup> On July 23, when Kennedy decided to end the CANE meeting after the discussion about Nasser's comments on striking Dimona, he also made mention of the Soviets. He declared that the May 8 Tripartite statement was

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<sup>253</sup> Framework and Tactics for Negotiation," p. 4.

<sup>254</sup> "Memorandum from Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Kennedy," July 23, 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-63, Volume XVIII, Document 300.

as far as he could “go without inviting the Soviets into the Middle East.”<sup>255</sup> Further, Kennedy’s reply to Eshkol mentioned his concern that an American guarantee to Israel US would cause backlash in the region, and possibly cause Arab states to seek similar assurances from the USSR.<sup>256</sup>

Finally, in his November meeting with US officials, Yitzhak Rabin mentioned the Soviets as well. Unofficial guarantees to Israel were less credible than a formal and public treaty, or an alliance where the partners engaged in joint military planning. But they were also “not against a communist enemy. The US would fight if their chief opponent attempted aggression, but it might be a different matter when no Communist enemy was involved.”<sup>257</sup>

Another important consideration, however, was the real US concern that a guarantee to Israel could result in Arab polarization and a Soviet counter-guarantee, or increased Soviet influence in the region more broadly. There is no question that this possibility was important in Kennedy’s decision to deny the Israelis a guarantee, as he explicitly mentioned it as he ended the July 23 meeting. It would appear then, that the Israel case provides some limited support for H1A1, that security guarantees are formed or denied on the basis of the patron’s primary adversary. It is important to consider the causal logic underlying this fear about a possible Soviet counter-guarantee, however. The Kennedy administration worried that a formal guarantee and military cooperation would antagonize the Arab world and Egypt in particular. The Soviets could gain influence as a consequence of this polarization. Increased Soviet influence was therefore a potential

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<sup>255</sup>“Memorandum of Conversation: Subject: McCloy’s Near East Arms Limitation Probe; Security Guarantee for Israel,” July 23, 4:30 pm, *FRUS*, 1961-63, Volume XVIII, Document 303.

<sup>256</sup> “Outgoing Telegram, Department of State, Amembassy Tel Aviv 309,” Oct 2, 1963, POF, Box 119a, JFKL. This telegram contains the verbatim text of JFK’s reply to Eshkol.

<sup>257</sup> Read to Bundy, Nov 9, 1963, NSF 119

tertiary effect of the guarantee, with signaling and the loss of the Arab world preceding any effects on the Soviets. While we cannot eliminate H1A1 entirely, it is also incorrect to say that the Soviets were a primary motivation for denying the guarantee, although they did factor into the administration's cost calculations.

### ***"I Can't Disarm Myself"***

The case of Israel provides important support Hypothesis 1. It is also a harrowing historical counterfactual. CANE did not fail because Egypt or Israel flatly refused the probe, but because the United States was unwilling to send public signals on Israel's behalf lest the Arab world turn against it. Had the Kennedy Administration been confident that it could engage in a satisfactory quid-pro-quo with Eshkol, it might have attempted to trade a guarantee for the Israeli weapons program. And if Israel had accepted a guarantee, it would have also had to accept the US requirement of eschewing further territorial expansion, three years before the Six Day War. Furthermore, if the US had pursued Nasser's offers of arms control in a "collective setting" or via unilateral renunciation, CANE would have been the second arms control treaty of the nuclear age, following closely on the heels of the Limited Test Ban.

Instead, however, the United States decided that a public commitment to Israel could not be made at an acceptable cost, and that it could not go beyond private security assurances and, later, regular arms sales. But this did not go far enough to satisfy the Israelis. "We must stand on our feet and be able to touch the umbrella," Prime Minister

Eshkol explained in 1964.<sup>258</sup> One year later, as American official pleaded with him not to go nuclear, Eshkol went further: “If we were a member of NATO or had a security pact with you... but I can’t disarm myself.”<sup>259</sup> By most accounts, Israel crossed the nuclear threshold in 1967, as it prepared to clash with Nasser in the Six Day War. The United States, Israel’s “de facto” ally, had almost no involvement.<sup>260</sup>

## **The Franco-Russian Alliance: War on Paper**

### ***Introduction***

The formation of the Franco-Russian alliance between is a sharp contrast to the United States’ decision to reject the Israeli security guarantee bid in 1963. Between 1890 and 1894, Paris and St. Petersburg negotiated both an entente and a formal defense pact, and did so despite the existence of several unshared adversaries. This alliance formation process demonstrates how the requirements for forming traditional defense pacts differ from those of security guarantee formation—namely, that the specific nature of the Franco-Russian pact and the fact that it was kept secret allowed the two countries to ally despite their many differences. I begin this section with a summary of the Franco-Russian alliance negotiation. I then go on to explore the case through the lens of Hypothesis 1 and its observable implications. I consider the role that unshared adversaries played in alliance formation, and how France and Russia constructed a detailed and clandestine pact that

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<sup>258</sup> Eshkol made this statement in a meeting with American Ambassador Barbour, and White House Liaison Meyer Feldman. “Incoming Telegram, Department of State, From: Tel Aviv,” Barbour to Rusk, April 7, 1964, NSF 138, LBJL.

<sup>259</sup> Eshkol made this commend in a meeting on Israel’s nuclear capability that included Komer, Barbour, and Averill Harriman, Golda Meir and several other Israeli and US officials. “Subject: Harriman Mission- The Nuclear Question,” March 1, 1965, NSF 139, LBJL.

<sup>260</sup> In preparation for their November 1963 consultations with Rabin, Komer instructed US officials to “talk candidly, as de facto allies,” with the Israelis.

could assuage entrapment and abandonment fears, despite their differing strategic priorities. I also demonstrate that even after the conclusion of the alliance, Paris and St. Petersburg continued to have distinct defensive interests, but that this did not prevent them from upholding their 1894 commitment when war eventually came.

### ***Case Summary***

Between 1890 and 1894, France and Russia negotiated and concluded a two-part defense pact. The first component, an entente, was signed in August 1891. The second part, an agreement for mutual military assistance in case of war was finalized in the first days of 1894. Although it has come to be thought of as a natural counterweight to the Triple Alliance, and one of the rigid alliances that helped to plunge Europe into the First World War, the Franco-Russian Pact was not a foregone conclusion. The prospective allies were primarily concerned about the military threats emanating from different foes, and this caused disagreements in two major areas. The first was the form that military cooperation among them should take; the second was the degree to which that cooperation should be publicized. Moreover, the diplomacy surrounding the Franco-Russian negotiations demonstrates how very much this type of defense relationship differed in its requirements from a post-1945 security guarantee.

The French and Russians were not natural allies. Alexander III, the Russian tsar, very much disliked the “radical, atheistic French Republic,” and believed that form of government to be unreliable and unstable.<sup>261</sup> Russia had previously had a warm

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<sup>261</sup> William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism: A Penetrating and Revelatory Study of European Diplomacy in the Crucial Period of 1890-1902* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1968), p.8.



relationship to Germany, as Tsar Alexander II was the nephew of Kaiser Wilhelm I, and was known to despise the French.<sup>262</sup> In the early 1880s, Russia was a part of the Three Emperor's League and thereafter, held a neutrality agreement with Germany. The Tsar and his ministers only began to contemplate an alignment with France after these treaty ties ended with Bismarck's 1890 departure, and even then, an alliance with Paris was considered a last resort to avoid complete isolation.<sup>263</sup>

The French, for their part, had few friends abroad after their humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. France looked to Russia as an international partner who might help it restore its position.<sup>264</sup> Paris' goal, both for the alliance and in Europe more broadly, was revanchism against Germany and the eventual return of Alsace Lorraine.<sup>265</sup> This agenda was a liability for the Tsar and his ministers, who feared that the French might use the alliance for offensive purposes.<sup>266</sup> The French Armed Forces were finally returning to full strength by the late 1880s, however, making Paris a more attractive partner.<sup>267</sup> From the French perspective, until 1890, the most obvious barrier to an alliance was Russia's other political commitments.

In 1881, Russia had joined the Three Emperors' League with German and Austria-Hungary, an arrangement that seemed natural based on ideological and dynastic kinship.<sup>268</sup> The pact stated that if any of the three became involved in a war with a power outside the

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<sup>262</sup> George F. Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia, and the Coming of the First World War* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 7.

<sup>263</sup> Langer, p. 8.

<sup>264</sup> Kennan, p. 30 .

<sup>265</sup> Kennan, p. 4.

<sup>266</sup> Langer, p. 8.

<sup>267</sup> Kennan, p. 25.

<sup>268</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 109.

group, the other two would observe neutrality and would not aid the adversary.<sup>269</sup> The motivation behind the pact was that an ongoing rivalry might relapse into conflict (Germany might renew its feud with France or that Russia might go to war with England in the Near East). With the treaty in place, there would be no need to worry about either of the other signatories launching an opportunistic attack. The League was renewed twice, and its terms most certainly prevented Russia from allying with France. In 1887, however, the Tsar refused to renew for a third time, arguing that Austrian policy had hurt Russia's position in Bulgaria.<sup>270</sup> As a substitute, Alexander concluded a secret neutrality pact with Germany only, which came to be known as the Reinsurance Treaty. By this agreement, Russia and Germany were bound to observe neutrality in war as long as the other partner was not the aggressor. Although it was a narrower commitment than the Three Emperors' League, the Reinsurance Treaty guaranteed Russia against having to fight a two front war with Germany as one foe. It would not, for example, face England in the Mediterranean and Germany in Poland simultaneously<sup>271</sup>.

The Reinsurance Treaty was due for renewal in 1890, just as German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck resigned. His successor, Leo Von Caprivi, recommended that the secret treaty be allowed to lapse.<sup>272</sup> Ostensibly, Kaiser Wilhelm II and his advisors refused to renew the treaty because Germany had too many others.<sup>273</sup> Bismarck had understood the interlocking nature of his complex treaty system, but the new government did not comprehend what additional value Germany gained from the pact.<sup>274</sup> They did not, for

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<sup>269</sup> Kennan, p. 18.

<sup>270</sup> Kennan, pp. 18-19.

<sup>271</sup> Langer, p. 8.

<sup>272</sup> Kennan, p. 20.

<sup>273</sup> Kennan, p. 20.

<sup>274</sup> Langer, p. 3.

example, perceive that the Reinsurance Treaty combined with long mobilization times meant that Russia could be kept out of the first few weeks of a renewed war with France. They also did not consider that its cancellation would cause Russia to seek some other form of alignment, and that the terms of the eventual Franco-Russian alliance could never have been negotiated with the Reinsurance Treaty in place.<sup>275</sup>

As Glenn Snyder has observed, a purely systemic logic would expect the Franco-Russian alliance to have formed directly following the Austro-German alliance of 1879. Bismarck, in effect, “beat the system” by mollifying for Russia concerns about its western border with the neutrality pact.<sup>276</sup> Only when his successors cut that tie did a Franco-Russian alliance become possible, and even then, St. Petersburg was wary. Indeed, following the Reinsurance Treaty cancellation Alexander reportedly told Wilhelm that he would never make an alliance with a republic.<sup>277</sup> On the German side, Wilhelm II was not nearly as pro-Russian as his father, but he did not intend to take up a hostile policy, and told the Tsar as much when he informed him of his decision to let the treaty lapse.<sup>278</sup> The German government insisted it would abide by all of its former positions, including support for Russian claims in Bulgaria and the Turkish Straits.<sup>279</sup> The Russian Foreign Minister, Nikolai Geirs, continued to believe that a tenuous German connection was better than any French one, so he tried desperately to convince Berlin to put these promises in writing.

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<sup>275</sup> Specifically, the Franco-Russian alliance provided for “immediate and simultaneous mobilization,” to ensure that no adversary could delay the other. Kennan, p. 39.

<sup>276</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 109.

<sup>277</sup> Langer, p. 11.

<sup>278</sup> Langer, p. 5.

<sup>279</sup> Langer, p. 6.

Their absolute refusal to do so was what finally made St. Petersburg look elsewhere for international support.<sup>280</sup>

The initial steps towards Franco-Russian rapprochement took place in August of 1890. High-level military officials from both states met and agreed that the other should have some intrinsic interest if it became embroiled in a war with Germany.<sup>281</sup> These conversations revealed, however, that the Russians and the French disagreed on military strategy as well as on the form that an agreement might take—persistent themes throughout the remainder of their treaty negotiations. In terms of military strategy, General Nikolai Obruchev proposed a “Russian Schlieffen Plan”: if an initial German offensive came against Russia, Russia should launch an offensive against Austria while taking the defensive against Germany; if the German thrust were against France, Russia would again take offensive against Austria and defensive against Germany, and turn full-force against Germany once Austria was defeated.<sup>282</sup> The French General, Raoul le Mouton de Boisdeffre was less than pleased with these proposed arrangements, but was heartened at the prospect of Russia joining them in war at all. The second point of disagreement was whether the pact should be formal and public (the French preference) or informal and secret (the Russian hope). The Generals parted ways without resolving either conundrum. By winter 1891, the Tsar was still not comfortable with the idea of promising to join France in a war against Germany.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Kennan, pp. 43-44; Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 112; Langer, p. 9.

<sup>281</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 110-112.

<sup>282</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 113.

<sup>283</sup> Langer, p. 16- 17.

The spring of 1891, however, brought with it the pressure that was necessary to elicit alliance interest from the Russians: the Triple Alliance announced its treaty renewal plans earlier than expected, which led to a series of rumors that Great Britain was planning to join it.<sup>284</sup> Fearful that he would be shut out by a hostile Anglo-German combination, and that the French might pursue alternative arrangements out of necessity, the Tsar quickly gave his blessing and the Entente Cordiale was drafted in July.<sup>285</sup> Negotiations took place when French vessels visited Russian naval maneuvers at Cronstadt. Though the document text was closely-held, the visit itself was seen as evidence of rapprochement.<sup>286</sup>

French Foreign Minister, Alexandre Ribot, came to that meeting with two sets of demands. First, the two governments should act in concert on all matters regarding peace in Europe. Second, the two governments should agree to immediate and simultaneous mobilization in case of a threat from the Triple Alliance.<sup>287</sup> His Russian counterpart would not agree to immediate and simultaneous mobilization, and softened the French language. He suggested that the entente partners draft an “agreement on measures” for “immediate and simultaneous adoption,” in case a military threat arose. If either party was menaced by aggression, Paris and St. Petersburg would confer, and would take action in tandem, assuming previously-agreed to circumstances had come to pass.<sup>288</sup> Ribot insisted that they would have to agree in advance to the circumstances and accompanying actions to which the Russians referred, and this was accepted. The Russians also raised the question of

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<sup>284</sup> These rumors were particularly pervasive in Italy, where treaty renewal had to be announced before the Parliament. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 114; Langer, pp. 19-20.

<sup>285</sup> Langer, p. 27.

<sup>286</sup> Kennan, p. 52

<sup>287</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 115; Langer p. 22.

<sup>288</sup> Langer, p. 22.

whether attacks on interests outside the European theater should be included in the entente (Egypt or the Mediterranean, for example), but later dropped this request.<sup>289</sup> The Entente Cordiale entered into force by an exchange of notes in late August, 1891. In addition to providing for consultation and concerted action in (to-be) specified circumstances, the final document cited the fact that the Triple Alliance had seriously compromised the European balance of power, and went so far as to speculate on Great Britain's possible incorporation.<sup>290</sup>

Even before it was signed, however, the French began to push for more binding arrangements. As Ribot's "immediate and simultaneous mobilization" clause had suggested, they were eager for an express commitment from the Russians that aid would be forthcoming in the case of a war against Germany. They worried that even with a consultative arrangement in place, the Russians might still pass the buck and focus on Austria first.<sup>291</sup> They argued that the allies should define their military commitments much more explicitly, lest lines of communication be quickly cut if war broke out.<sup>292</sup> The Russians, for their part, were happy to think of the entente as evidence of improved relations, but most of the Tsar's cabinet ministers, and the foreign minister in particular, opposed any further action that would result in a more intimate military relationship. This was because, from St. Petersburg, no actual war with Germany was foreseeable at that time.<sup>293</sup> As will be discussed shortly, the Russians remained preoccupied with Austria and

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<sup>289</sup> Kennan, p. 105.

<sup>290</sup> Kennan, p. 103.

<sup>291</sup> Kennan, p. 111.

<sup>292</sup> Kennan, pp. 107, 114.

<sup>293</sup> Kennan, p. 111.

Britain in the Mediterranean, but knew full well that France had its eye on Germany.<sup>294</sup> The Russians therefore declined French entreaties to conclude a more binding military pact, and embarked on a good will tour of Europe, to reassure other states (and Germany in particular) of the entente partners' peaceful intentions.<sup>295</sup>

By early 1892, the French were growing antsy and wished to firm up the Entente's implicit but wholly unspecified obligation of mutual assistance in the case of aggression. Specifically, they hoped to conclude an agreement on mobilization and delineate what military measures would be taken by each side.<sup>296</sup> The French General Staff authored a paper, which argued that the Franco-Russian alliance had a small manpower edge, but that the Triple Alliance could best them due to their speed of mobilization. The study, discussed in more detail shortly, recommended deployment patterns (numbers of troops and positions they would take up) to best address these shortcomings.<sup>297</sup> In August, 1892, General Boisdeffre arrived in St. Petersburg with the French proposal. In case Germany alone, or the entire Triple Alliance mobilized, France and Russia should do the same without need for previous agreement or notification, and should commit to very specific deployment patterns.<sup>298</sup> The Russians, who remained preoccupied with Austria, were hesitant to make any specific commitment that was primarily focused on Germany.<sup>299</sup> A compromise military convention was drafted on August 10, 1892, with minimal Russian enthusiasm.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 116.

<sup>295</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 117; Langer, p. 27; Kennan, p. 139.

<sup>296</sup> Kennan, p. 138.

<sup>297</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 117; Kennan, p. 149.

<sup>298</sup> Langer, p. 34.

<sup>299</sup> Langer, p. 35.

<sup>300</sup> Kennan, p. 181.

After its drafting, the alliance agreement entered limbo for a year and a half, largely due to Russian concerns as to whether its defense interests could be reconciled with the French.<sup>301</sup> In July, 1893, however, the German Reichstag passed a new army bill, which increased the country's standing peacetime military by 72,000 and implemented a new system of reserves. When implemented, the new system would allow Berlin to field 520,000 trained men on short notice.<sup>302</sup> The bill raised suspicions about German intentions in both Petersburg and Paris, although the Tsar was still not quite prepared to agree to French demands about troop commitments.<sup>303</sup> Following a highly-publicized Russian naval visit to Toulon that October, however, Russian commitment to the proposal increased substantially.<sup>304</sup> Other European states took notice as well. The German Chancellor was reported to have declared that no event "of the preceding twenty years had so seriously threatened the peace of Europe," and a London newspaper argued that Russia's visit marked "the most serious day England had passed through since the battle of Trafalgar."<sup>305</sup> With both its existence and specific provisions held secret, the Franco-Russian alliance entered into force in the first days of January, 1894.<sup>306</sup>

### ***Unshared Adversaries: Surmountable Obstacles***

The long delay between the cancellation of the Franco-German Reinsurance Treaty and conclusion of the Franco-Russian defense pact can largely be explained by the fact that

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<sup>301</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 120.

<sup>302</sup> Kennan, p. 216.

<sup>303</sup> Langer, pp. 42-43.

<sup>304</sup> Langer, p. 47; Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>305</sup> Langer, p. 47.

<sup>306</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 122.



the two states did not necessarily share military goals. Indeed, as of 1890, their divergences were more notable than their shared strategic interests, particularly when it came to adversaries. The overarching concern that drove Paris to seek an alliance was the possibility of a second Franco-Prussian War. The German presence on France's borders made it deeply insecure, and it retained a long-term goal of recapturing Alsace-Lorraine. Beyond that particular territory, there was a strong desire in Paris to exact revenge on Berlin.<sup>307</sup> A secondary concern was Italy, with whom France had a host of colonial conflicts.<sup>308</sup> From 1887-1890, Franco-Italian relations were at a nadir, as the French sought to break the Italian connection to Triple Alliance through punitive economic measures and interference in a dispute between the Pope and the Italian government.<sup>309</sup> In early 1891, the Italians attempted to improve relations in hopes of sapping the French interest in a Russian alliance, but their refusal to disclose the terms of the Triple Alliance scuttled rapprochement.<sup>310</sup> Paris had no ill-will towards Vienna, however, understood that Austria's membership in the Triple Alliance had little to do with France, and would have much preferred an Austrian alliance to a Russian one.<sup>311</sup> France had little interest in the Balkans or Turkish Straits, where the Austrians clashed with St. Petersburg.<sup>312</sup> Finally, due to colonial disputes, Anglo-French relations were poor.<sup>313</sup>

As of 1890, Russia's patterns of amity and enmity were quite different. The Three Emperors' League and Reinsurance Treaty meant that Russo-German relations were

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<sup>307</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 109.

<sup>308</sup> Kennan, p. 120.

<sup>309</sup> Langer, p. 10.

<sup>310</sup> Kennan, p. 55.

<sup>311</sup> Kennan, p. 119.

<sup>312</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 109.

<sup>313</sup> Kennan, p. 125.

relatively friendly, despite the latter's refusal to codify their sustained amity.<sup>314</sup> The Russians had little stake in the Franco-German rivalry, and none whatsoever in Alsace-Lorraine. They also had no particular quarrels with the Italians, and as they began rapprochement with the French, took pains to convince Rome that the partnership was only a reaction to the renewal of the Triple Alliance.<sup>315</sup> There was, however, a longstanding distrust of Austria-Hungary through the Russian government and society more broadly, and bad blood over the Balkans and Turkish Straits specifically.<sup>316</sup> In one of the few similarities in the two countries' rivalry profiles, Russo-British relations were also tense, especially over the Russian presence in the Black Sea.<sup>317</sup> In sum, for the French, the primary alliance goal was to defend against and eventually inflict damage upon Germany, whereas the Russians were primarily interested in settling scores with Austria and Britain without fear of German intervention.<sup>318</sup> The Russians however, did not expect any near-term war with Germany, and were acutely concerned that an alliance with France could provoke Berlin to attack.<sup>319</sup> One could hardly argue that the Paris and St. Petersburg were natural military allies.

Once entente negotiations commenced, France and Russia's differing adversaries were a prominent concern. In their 1891 talks, the French sought an explicit and public pledge of Russian support in a war against Germany, and their stated war aim was the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>320</sup> In negotiations, the French hoped for a pledge of immediate

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<sup>314</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 110.

<sup>315</sup> Kennan, p. 137.

<sup>316</sup> Kennan, p. 123.

<sup>317</sup> Kennan, p. 127.

<sup>318</sup> Kennan, p. 96.

<sup>319</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 109.

<sup>320</sup> Boisdeffre announced this in his 1891 meeting with Obruchev. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 114-115.

and simultaneous mobilization that would force the Russians to wage a two-front war from the start. The French worried that without a binding agreement, the Russians might concentrate efforts on Austria alone. The Russians, however, were primarily interested in deterring German intervention in an Austro-Russian war. In such a conflict they hoped to gain Austrian Galicia and control of the Straits at Constantinople.<sup>321</sup> They preferred a vaguer, non-public alliance agreement, which would not provoke Germany or foreclose the possibility of re-establishing a Russo-German friendship later. A flexible and secret agreement also had the bonus of reducing the risk of entrapment over Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>322</sup> These conflicts of interest were summarized by General Obruchev, the Russian Chief of Staff, as entente negotiations were under way:

“The French regard as their immediate enemy Germany almost exclusively; to Italy they attach secondary importance, while for Austria they cherish certain sympathies... Hence, the French would like, if possible, to conclude with us a convention solely for the event of war with Germany. To a certain extent this condition is mutually profitable. But one cannot help noticing that it is considerable more profitable for France than for us. Having secured a guarantee against her most dangerous enemy, France might, in the case of war by Russia against Austria, even though it broke out at Germany’s command, remain inactive and wait for developments, which might prove fatal to us...”<sup>323</sup>

Foreign Minister Geirs echoed this sentiment in explaining why the Russians could not commit to a true military pact in 1891: “It would be a mistake to help the French crush Germany when the French were unwilling to aid Russia against Austria or Turkey.”<sup>324</sup> Geirs argued that if the Russians agreed to the French request for aid against Germany, and

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<sup>321</sup> Obruchev said as much in his 1891 meeting with Boisdeffre. Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>322</sup> For a more extensive discussion of both states’ goals in the entente negotiations see Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 113.

<sup>323</sup> As quoted in Langer, p. 35.

<sup>324</sup> As quoted in Langer, p. 32

helped France to prevail in a war against Berlin, the Russians would have no guarantee whatsoever of French cooperation to finish off Austria.<sup>325</sup>

Another compelling reason for the Russians to demur on a formal military commitment to France was the simple fact that they fundamentally did not believe that a near-term war between them and Germany was likely.<sup>326</sup> To quote one prominent scholar of the alliance:

“...there was at that time simply no political issue outstanding between Russia and Germany that could remotely have justified, or called for, a settlement by force of arms. Neither power had any territorial design on the other. Neither had any specific objectives with relation to the other that only a successful war could be expected to achieve, unless it be the Tsar’s rather wistful assumption that a defeated Germany would fall to pieces and cease to be a bother to him. And Bismarck, in his final years in office, had repeatedly warned the Germany military leaders not only that Germany had no designs on Russia territory, but that if they got themselves into a war with Russia they would have no rational objectives and would never find a favorable place to stop.”<sup>327</sup>

At the time that they penned the Entente Cordiale, then, Russia and France had myriad unshared adversaries, and few that were truly mutual (the British came the closest). In Russian eyes, this meant that there was simply no basis for a more binding commitment. The French, of course, wanted more than an entente and continued to advocate for a Russian commitment of aid against Germany. As they considered the military convention that the French General Staff had drafted, the Russians insisted that they would have to have a guarantee of French support in case of a war by Austria alone.<sup>328</sup> They made clear to the French that they would not attack Germany and Austria on the basis of Italian

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<sup>325</sup> Langer, p. 32; Kennan, p. 154.

<sup>326</sup> Kennan, p. 137.

<sup>327</sup> Kennan, p. 156.

<sup>328</sup> Kennan, p. 162.

mobilization against France.<sup>329</sup> The French, for their part, insisted that they should retain the right not to intervene in a purely Austro-Russo conflict, so long as Germany did the same (they did not want to be forced into the position of aggressor against Germany).<sup>330</sup> Because of these disagreements, nearly all of the Tsar's top ministers remained opposed to any further written agreement at all.<sup>331</sup>

While the alliance agreement stood unsigned, the Entente partners' diverging military interests remained apparent. The French declined to support Russia in disputed with Britain over the Indian border, and Russian claims in Bulgaria were an "open sore" between the two states.<sup>332</sup> The Russians, in turn, refused to support the French position in Egypt when it was challenged by the British.<sup>333</sup> Perhaps most problematic was the fact that the entente had clearly not stemmed St. Petersburg's interest in a rapprochement with Berlin. In 1892, the Russians initiated a new commercial treaty with Germany as a step to improve relations, which the Germans took up with interest.<sup>334</sup> In an effort to lure the Russians back, Berlin returned to a "Bismarckian attitude" on Bulgaria, and ceased its explicit support for Austrian and British interests there.<sup>335</sup> In early 1893, Kaiser Wilhelm II was overt in his efforts to win over the Tsar, telling Alexander that the French government was capricious and corrupt, and suggesting that a "crusade" against them might become necessary. Further, he insisted, the Triple Alliance was wholly defensive, based on

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<sup>329</sup> Kennan, p. 167.

<sup>330</sup> Kennan, p. 175.

<sup>331</sup> Kennan, pp. 169-170, 178-179.

<sup>332</sup> Langer, p. 38.

<sup>333</sup> Langer, p. 38.

<sup>334</sup> Langer, p. 40.

<sup>335</sup> Langer, p. 41.

conservative principles and in was in no way an obstacle to re-establishing a Holy Alliance or Three Emperors League to combat corruption and revolution.<sup>336</sup>

In July, 1893, a newspaper article entitled “Alliance ou Flirt?” appeared in the French newspaper *Le Figaro*.<sup>337</sup> It suggested that a Russo-German rapprochement might be in the offing, and argued that the French were being slighted. In Russia, there was ample suspicion that the French government was behind the article, but it nonetheless sent the message that the French might lose interest in closer ties. That same summer, the Russo-German trade treaty collapsed and Berlin introduced to Parliament their new military bill that would expand its armed forces by 8,000.<sup>338</sup> Several months later, on December 16, the Tsar finally informed the French ambassador that he was ready to agree to the military pact set out at the Toulon visit in 1892. After stressing the need for peace in Europe, Alexander informed the ambassador that “French idea of revenge must be kept in the realm of sentiment and must not be translated into action.”<sup>339</sup> On December 27, 1893, the Russian government issued its formal adherence to the military convention that had been drafted 15 months earlier, and on January 4, 1894, the French cabled back with the same language. The litany of defensive disagreements did not stop Paris and St. Petersburg from successfully negotiating a defense pact.

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<sup>336</sup> Langer p. 41.

<sup>337</sup> Kennan, p. 175.

<sup>338</sup> Langer, p. 42.

<sup>339</sup> Langer, p. 48.

### ***Avoiding Entrapment and Abandonment: Specificity and Secrecy in the Pact***

Despite the fact that France and Russia each had multiple adversaries that the other did not share, they managed to go well beyond their initial entente relationship and conclude a binding alliance. The presence of unshared adversaries raised for each state the possibility of entrapment in an unwanted war or abandonment in crisis, but this risk was managed through two important mechanisms. The first was a series of very specific defensive commitments, which allowed each party to believe that it would receive military support against its most-likely adversary, without committing completely to contingencies in which it had less of a stake. The second was treaty secrecy: the Russians eventually agreed to make a specific series of commitments to France against Germany because the existence of the treaty, as well as its content, was to be held in absolute confidence. This minimized the risk that the Franco-Russian alliance would have the near-term effect of inciting Berlin. I begin by examining the specific treaty content that allowed the French and Russians to surmount the obstacle of unshared adversaries; I then go on to consider the role that secrecy played in this alliance.

The Franco-Russian military convention managed to assuage the entrapment and abandonment fears of both parties because it was a compromise document with circumscribed aims. The first article of the pact read as follows:

“If France is attacked by Germany, or by Italy supported by Germany, Russia will employ all her available forces for an attack on Germany. If Russia is attacked by Germany, or by Austria supported by Germany, France will employ all her available forces for an attack on Germany.”

This clause was important for several reasons. First, it acknowledged that France was primarily concerned with a German or Italian attack, while Russia was preoccupied with a German or Austrian one. France and Russia were therefore not required to “take on” each other’s adversaries to make a defense commitment. Second, France was committed to aiding Russia against attack from Austria and Russia committed to aiding France against Italy if and only if the adversary was supported by the Germans. This was a nod to the Russian concern that St. Petersburg not be obligated to go to war over some “isolated fracas” between France and Italy.<sup>340</sup> Likewise, it insulated the French against association with a war between Austria and Russia over discrete territorial interests. Finally, by having war making obligations hinge upon German involvement, Article 1 gave deference to French concerns that this was the potential future conflict in which both French and Russian interests would be engaged. This concession was eventually made because the Russians came to believe that any major attack by Germany would eventually include the Austrians as well.

The second article of the pact laid out the allies’ mobilization obligations and was not entirely consistent with the first. It stated:

“In case the forces of the Triple Alliance or of one of the partners of that Alliance should mobilize, France and Russia, at the first announcement of that event and without necessity for prior agreement, will immediately and simultaneously mobilize the totality of their forces and will move them as close as possible to their frontiers.”

Because of their shared belief that the Triple Alliance could mobilize its forces faster than they could, France and Russia each agreed to begin mobilization promptly when any

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<sup>340</sup> Kennan, p. 182.



member of the Triple Alliance did, so that if war came, neither would be delayed in assisting the other. The French had originally proposed that the alliance mobilize in response to German mobilization only, but this stoked Russian fears that they could be pulled into a war with Germany on France's behalf without a reciprocal guarantee of French aid in a war with Austria.<sup>341</sup> The commitment to mobilize was therefore far less discriminating than the actual commitment to make war, and provided for contingencies in which France or Russia might mobilize without actually going to war (e.g. an exclusively-Austrian attack on Russia in the former case, or an exclusively-Italian attack on France in the latter).<sup>342</sup> This agreement was intended as a compromise, as it protected France against entrapment in an Austro-Russian war, but guaranteed Russia that it would at least have French support in an Austro-Russian crisis.<sup>343</sup>

Article 2, however, then went on to specify the actual troop deployments that would be made by each side if and when the contingencies enumerated in Article 1 came to pass. Specifically, the French committed to employ 1,300,000 men against Germany, and the Russians 700,000-800,000 against Germany (out of a total 1,600,000).<sup>344</sup> These forces were to be concentrated as quickly as possible on the German frontier "in order to deprive [the Germans] from the outset of all possibility of shuttling their forces between East and West."<sup>345</sup> In any war involving Germany, then, the Russians committed to placing fully half of their armed forces on the German border as quickly as possible, reserving only what was

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<sup>341</sup> Langer, p. 35; Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 119.

<sup>342</sup> Kennan, pp. 181-182.

<sup>343</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 120.

<sup>344</sup> Kennan, p. 149; Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 117.

<sup>345</sup> As quoted in Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 117, fn 25.

necessary to hold Austria in check.<sup>346</sup> The aim of this commitment was to force Germany to fight on two fronts, and to eliminate any need for the allies to confer further in case war should break out.<sup>347</sup> This commitment demonstrated that even though the Russians' primary political occupation remained the Austrians, the allies were able to come to an agreement on how their mutual interests might be served operationally.

Several scholars have observed the curious format of the first two articles of the Franco-Russian treaty. Logically, one would expect the compact to address: 1) mobilization; 2) common action in case of war; 3) troop commitments. This agreement led with the commitment to common action and then included mobilization guidelines that were not terribly consistent with those goals. The explanation for this inconsistency appears to be that it was necessary to cobble together a compromise: Article 1 allowed the French to claim that they were only obligated to provide aid in the case of a German-backed war, while Article 2 allowed the Russians to insist that they would have French support against Austria (in the form of mobilization), regardless of whether Vienna was backed by Berlin.<sup>348</sup> The common action clause was placed front and center because the French drafted the agreement, and this was the portion of the commitment they preferred to highlight.

The remaining clauses of the treaty stated that the general staffs of the two armies should concert in advance to facilitate the measures laid out, and communicate to each other any knowledge relating to the armaments of the Triple Alliance. France and Russia

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<sup>346</sup> Langer, p. 34.

<sup>347</sup> Kennan, p. 149.

<sup>348</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 120; Langer, p. 36; Kennan, pp. 250-252.

agreed not to conclude peace separately with members of the Triple Alliance, and agreed that the pact would remain in force for as long as the Triple Alliance did. The final article declared: "All the clauses numbered above here shall be held rigorously secret."<sup>349</sup>

The clandestine nature of the Franco-Russian alliance was the second reason that the two states managed to forge a defense pact despite their disparate strategic concerns. The reciprocal naval visits to Cronstadt and Toulon made it clear that the two countries had achieved rapprochement, but the details of both the entente and defense pact negotiations were closely held. The document that was eventually approved in early 1894 was dubbed a "military convention" rather than a defense treaty so that the French would not be obligated to submit it to Parliament for approval, and during its negotiation, no more than a handful of advisors on each side were aware of its existence. Moreover, a chief reason that a year and a half passed between the drafting and entrance into force of the defense pact was Russian concerns about secrecy.<sup>350</sup>

As already discussed, in the years between 1890 and 1893, the Tsar was not at all convinced that the Russo-German relationship was beyond repair, and hesitated to formalize any kind of relationship with France, lest it provoke Berlin. A significant reason for St. Petersburg's delay in approving the military convention was the strongly-held belief among top ministers that the country needed several years of peace to focus on domestic and other less prominent international issues.<sup>351</sup> This group feared that if the Russians were to conclude a military convention, and news of its existence (never mind its content) were to become public, relations with Germany would be soured needlessly. The French

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<sup>349</sup> Kennan, pp. 181-182; Langer p. 37.

<sup>350</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 120.

<sup>351</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 121.

had quite a different agenda. Upon conclusion of the entente, they began to push for a treaty commitment that laid out more specific defense obligations and was public, for the purposes of sending the strongest possible message to Germany. The Tsar and his ministers flatly refused to consent to this, however, and insisted that the draft convention include a clause that stated that the treaty could not be made public without the consent of both parties.<sup>352</sup> When the French tried to amend this clause, the Russian Foreign Minister threatened to back out of the alliance altogether.<sup>353</sup> The Russian insistence on secrecy in turn placed the French in a somewhat precarious position until the pact was signed: The October 1893 Toulon visit, for example, caused outrage in many European capitals, but the French had no actual defense commitment from Russia at the point they hosted the fleet.<sup>354</sup> They therefore assumed the liability of antagonizing adversaries, without gaining the benefit of deterrence.

When the Franco-Russian treaty was adopted on January 4, 1894, both parties understood that its existence, if not the actual content, would eventually become known—the question was when this would occur. The French negotiators hoped it would become public sooner, so that they might receive the political credit for brokering the alliance; the tsar, however, wanted to delay any leakage by several more years, lest Germany be provoked unnecessarily.<sup>355</sup> Following the ratification of the compact, the German ambassadors in Paris and St. Petersburg were instructed to relay to Berlin that neither country had any offensive intent.<sup>356</sup> At that time, no more than a handful of Russians had

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<sup>352</sup> Kennan, pp. 186-88.

<sup>353</sup> Kennan, p. 188.

<sup>354</sup> Langer, p. 47; Kennan pp. 220-223.

<sup>355</sup> Kennan, p. 193, 217.

<sup>356</sup> Kennan, p. 223.

knowledge that any document had been signed at all. More French officials were aware of its existence, but that number was still a circumscribed one.<sup>357</sup> Moreover, one scholar has observed that correspondence relating to the treaty suggests that multiple conventions may have been signed in 1894, meaning that there may well have been additional secret military provisions, unknown to either foreign office and yet to be unearthed by history.<sup>358</sup>

Despite the fact that France and Russia had different adversaries and might have seemed strange strategic bedfellows in the early 1890s, the two countries managed to overcome these obstacles and sign a defense pact. This was possible because the treaty itself was so specific as to lay out each sides' operational commitments in a manner that was made mutually acceptable. It was also helped along by the fact that the treaty and its contents were negotiated and held in secret by both governments, so as not to create prematurely for Russia a sworn adversary in Germany when that might be delayed or avoided. The specific contents, then, of the Franco-Russian alliance, are they key to understanding why, despite many hurdles, the relationship was possible at all.

### ***After the Pact: 1894-1914***

One might reasonably assume that France and Russia's divergent strategic interests were ameliorated by their alliance—that the two states took on each other's defense priorities, moving towards alliance "consistency."<sup>359</sup> The historical record demonstrates, however, that the allies continued to have different adversaries, but that this did not ultimately undermine their defense commitment to one another.

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<sup>357</sup> Kennan, p. 237.

<sup>358</sup> Kennan, p. 217.

<sup>359</sup> Jervis, *System Effects*, pp. 210-252.

After signing the 1894 compact, Russia's relations with Germany continued to ebb and flow. In late 1894, the Kaiser decided to try to "sap the vitality" of the Franco-Russian relationship, by cultivating a friendship with the Tsar and denying any interest in near eastern affairs.<sup>360</sup> Germany announced to Austria the Russian occupation of Constantinople would no longer be considered a *casus belli* that would invoke the alliance.<sup>361</sup> Russian relations also warmed with Austria during the same period.<sup>362</sup>

France and Russia parted ways over the latter's policy in the Far East. Although France supported a Russian bid to force Japan to give up territories gained from its defeat of China in the Treaty of Shimonoseki, it stayed out of the Russo-Japanese war entirely.<sup>363</sup> Russia was defeated disastrously, and militarily crippled. The Kaiser capitalized on this fact and succeeded in convincing the Tsar to sign with Germany a defense treaty, the Bjorko Treaty. It remained in force for only a few months before the Foreign Office convinced him it was incompatible with the Franco-Russian pact, but it was nonetheless a sign that Russia was still not convinced that Germany need be a sworn adversary.<sup>364</sup> Moreover, after signing an entente with Britain—an important treaty step towards the Triple Entente—St. Petersburg also quickly signed an agreement with Austria-Hungary, and refused to use the term "Triple Entente" publicly in the prewar years.<sup>365</sup>

Lack of Russian support for French endeavors also had the unintended consequence of pushing Paris and London towards reconciliation. Russia failed to support France during

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<sup>360</sup> Langer, p. 57.

<sup>361</sup> Langer, p. 52.

<sup>362</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 264-265.

<sup>363</sup> Snyder, p. 265, p. 274.

<sup>364</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 274; Margret Macmillan, *The War that Ended Peace: The Road to 1914* (New York: Random House, 2014), pp. 204-207.

<sup>365</sup> Macmillan, p. 211.

the Fashoda Crisis, and the French were forced to back down in humiliation.<sup>366</sup> The lack of Russian backing, St. Petersburg's entanglements in the Far East, and its reasonably friendly demeanor towards Berlin, caused the French to mend fences with Britain so that it would have more leverage against Germany.<sup>367</sup> The result was the 1904 Franco-British Entente. Moreover, in 1906-07, the Russians expressed to the French new reservations about committing their forces to any particular military action in Europe.<sup>368</sup>

The Franco-Russian record of alliance support remained spotty until the years immediately preceding World War I. France gave Russia no backing in the 1908-09 crisis over Austria's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and pleaded with its ally to avoid war at all costs.<sup>369</sup> To quote Glenn Snyder, "France, in effect, demanded that Russia drop its support of Serbia and accept the Austrian annexation, and implicitly threatened to withhold military support if the intransigent position of Russia involved it in war."<sup>370</sup> The Tsar was quite displeased by his ally's behavior, and sought to improve relations with both Germany and Italy as a result. He signed a 1909 agreement with Rome that guaranteed the status quo in the Balkans and pledged support for Italian colonial interests in North Africa and Russian interests in the Turkish Straits. In 1910, the Russians signed the Potsdam Agreement with Germany, in which they pledged not to support British policies hostile to Germany, and the Germans promised not to support aggressive Austrian behavior in the Balkans.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 268.

<sup>367</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 273.

<sup>368</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 293.

<sup>369</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 280.

<sup>370</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 282.

<sup>371</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 283.-284.

Russia provided France no backing in the 1911 Agadir Crisis with Germany, and indeed, advised its ally to relinquish the port to Berlin.<sup>372</sup> Nonetheless, France supported Russia in the Balkan wars of 1912, and reaffirmed its treaty commitments to in the 1913-1914 Liman Von Sanders Crisis, although it refused overt aid.<sup>373</sup> Despite this mixed record of support in distinct crises, however, the 1894 defense treaty was realized in 1914, and “immediate and simultaneous” mobilization was indeed the response to Austria and Germany’s July preparations. Their disagreements over unrelated wars and crises seemed to do little damage to the alliance.

### ***Shared Adversaries Sufficient?***

There is little evidence to support the alternative hypothesis that the Franco-Russian alliance formed solely on the basis of a shared rival, with little consideration paid to the presence and potential entrapment risks that came along with unshared rivalries. While it is absolutely true that for the alliance to form, it was necessary that France had Russia shared an adversary in Germany, this was an insufficient condition.

There were two important inflection points in Russian decision-making: the collapse of the commercial treaty with Berlin, and Germany’s introduction to the Reichstag of the new military bill. These gave the Tsar reason to suspect German intentions, and even though Germany was still not a sworn adversary as later attempts at rapprochement demonstrate, it was a plausible one. Because St. Petersburg shared French concerns about a potential military threat from Germany, they were finally able to consider the proposed

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<sup>372</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>373</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 297.



defense pact. Germany's apparent change of tone towards St. Petersburg appears to have been necessary to convince the Russians that some formal military preparation against Berlin was justified. France and Russia finally had one shared potential adversary, in addition to their numerous unshared foes. This condition alone was not enough to bring the alliance about, however. Rather, the shared German rivalry coupled with some alliance *léger de main* in the form of secrecy and specificity helped cement the pact.

### ***Explaining Franco-Russian Alliance Formation***

As of early 1890 there were arguably more obstacles to a Franco-Russian defense pact than there were reasons compelling one. Though both Russia and France were each isolated diplomatically, making an entente desirable, at that early date they arguably had no adversaries in common. Indeed, the gap between the demise of the Franco-German Reinsurance Treaty and 1894 signing of the military convention can largely be explained by France (and mostly Russia's) consideration of their unshared adversaries. In particular, Russia's concerns that France would not support it in a war with Austria, and uncertainty about whether it actually considered Germany a true military adversary at all kept it from drafting and then from signing the pact.

Ultimately, specificity and secrecy of the treaty itself was what permitted a Franco-Russian defense pact, despite the two countries' differing strategic priorities. Germany was clearly the focus of the pact, but France was able to secure a promise of aid in case it was attacked by Italy backed by Germany. Russia got the same in the case of a German-backed attack by Austria, which helped to assuage each state's abandonment concerns in case of a war with an adversary who was not Germany. The requirement that these attacks be

German-backed also allayed each states' fears that it would get pulled into a bilateral conflict in which it had no stake. Although somewhat contradictory with Article 1, the immediate and simultaneous mobilization clause ensured that either country would receive at least some support in crisis from its alliance partner against any member of the Triple Alliance, even if it was not obligated to go to war in all cases in which it might mobilize.

Another crucial aspect of the compact was its inclusion of specific troop allocations. With Russia committed to turning half of its armed forces against Germany, it addressed earlier French fears that St. Petersburg was preoccupied with Vienna only, and by holding half of its army in reserve, Russia could guarantee that it would still be able to keep Austria at bay. Moreover, both allies committed to deploying specific numbers of troops to German borders without any further need for consultation, and agreed that these plans would remain in place as long as the Triple Alliance did. What is so striking about the Franco-Russian pact is that it is both a political alliance and a fairly detailed war plan, with the latter making the former possible despite the two states' differing security concerns.

Secrecy, both in the pact's negotiation and after its implementation, also helped the allies surmount their differing views of Germany in particular. Because the details of the alliance were tightly held, Russia had less reason to fear that it would provoke Germany unnecessarily (turning it into a true adversary if they were not, in fact, a genuine foe). This furtive alliance also mimicked that of its rivals: The Triple Alliance's provisions were clandestine, although its existence was widely acknowledged. Taken together, the specificity and secrecy of the Franco-Russian alliance demonstrate that the allies were planning for a very specific war against three or fewer specific adversaries. Their

commitment detailed the theater of operations in which they would act, their plans for mobilization, and even the numbers of troops that would be deployed if war came. Their relations, both during and after the treaty negotiations demonstrate that this alliance did not extend to other adversaries, crises, or theaters. Yet their failure to support each other diplomatically and militarily several times over the course of two decades in no way undermined their specific commitment when it was finally invoked, consistent with Hypothesis 1. Despite much diplomatic adversary in the intervening 20 years, the detailed Franco-Russian defense commitment held fast, and helped to seal the unhappy fate of Europe in 1914.

### **Adversaries, Anticipation and Alliance Formation**

The United States-Israel and Franco-Russian alliance negotiations provide considerable support for Hypothesis 1: An unshared adversary is sufficient to prevent a patron from extending a security guarantee to a client, but does not necessarily impede the formation of a traditional defense pact. This is true because security guarantees are broad-based pacts that do not target their deterrence and come with heavy signaling burdens, whereas other alliances may be circumscribed in their contents and permit allies to target their alliance signaling.

The Kennedy Administration debated several features of a potential security guarantee to Israel, but there was never any doubt that it would be a broad promise of defense, and that it would be made public for “[m]aximum public utility and deterrent effect.” At no time during the summer of 1963 did officials discuss the possibility of circumscribing the commitment to apply to particular contingencies or adversaries. And while they did favor an executive agreement over a Senate-ratified mutual defense treaty,

they knew the guarantee would have to be formal and public if it were to assuage the Israelis and send a clear deterrent signal. This led to a belief by the President, Secretary of State, and Joint Chiefs of Staff that an American guarantee would necessarily destroy hard-won relations with Nasser. Alienating the Arab world was of particular concern, because an alliance would rely upon joint military exercises, war planning, and other observable forms of US commitment. The Israelis were particularly eager to have these for their deterrent effect, and the United States could see no way of commencing that kind of public defense relationship without destroying its Arab ties.

The Franco-Russian negotiations, however, stood in sharp contrast. Despite the fact that Russia and France each had multiple allies that the other did not share, an alliance was possible because the agreement was precise and partially clandestine. The French were the ones to press for a binding commitment from Russia, but at no point did either party contemplate a defense relationship that would have applied to all possible adversaries or all possible contingencies. The allies had to negotiate the circumstances and threats that would bring the agreement into force, but there was little question that it would be a specific agreement, applied to the European theater, and would seek to minimize both parties' fears of involvement in an unwanted war. When completed, the Franco-Russian alliance included an extremely detailed war plan that would allow the allies to take up arms with no need for prior consultation. This detailed commitment meant that there was relatively little need to signal the defense relationship publicly, and the French were willing to yield to the Russian desire to keep the pact a secret in deference to the Germans.

Establishing alliance deterrence on behalf of the Israelis was too costly for the Kennedy administration to pursue, based on the likely effects on other regional actors and

the public nature of a guarantee. This raises an additional puzzle about traditional defense pacts: If a military treaty can be so specific as to resemble a war plan, and held in confidence so as not to provoke other parties unnecessarily, is it rightly thought of as a deterrence-producing tool of statecraft? The French and Russians were clearly sincere in their commitments to one another, yet there was little impetus to communicate that relationship to adversaries in 1894, or in the two decades that followed. St. Petersburg and Paris engaged in few public displays of alliance and often declined to support one another on the international stage, whereas the Kennedy administration assumed that if it gave a public guarantee, it could not avoid joint military exercises or planning with Israel, and would therefore inevitably alienate Nasser. The Kennedy administration's assumptions were consistent with the exigencies of deterrence and potential speed and destruction of war in the nuclear age. Nonetheless, the differences in how the potential alliance partners conceived of deterrence and defense in these two cases are substantial, and underscore just how different in their formation requirements security guarantees are from their predecessor pacts.

**CHAPTER 4 - GENERAL DETERRENCE, IMMEDIATE ENTRAPMENT  
PATRON CRISIS INTERVENTION**

“I wish it were as simple as drawing a line and saying in effect, ‘this far and no further.’ I assure you that there are a thousand and one complicated factors that prevented such an easy solution.”

-Dwight D. Eisenhower

**Introduction**

In his memoirs, President Dwight Eisenhower recalled the difficulty of sending clear signals during the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1958. He elaborated on the many forces that drew the United States into the fray, including the desire to deter Mao Zedong from an invasion of Taiwan, and the need to support and simultaneously restrain Chiang Kai-shek, who held a US security guarantee. Although it has been well documented, Eisenhower’s sense of alliance undertow is somewhat puzzling. Foundational international relations theories suggest that in asymmetric commitments like security guarantees, patron states should not easily be pulled into conflicts or crises on behalf of their client states. If they are, why is this the case? And is this due to the unique features of security guarantee pacts?

Perhaps the best-known challenge of alliance management is what Glenn Snyder termed the “alliance security dilemma”—the perpetual balance that allies must strike between entrapment and abandonment. The first part of this dilemma, entrapment, occurs when an ally is dragged into a war over its partner’s interests despite the fact that it does not share them or shares them only partially. Lesser forms of entrapment can occur when one partner behaves recklessly, or takes an especially firm position towards an adversary due to its confidence in alliance support. As I will discuss shortly, there is reason to believe that in security guarantees, patrons should run little risk of entrapment. Contrary to this

expectation, I argue the opposite: the ambiguous and asymmetric nature of security guarantees makes the risk to a patron of entanglement in its client's conflicts substantial. I hypothesize that, despite their superior capabilities and limited intrinsic interests in client conflicts, nuclear patrons are compelled to intervene in their clients' crises, even if those crises are not covered by the mutual defense treaty. When a client state becomes party to a crisis, the ambiguous and unilateral nature of umbrella alliances begets patron fears of entrapment. These, in turn, motivate the patron to intervene demonstrably in the dispute, lest it become embroiled in a larger and more costly conflict later on.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. I begin with a brief discussion of nuclear security guarantees, and suggest that their unique features change the way that the prominent risk of alliance entrapment may present itself. I lay out the expectations of some leading alliance theories, demonstrating that this seminal scholarship suggests that the risk of patron entrapment in client state crises should be low. I argue that, contrary to these expectations, the risk of patron entrapment in security guarantee commitments may be significant. I present a hypothesis on entrapment in nuclear security guarantees and lay out the observable implications that would substantiate this hypothesis, as well as an alternative. I comment on case selection, before turning to some brief summary statistical analysis. This analysis demonstrates that when client states become involved in crises, nuclear patrons do intervene more forcefully in those disputes than they do in the disputes of non-allies, or in the crises of allies who do not hold security guarantees.

To test whether these intervention patterns occur for the reasons I hypothesize, I turn three case studies. First, I examine the US decision to intervene militarily and politically on behalf of the Republic of China in the 1958 Taiwan Straits crises. Second, I

examine the parallel decision by the Soviet Union to intervene only politically on behalf of the People's Republic of China in the same crisis. Third, I briefly explore the United States' non-intervention in the 1978 Beagle Channel crisis between Argentina and Chile. I find support for my hypothesis.

### **Nuclear Security Guarantees and the Risk of Alliance Entrapment**

In the first chapter of this project, I argued that the ambiguity and unilateral nature of security guarantees can be explained by the fact that they signal deterrence by punishment in addition to deterrence by denial.<sup>374</sup> Given that these alliances are supported by incredibly destructive weapons and are long-lasting, grand strategic commitments, ambiguous treaty promises allow the patron maximum flexibility. Combined with the unilateral nature of these pacts, however, these vague commitments provide allies and adversaries with relatively little information about when they should expect the patron to intervene, and what form that intervention might take. Nuclear security guarantees are alliances that leave something—and in fact, a great deal—to chance. These unique alliance attributes, in turn, inform the ways that security guarantees are maintained. This includes the way that prominent alliance management challenges may present themselves.

Leading scholars of alliance relations have argued that the twin dilemmas of entrapment and abandonment should be mitigated in post-1945 alliances. In pre-World War II alliances, the potential flexibility of alignments meant that allies were at constant risk that a partner would defect. This, in turn, made allies more likely to follow each other into unwanted conflicts for the sake of preserving these relationships. During the Cold War,

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<sup>374</sup> On this distinction, see: Glenn H. Snyder, *Defense and Deterrence*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 41-43.



however, when only the United States and Soviet Union were leading powers, alliance ties were rigid. There was little risk that allies, who were necessarily smaller powers, would defect to the other Cold War camp, and the costs of them choosing to do so would have been minor.<sup>375</sup> Superpowers were therefore unlikely to face serious alliance entrapment and be dragged into a war or crisis in which it had little stake.<sup>376</sup> Some have argued that the risk of superpower entrapment by smaller allies is further mitigated in the post-Cold War world. With no great power competitor, the United States has little need to take actions to oppose an adversary, and few reasons to defer to weaker parties for the sake of consensus building. Since 1991, this argument goes, the leverage that small and medium powers possess over their superpower patron may be at an all-time low.<sup>377</sup>

There are a few reasons to believe that super-power patrons have less reason to fear entrapment in post-1945 alliances. First, security guarantee patrons extend unilateral treaty promises to their patrons, making them less dependent on reciprocal aid for their own security, if they are dependent on it at all.<sup>378</sup> Second, entrapment risk should be greatest where the level of formal alliance commitment itself is high, and mitigated where it is less so.<sup>379</sup> When one considers the nature and scope of security guarantees, however, it is clear that the formal alliance commitment is not terribly binding.

Security guarantees detail almost nothing about the exact *casus foederis* that will bring them into force, the adversary they are aimed against, or the form of military aid that

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<sup>375</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 169-170; Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 19.

<sup>376</sup> Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," p. 483-484; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 169.

<sup>377</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," *World Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 1, Jan 2009, pp. 94-98.

<sup>378</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 166.

<sup>379</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 169.

will be forthcoming if they are invoked. Patrons do commit, however, to defend client states in case of unprovoked attacks on their home territory.<sup>380</sup> While it may be difficult to define either an unprovoked attack, or the precise territory that qualifies as an ally's homeland, these two caveats should, in general, substantially ameliorate patron entrapment concerns. By restricting the alliance to an unprovoked attack on the client's home territory, the patron mitigates the risk that it will be drawn into a conflict of the client's initiative, or a conflict in an outside area that it deems to be of little strategic importance. And by leaving vague its actual military commitment in the case of war, the patron creates few concrete expectations even if the treaty promise is invoked. Patrons should therefore face little risk of entrapment if the client dispute in question does not directly invoke the *casus foederis* of the treaty, and should retain a fair degree of flexibility even if it does.<sup>381</sup> In sum, theory and intuition give us ample reason to believe that post-1945 security guarantees should have low risks of entrapment for the patrons extending them, especially when the dispute in question involves a client interest that is outside of promised treaty commitment.

### **Hypothesis 2: General Deterrence, Immediate Entrapment**

In Chapters 2 and 3, I demonstrated that the unilateral and ambiguous nature of nuclear security guarantees means that the threat conditions for these alliances' formation are different from those associated with other defense pacts. In this chapter, I hypothesize that these same features mean that entrapment risks also present differently in so-called umbrella alliances than they do in other defense pacts. Despite the received wisdom that

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<sup>380</sup> See Chapter 1, pp. 28-34.

<sup>381</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp.186-188.

low levels of patron dependency and vague treaty commitments result in commensurately low risk of entanglement, I argue that nuclear security guarantees, in fact, come with a substantial risk of entrapment.

Security guarantee treaties entail broad patron commitments to aid a client state if it is the victim of an unprovoked attack on its homeland. Unlike some other defense pacts, however, these pacts do not specify the adversaries they are aimed against, the specific contingencies they are designed to deter, or the precise type of defensive aid that will be forthcoming. From the patron's perspective, this ambiguity may be advantageous in a general deterrence context, as some uncertainty about its precise commitments may dissuade challengers from opportunism and leave superpowers with flexibility. Once a client state becomes involved in a crisis, however, this alliance ambiguity may become a liability. Even if a client is involved in only a minor dispute, the risk exists that the skirmish will widen. The crisis itself may not obviously qualify as an unprovoked attack on the client's homeland. But because the *casus foederis* of the security guarantee is not clearly defined, the patron may have reason to intervene more energetically in a client state's crisis to signal its alliance commitment than it would be inclined to do in another relatively minor skirmish. It would rather risk relatively low-level entrapment in the short term than face deeper, costlier entrapment if the crisis becomes a conflict and the treaty is actually invoked. By taking additional risk upon itself, even if its alliance commitment has not yet been activated, patrons may restrain clients and deter adversaries from further action, diminishing the risk that they will actually be dragged into a full-scale war. Through strong public statements or demonstrations of force, a patron may avoid being pulled into conflict by altering the local balance of capabilities or interests and bolstering immediate

deterrence.<sup>382</sup> These same actions may also restrain the client state from further escalatory action.

Contrary to the expectations of prominent alliance theories, patron entrapment risks may be exacerbated precisely because security guarantees are unilateral and asymmetric. Although in theory a superpower patron should be able to stand aloof from a skirmish if it does not entail an unprovoked attack on its ally's homeland that jeopardizes its sovereignty, a weak client state that has outsourced its security cannot credibly defend itself.<sup>383</sup> Once a client state is involved in a dispute, the possibility of it being bloodied by a challenger and calling for defensive aid from the patron looms large. Far from minimizing patron dependence and commitment, then, I hypothesize that the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantees should encourage patrons to intervene in client crises to establish immediate deterrence, even if they have little inherent stake in the object under dispute. This logic yields my second hypothesis:

**H2:** *Ambiguous, unilateral commitments create incentives for nuclear patrons to intervene forcefully in security guarantee client crises to restrain allies and deter adversaries; the same entrapment fears will not present in other defense pacts.*

It is, of course, possible that powerful patrons *choose* to intervene in their weaker client's crises based on shared interests. They are not being entrapped in unwanted conflict through ambiguous, unilateral treaty promises and the risk of escalation, but enter allies' disputes because they too have something material at stake.<sup>384</sup> This alternative story is

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<sup>382</sup> On selection effects and the balance of capabilities and interests in crisis bargaining, see: James D. Fearon, "Signaling versus the Balance of Power and Interests," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 1994), p. 236.

<sup>383</sup> Robert Jervis has developed this point. Robert L. Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), Chapter 5.

<sup>384</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 170.

consistent with alliance theories that suggest that the risk of patron entrapment in ambiguous, unilateral pacts should be low.

**H2A1:** *Patrons intervene in client crises if they share a clear interest in the object over which the client is bargaining.*

It is also possible that nuclear patrons intervene in their clients' disputes not because of direct vital interests, but because of domino thinking. Leaders may believe that defeat or retreat on one issue is likely to produce further demands or defections elsewhere.<sup>385</sup> As Timothy Crawford has argued, "alliance commitments do not merely "reveal" existing interests, they create new ones, by incurring reputation costs."<sup>386</sup> According to this logic, truly intrinsic interests may be difficult to discern because the world is tightly interconnected. Failing to aid an ally in one dispute may jeopardize all allies' security.

**H2A2:** *Patrons intervene in client crises because they fear that a failure to support them will invite challenges elsewhere.*

There are some clear observable implications of each of these hypotheses. If Hypothesis 2 is borne out, we should see policymakers intervene primarily because they fear that a client disputes will escalate, and they will become entangled in it if they do not take action. We should also find some evidence that this fear of entrapment is tied to the vague and unilateral nature of the treaty commitment itself. In cases of patron non-

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<sup>385</sup> Robert Jervis, "Domino Beliefs and Strategic Behavior," in Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, eds., *Dominoes and Bandwagons: Strategic Beliefs and Great Power Competition in the Eurasian Rimland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 22.

<sup>386</sup> Timothy Crawford, *Pivotal Deterrence*, p. 36.

intervention, we should expect that patrons demur from a dispute because the ambiguity in or unilateral nature of the alliance commitment has been mitigated. They are not compelled to intervene seriously in the client's dispute because they have restricted their defensive commitments outside of the alliance treaty area or do not fear their weaker client's defeat. This causal logic appears in the schematic below.

*Figure 9- Hypothesis 2*



If the first alternative hypothesis is substantiated, in cases of crisis intervention we should see decision-makers from the patron state join the dispute because they are compelled by the object of the crisis itself. Patrons intervene in client standoffs when there is a harmony of interests in the crisis. In cases of non-intervention, patrons make the decision to stand aside because their state does not have an obvious stake in the dispute, alliance notwithstanding. This logic appears below.

*Figure 10- Hypothesis 2, Alternative 1*



If the second alternative hypothesis is substantiated, patron state leaders should join client crises because they believe those disputes to be linked to other commitments. They should articulate a domino-like logic of intervention, which may act through one of

several mechanisms. Leaders may believe that victory in one area may add to an adversary's physical resources or geographic advantage. A domino logic may be less direct and more psychological, however, in which case leaders will be concerned about inferences that other states will draw from their intervention behavior.<sup>387</sup> If this logic is born out, leaders will not intervene when they do not believe the client crisis in question to be linked to other interests.

It is worth noting that a domino logic may bear some similarities to the primary hypothesis tested in this chapter. In both cases, leaders may argue that earlier intervention will be more effective than later resistance. Where my hypothesis is concerned, however, this mechanism occurs within-case: patrons would rather intervene at the crisis stage to bolster an ally than face a wider war on behalf of that same client in that same issue area later on. Where a domino logic is concerned, this logic is applied across cases and assumes the interconnection of alliance commitments.<sup>388</sup> Leaders prefer to intervene in a client crisis rather than face a challenge at another time or place due to the consequences of prior non-intervention.

*Figure 11- Hypothesis 2, Alternative 2*



If either alternative hypothesis is born out, concerns about entrapment in that specific dispute should not feature prominently in decision-making, and conscious efforts

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<sup>387</sup> <sup>387</sup> Robert Jervis, "Domino Beliefs and Strategic Behavior," pp. 31-32.

<sup>388</sup> Jack Snyder has termed this cross-case logic for earlier intervention the "Thermopylae Corollary." Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 170-171.

to mitigate it should not be observed. If H2A1 is born out, vested interests, rather than treaty ambiguity and asymmetric commitments, should compel intervention when it occurs. If H2A2 is supported, beliefs in the tight interconnection of commitments, rather than the nature of the alliance at hand, should encourage intervention.

### Case Selection

To test these hypotheses on security guarantees and entrapment, and in an attempt to control for a third possible explanation, I select cases in which the crisis in question occurs *outside* of the alliance treaty area. That is, I examine cases in which the object in dispute *does not* entail a direct attack on the client state's home territory. There are several reasons for this choice.

First, if I were to examine cases in which the alliance treaty's *casus foederis* was actually invoked, it would be difficult to determine whether patrons chose to intervene because of unilateral, ambiguous alliances and concomitant entrapment fears or whether they intervened for reasons of alliance credibility and reputation. We know that policymakers often worry about the credibility of their international commitments, and that alliances may be a signal of reputation.<sup>389</sup> If a patron were to intervene in response to an unprovoked attack on its client's homeland, it is not clear that this would actually constitute "entrapment" at all. Rather, this would be an instance of the patron making good on an alliance promise, which was likely in place because the patron saw some *ex ante*

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<sup>389</sup> Douglas M. Gibler, "The Costs of Reneging: Reputation and Alliance Formation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2008), pp. 426-454.



interest in upholding it.<sup>390</sup> If we are to look for evidence of true alliance entrapment, we do better to examine cases in which prior, formalized patron interests are not necessarily invoked at the outset.

A second and more pedestrian reason to look at extra-treaty crises is that security guarantee client states have rarely, if ever, been victims of major, unprovoked attacks on their homelands. This may, of course, be attributable to the selection effects that accompany strong deterrent signals like security guarantees, or it simply may be the case that potential adversaries have never had interests in the wholesale violation of the sovereignty of nuclear client states.<sup>391</sup> Regardless, if we were to look for signs of patron entrapment in only those cases that clearly met the *casus foederis* of a security guarantee, we would have a paucity of evidence to examine.

I use both a process-tracing research design and a comparative case design in this analysis. I look for evidence of patron entrapment fears that are due to the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantee commitments. I also look for a causal connection between these fears and patrons' decisions to intervene in client crises. In an effort to undertake a carefully controlled comparison I select two primary cases that involve intervention/non-intervention decisions in the same crisis. First, I evaluate the United States' decision to intervene with a substantial military and political commitment on behalf of the Republic China in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis. Second, I evaluate the Soviet Union's decision to intervene with a modest political commitment to the People's Republic of China in the same crisis. This cannot produce a perfectly controlled comparison, but it

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<sup>390</sup> Tongfi Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle But Seldom Entrap States," *Security Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2011), pp. 350-377.

<sup>391</sup> James Fearon, "Selection Effects and Deterrence," *International Interactions* Vol. 28, No. 1 (2002), pp. 5-29.

does minimize the risk that crisis-specific factors, the time period, or the region will confound my evaluation. It also holds constant the object at stake—control of the Offshore Islands, Quemoy and Matsu.

I have also chosen to focus on the Taiwan Straits crisis to gain insight into Soviet extended deterrence decision-making. In general, very little information is available on how exactly the Soviet Union thought about deterrence and its so-called nuclear umbrella commitments, but the Sino-Soviet alliance is one case in which there is a reasonably robust source base. Inclusion of this Soviet case will therefore help to establish that my signaling theory of security guarantees has application beyond US cases. Put differently, an analysis of two different sides of the same crisis provides a more rigorous test of Hypothesis 2. Does this hypothesis correctly identify the reasons that Washington intervened forcefully, and Moscow intervened more modestly in the Offshore Islands crisis?

The third case I examine, the 1978 Beagle Channel dispute, does not offer a comparison that is nearly as apt as the two Taiwan Straits cases. I include it because it is a case of a crisis in a non-security guarantee alliance, and therefore provides some variation on the independent variable. This is necessarily an imperfect comparison. Unlike in the 1958 crisis, the United States had formal alliances with both Argentina and Chile, although it did not maintain close ties to either one. Nonetheless, a brief examination of this case is useful to elucidate how patron entrapment incentives may differ when the alliance in question does not have the same ambiguities as an umbrella alliance.

It is worth noting, however, that this qualitative evaluation of patron crisis behavior is plagued by a causal inference problem: the causes of patron intervention in client crises may be related to the reasons that these states form security guarantees in the first place.

This endogeneity is not confined to my study of security guarantees and patron crisis behavior; rather, it is a fundamental liability in any study of alliances. In this chapter I seek to examine how a security guarantee commitment may inform patron crisis intervention behavior, but it is of course the case that alliances both reflect allies' underlying interests and change them. Acknowledging this endogeneity problem hardly eliminates it, but it would also be imprudent to abandon the study of alliances as independent variables simply because it exists.

In acknowledgement of this problem, I use one minor qualitative “control” in these case studies. Accepting that alliance behavior may reflect underlying interests, I explore whether patron crisis behavior may be explained by one of the factors that drives security guarantee formation in the first place. In Chapters 2 and 3, I posited that nuclear security guarantees formed where prospective client and patron states had *exclusively* common rivals—that is, that the client state did not have adversaries that the patron did not share. I found substantial support for this hypothesis using ReLogit models and detailed qualitative case studies. As I consider the causes of US intervention and Soviet intervention, then, I will not only evaluate the crisis intervention hypotheses presented here, but also consider this nuclear security guarantee formation hypothesis, to explore whether there may be a selection problem at work. To what extent does the presence of exclusively common rivals or unshared adversaries appear to influence the intervention decisions of the patron in question? This method cannot eliminate the causal inference problem entirely, but will allow me to determine whether or not H1 also seems to have some causal weight where patron crisis intervention is concerned.

Before undertaking this case study analysis, however, I must establish that there is reason to believe that nuclear patrons do, in fact, face some risk of entrapment in their clients' crises. Empirically, does superpower crisis intervention behavior look different for client state crises than it does for other crises? To answer this question I turn to a brief summary statistical analysis of crisis behavior and alliance data.

### **Patron Intervention in Absolute Alliances**

Since the dawn of the nuclear age, both the United States and the Soviet Union have intervened hundreds of times in international crises. In some of these cases, the superpowers themselves were direct crisis actors.<sup>392</sup> In many more, however, the nuclear patron states intervened as third parties in other states' disputes. To establish the premise that I explore in the rest of this chapter—namely, that patrons face and react to entrapment risks in their security guarantee client states' crises—I must first explore whether and how their crisis intervention on behalf of umbrella allies differs from their intervention in other international disputes.

Some international relations scholarship has suggested that alliance entrapment in conflict may occur rarely, if ever.<sup>393</sup> Recent work has found that the United States rarely becomes entangled in “military fiascos” on behalf of its allies.<sup>394</sup> What little work evaluates the empirical record on entrapment tends to focus on the risk of alliance entanglement in

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<sup>392</sup> The United States was a direct actor in 62 of 738 crises since 1945. The Soviet Union was a direct actor in 29 of 738.

<sup>393</sup> Tongfi Kim, “Why Alliances Entangle but Seldom Entrap States,” *Security Studies* Vol. 20, No.3 (2011), pp. 350-377.

<sup>394</sup> Michael Beckley, “Entangling Alliances?: Assessing the Security Risks of America’s Defense Pacts,” September 2014 Working Paper, p. 1.

full-blown war as opposed to crises.<sup>395</sup> To wit, no study has evaluated the relative entrapment risks of security guarantees as compared to other alliances. Because nuclear security guarantees threaten adversaries with devastating punishment, however, I acknowledge and expect that we would find little evidence of patron entrapment in full-blown war. Such wars are significantly less likely between nuclear-armed powers in the nuclear age. Moreover, the hypothesis tested in this chapter posits a reason that we may expect to see little overt entrapment in war where security guarantees are concerned. The nature of these pacts mean that patrons have incentive to intervene early on behalf of clients to bolster their vague, one-sided commitments to prevent escalation.

To investigate the relationship between alliance type and patron crisis intervention, I draw upon the International Crisis Behavior dataset. The unit of analysis is the international crisis actor. For each crisis actor, I examine whether the United States or Soviet Union intervened as a third party, and if it did, what form its intervention took. Superpower intervention is a categorical variable, ranging from 1-9. A 1 indicates that the US/USSR was not involved in the crisis. A 2 indicates that they officially took a non-interventionist or neutral position. A 3 indicates political involvement, such as public statements. A 4 indicates economic involvement, such as the giving or withholding of financial aid. A 5 indicates propaganda involvement. A 6 indicates covert military involvement, such as clandestine aid to combatants. A 7 indicates semi-military involvement, including direct aid to combatants and military advising. An 8 indicates direct

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<sup>395</sup> Beckley looks for evidence in of US entrapment in war since 1945 evaluating all US alliances and intervention in MIDs. He drops all cases in which the United States does not at least intervene using threats, however, so it is not surprising that he finds only modest levels of entrapment evidence. His independent variable also does not distinguish security guarantees from other defense pacts. Beckley, pp. 16-21.

superpower military intervention. A 9 indicates that the superpower itself was a direct crisis actor.<sup>396</sup>

To examine the relationship between superpower crisis intervention and alliance commitments, I also include data from the COW 4.1 alliance dataset. For every crisis actor, I code whether or not that state had a formal defense pact with the United States or Soviet Union/Russia. Drawing upon my own treaty-based data, I also code whether or not either superpower had a security guarantee with the crisis actor in question. This allows me to examine the relationship between the type of superpower alliance commitment and their level of third-party crisis intervention. This sample is necessarily biased because it relies on cases of crisis and excludes cases of non-crisis. It is therefore useful only for describing broad patterns of patron intervention across crises, rather than for identifying those factors that make crisis entanglement more or less likely.

Before proceeding to the data of interest, I consider some general features of superpower crisis interventions since 1945. First, most US/USSR interventions did *not* occur on behalf of allies. This is unsurprising and may be due to selection effects. Because major powers have made manifest their investments in their client states through formal treaty commitments, we should not expect nuclear clients to be the targets of crises very often.<sup>397</sup> The US and USSR intervened most often in crises in which neither they, nor an ally, is directly involved.

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<sup>396</sup> For the purposes of my analysis of 3<sup>rd</sup> party crisis interventions, I drop cases with the value of “9” from the dataset, as I am not interested in cases in which the superpower was a primary actor.

<sup>397</sup> Fuhrmann and Sechser find that nuclear umbrella allies are less likely to be the targets of militarized interstate disputes than states that do not hold security guarantees. Matthew Fuhrmann and Todd S. Sechser, “Signaling Alliance Commitments.”

Second, it is important to examine the baseline levels of intervention when the US and USSR have intervened in other states' disputes. In so doing, it is worth emphasizing that the levels of superpower intervention are measured as categorical, rather than continuous variables. Means and differences in means are meant to give a general intuition for levels of superpower crisis involvement, but should not be interpreted as precise measures across cases.

Across 631 crises from 1945-2000 in which it was not a direct actor, the United States' mean level of intervention was 3.96 (close to a 4, signifying economic intervention). Its modal, or most frequent levels of involvement, however were 1s (no involvement) and 3s (political involvement). The United States had no involvement in 22.49 percent of crises, and intervened politically 35.37 percent of the time. During the same period, the Soviet Union had a mean level of crisis intervention of 3.14 (close to a 3, signifying political involvement). Its modal levels of involvement were also 1s and 3s. The Soviet Union/Russia did not intervene in 38.48 percent of crisis, and intervened politically in 33.33 percent of crises.

*Table 10- US/ USSR Crisis Intervention Levels , 1945-2000*

	United States	USSR/Russia
Mean level of intervention	3.96 (n=631)	3.14 (n=664)
Mean level in allies' disputes	4.32 (n=137)	5.42 (n=26)
Mean level in NSG allies' disputes	4.39 (n=83)	5.8 (n=20)
Mean level in other allies' disputes	4.22 (n=54)	4.0 (n=7)

\*means exclude all crises in which the US/USSR was itself the primary crisis actor

Beginning with the United States, I examine mean levels of intervention in third party disputes. The US mean for intervention in allies' disputes in general is 4.32, higher than the overall mean of 3.96. The mean level of US intervention for security guarantee allies only is higher still, at 4.39. The mean level of US intervention in non-security allies' crises is, predictably, lower at 4.22. From 1945-2000, the United States intervened more forcefully in the crises of security guarantee allies than it did in general, and than it did in the disputes of non-security guarantee allies. The differences between the mean level of intervention for allies, security guarantee allies, and non-security guarantee allies and the overall mean level of intervention are statistically significant.

The Soviet Union's mean level of intervention in allies' disputes is 5.42, which is significantly higher than its overall mean of 3.14. Its mean level of intervention in security guarantee allies' is higher still, at 5.8, while its level of intervention in non-security guarantee allies' crises is much lower at 4.0. Like the United States, and even more dramatically, the Soviet Union/Russia intervened more energetically in the crises of its umbrella allies than it did in general, and than it did in the disputes of non-security guarantee allies. The differences between the mean level of intervention for allies, security guarantee allies, and non-security guarantee allies and the overall mean level of intervention are statistically significant.

For the two countries that have actively extended deterrence to allies since the early Cold War, a similar pattern emerges. Patrons intervene at higher levels of involvement in their security guarantee clients' crises than they do in other crises. This pattern appears to be attributable to the distribution of intervention tools that patrons select. As mentioned,



in most crises since 1945, both the USSR and US either did not intervene at all, or intervened politically. In the crises of non-allies, the superpowers also occasionally took official neutrality positions, or used economic tools, propaganda efforts, and covert military action. When allies were involved in crises, however, patron intervention was restricted to fewer policy tools: The US/USSR either did not intervene at all (1s), intervened with public, political statements (3s), or intervened using semi-military (7s) or military means (8s). Economic, propaganda, and covert military tools were not brought to bear on behalf of security guarantee allies between 1945 and 2000. In no allied crisis did either of the superpowers ever taken an officially neutral position.

Superpower patrons were relatively unlikely to stand completely aloof when their allies were in crisis. They also resorted to military or semi-military intervention a much higher percentage of the time when allies were crisis actors. There is, however, an obvious distinction between superpower intervention behavior in security guarantee ally crises and non-security guarantee ally crises. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were much more likely to use military force in the crises of security guarantee allies than they were to use that tool in the crises of other allies, although they relied on semi-military means for other allies fairly frequently.

*Table 11- US Crisis Intervention Levels by Alliance Type*

	<b>Not involved</b>	<b>Officially Neutral</b>	<b>Political Involvement</b>	<b>Economic Involvement</b>	<b>Propaganda Involvement</b>	<b>Covert Military</b>	<b>Semi-Military</b>	<b>Military Involvement</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Non-Allies</b>	141	5	166	17	4	8	92	60	494
<b>NSG Allies</b>	13	0	38	1	0	0	15	16	83
<b>Non-NSG Allies</b>	8	0	26	0	0	0	18	2	54
<b>Total</b>	162	5	230	18	4	8	125	78	631

*Table 12-USSR Crisis Intervention Levels by Alliance Type*

	<b>Not involved</b>	<b>Officially Neutral</b>	<b>Political Involvement</b>	<b>Economic Involvement</b>	<b>Propaganda Involvement</b>	<b>Covert Military</b>	<b>Semi-Military</b>	<b>Military Involvement</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Non-Allies</b>	265	11	212	9	5	6	106	22	638
<b>NSG Allies</b>	1	0	6	0	0	1	5	7	20
<b>Non-NSG Allies</b>	0	0	5	0	0	1	1	0	7
<b>Total</b>	266	11	223	9	5	8	112	29	664

These findings seem to accord with the hypothesis proffered in this chapter:

Ambiguity may be advantageous in upholding general deterrence, but once a weaker ally is involved in crisis and a patron wishes to reinforce immediate deterrence, it is more likely to turn to overt signals of commitment. Public statements and military maneuvers are better-suited for sending clear signals to allies and adversaries than are economic or covert measures, which may not attach directly to the signal-sender, and may take time to become effective. This pattern in the selection of intervention signaling tools, in turn, helps to explain why, on average, patrons intervene at higher levels in their client states' crises than they do in other crises. It also suggests that patrons may feel compelled to intervene militarily in the crises of security guarantee allies more than they do in the crises of other allies.

It is worth noting, however, that there may be significant selection bias in these patterns. Most obviously, superpower patrons may choose to intervene in their client states' crises for reasons that are related to why they formed their security guarantees in the first place. I attempt to deal with this in the case study analysis by examining whether determinants of security guarantee formation (namely, exclusive/unshared adversaries) also influence patron crisis intervention choices. It should also be acknowledged that these

observations are based on relatively few cases. The Soviet Union, for example, was involved in only 22 disputes that involved security guarantee allies.

This summary statistical analysis has provided support for a premise of this chapter: superpower patrons intervene more forcefully in their allies' crises than they do in other states' crises. Moreover, they are more likely to resort to military force on behalf of security guarantee allies than they are on behalf of other allies. To ascertain whether this occurs for the reasons I hypothesize—namely, that the ambiguous and unilateral nature of security guarantees compels patrons to intervene forcefully at the crises phase, rather than face costlier entrapment in a war later on—I turn to three historical case studies of patron crisis intervention.

### **Crisis Intervention in Absolute Alliances: Three Case Studies**

#### ***Introduction***

This case study section examines patron intervention decisions in allies' crises over disputed territories. The bulk of this analysis focuses on United States and Soviet Union's decision-making in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis—a dispute in which each had a security guarantee ally. I also briefly examine the US role in the 1978 Beagle Channel Crisis involving non-security guarantee allies, to determine whether, as I posit, it is the ambiguity and unilateral nature of umbrella alliances that inspires patron crisis intervention. The three cases examined here provide substantial support for Hypothesis 2, with some caveats. Namely, exclusively shared adversaries identified in Hypothesis 1 may also play some role in patrons' crisis intervention decisions.

The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis was in many ways a continuation of 1954-55 skirmishes between the PRC and ROC over Quemoy, Matsu, and the Dachen Islands. One scholar has argued that the Offshore Islands crises were “really one crisis with intermission for buildups.”<sup>398</sup> Because I am interested in how security guarantees influence patrons crisis intervention decisions, however, I make the 1958 crisis the subject of my inquiry. The 1954-1955 crisis occurred as the United States was preparing to extend its security guarantee to the ROC, so the alliance was not in place for much of the crisis.<sup>399</sup> Indeed, scholars have argued that Mao initiated the 1954 crisis because he wished to preclude a US-ROC alliance, so examining this case in depth may confound my attempts to isolate the relationship between umbrella alliances and entrapment incentives. Because of the close relationship between the two Offshore Islands crises, however, I will make reference to the 1954-55 episode throughout the case study.

I begin my analysis with a brief review of the facts of the 1958 case. I then examine the specifics of the United States’ involvement, and look for evidence relevant to Hypothesis 2. I detail the nature of US intervention in the crisis. I go on to look for evidence that US policymakers feared entrapment in a broader war, and that this motivated their decision to intervene. I examine the extent to which the ambiguous and unilateral nature of the US-ROC alliance commitment was responsible for these entrapment fears. I also look for evidence to support the alternative hypothesis, that the United States intervened on behalf of the ROC due to intrinsic interests or domino fears in the Offshore Islands. Finally,

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<sup>398</sup>Waldo Heinrichs, “Eisenhower and the Sino-American Confrontation” in Warren I. Cohen and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Great Powers in East Asia 1953-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 98.

<sup>399</sup> In 1950, the United States had moved the Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Straits, signaling its intent to defend Taiwan, and the beginning of an informal alliance between the two states.

to address potentially-confounding selection effects, I consider how factors influencing security guarantee formation might have also influenced the American decision to intervene—namely, whether the United States shared Taiwan’s adversaries, and how this factored into its crisis intervention behavior.

I repeat this same process for the Soviet Union’s side of this crisis. I detail the form that its intervention took, and look for evidence of entrapment fears, as well as their link to the vague and unilateral nature of the USSR-China treaty commitment. I look for evidence to support the alternative, interest and domino-based hypotheses and consider the role of shared/unshared adversaries in Soviet intervention behavior. Finally, I briefly examine the United States’ decision not to intervene in the 1978 Beagle Channel Crisis. I review the facts of that case and then evaluate it using the same criteria employed in the Taiwan Straits cases. I analyze the case findings, and find good support for Hypothesis 2, and conclude with some broader implications.

### ***Dire Straits***

Following the Chinese civil war, Taiwan became the outpost of the nationalist Kuomintang party, led by Chiang Kai-shek. As Chiang and his forces fled mainland China for Taiwan in 1949, they retained control over Quemoy, Matsu, the Dachens, and several other clusters of offshore islands. The communist and nationalist Chinese forces skirmished over the islands periodically from 1949 onwards. Washington considered the legal status of Taiwan and the Pescadores to be unsettled by virtue of the Chinese civil war. It considered the offshore islands, however, many of which were within miles of the mainland coast, to be

Communist Chinese territory, despite the fact that Chiang had reinforced them with tens of thousands of ROC troops.<sup>400</sup>

As the United States prepared to extend a formal security guarantee to Taiwan in autumn 1954, the Chinese bombarded Quemoy and Matsu. Mao believed that a US-ROC alliance would result in permanent American involvement in the Chinese civil war, and hoped to derail the pact.<sup>401</sup> The gambit backfired, and the United States pursued the alliance despite the shelling, believing it to be an important counterweight to the 1950 Sino-Soviet guarantee.<sup>402</sup>

Like the US-ROC treaty, the 1950 Sino-Soviet alliance provided defensive protection to uphold Chinese sovereignty, but was silent on the Offshore Islands. It promised “military assistance” in case of “aggression,” but neither of these was defined. This ambiguity was compounded by the Sino-Soviet pact’s unusual alliance formation process. The Soviets had originally signed an alliance with the Nationalist Chinese government in 1945, and switched their allegiance to the Communists through a series of diplomatic notes. These resulted in the abrogation of the Soviet-KMT alliance, and creation of a USSR-PRC pact in February 1950. Where the Offshore Islands were concerned, however, the Sino-Soviet guarantee was at least as opaque as the US-ROC pact. The treaty contained no mention of

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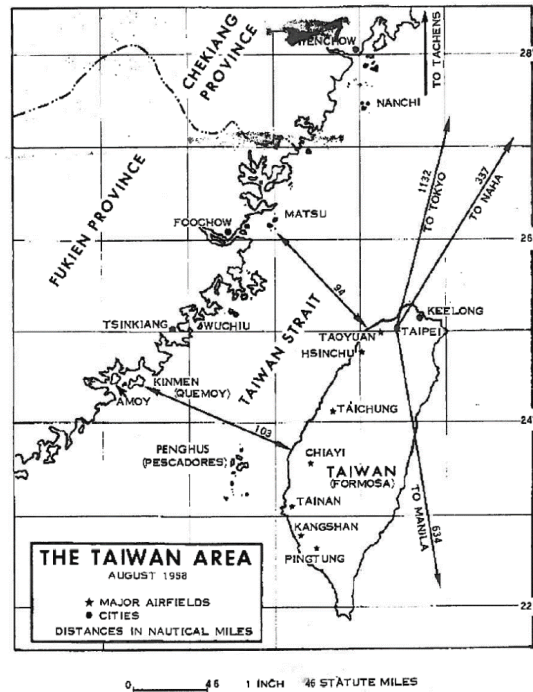
<sup>400</sup> In 1954, Chiang had 50,000 troops stationed on Quemoy alone. Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 117-120.

<sup>401</sup> John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 26; Thomas J. Christensen, “Trend Analysis and Beijing’s Use of Force,” in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, eds., *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 59.

<sup>402</sup> A 1954 intelligence assessment emphasized the Sino-Soviet alliance’s desire to probe weakness along its borders. NIE 10-2-54, “Communist Courses of Action Through Mid-1955,” March 15, 1954, *FRUS* 1952-54, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 389-396.

the islands, and there existed no other public evidence to clarify Moscow’s view of their legal status or whether they fell under the purview of the guarantee.<sup>403</sup>

Figure 12- Taiwan, China, and the Offshore Islands, 1958<sup>404</sup>



While the US-ROC guarantee was being negotiated in 1954-55, the shelling of Quemoy and Matsu continued for several months, and Beijing forced Chiang to evacuate another offshore position in the Dachen Islands. Awaiting treaty ratification, President Eisenhower sought and was granted permission by the US Senate to use force to repel an invasion of Taiwan via the Formosa Resolution. The Formosa Resolution granted Eisenhower permission to commit troops outside the US-ROC treaty area if this was

<sup>403</sup> For the original treaty between the Soviets and the Nationalist government, see: “Sino Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance,” August 14, 1945, in Gibler, *International Military Alliances*; On the abrogation of that treaty and establishment of the 1950 pact see: “Conclusion of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao/3602/3604/t18011.htm>.

<sup>404</sup> Map retrieved at: <http://taipeirstation.blogspot.com/2013/03/chaiyi-air-base-1958.html>

necessary to uphold the treaty commitment to Taiwan. The first crisis ultimately ended in April 1955, when Chou Enlai dramatically announced that Beijing did not want war with the United States. Washington seized the opportunity for negotiations, and the US and China established ambassadorial talks in Geneva.<sup>405</sup>

Despite the pause in the crisis, Taipei continued to tighten its grip on the offshore islands, with some US assistance. Chiang's troops regularly harassed communist shipping from the outpost, and briefly blockaded the Chinese port of Xiamen.<sup>406</sup> Chiang also engaged in a substantial troop buildup on Quemoy and Matsu.<sup>407</sup> By 1958, the KMT leader had stationed 100,000 troops, nearly one-third of his total ground forces, on the islands.<sup>408</sup>

After several years of Geneva negotiations with the United States, Beijing was unsatisfied. Washington remained unwilling to recognize it as the legitimate government of China, and would not promise to support unification with Taiwan.<sup>409</sup> In late 1957, shortly after the Soviets began to call for "peaceful coexistence" with the United States, the Chinese ended the Geneva talks, and began preparations for renewed military action in the Taiwan Straits.<sup>410</sup>

For the entirety of its short nationhood, the PRC had been heavily reliant on Soviet military and economic aid. In 1955, however, Mao advised the Chinese military to develop its own modern weapons, including nuclear weapons.<sup>411</sup> In a June 21, 1958 meeting with

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<sup>405</sup> Chang, p. 137.

<sup>406</sup> Thomas E. Stolper, *China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands*, (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1985), p. 125

<sup>407</sup> Chang, p. 183

<sup>408</sup> Chang, p. 183

<sup>409</sup> Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2008), p. 96.

<sup>410</sup> Luthi, p. 98

<sup>411</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 205.



the Central Military Commission, Mao announced his plans for an accelerated, indigenous nuclear weapons program.<sup>412</sup> This Chinese shift towards self-reliance was part of Mao's "Great Leap Forward"—a radical domestic economic and political agenda designed to modernize the PRC. As he began the implementation of this bold new initiative, he also planned an attack on Quemoy.<sup>413</sup>

Evidence suggests that Mao probably did not intend to invade the island in 1958, but hoped that renewed bombardment and interdiction of Nationalist ships would result in a quick victory in which Chiang withdrew his troops.<sup>414</sup> With the United States bogged down in a crisis over Lebanon and Jordan, Mao calculated that the risk of American intervention was low, and that Washington would probably pressure Chiang to abandon the island. Mao did not, however, consult with his Soviet counterparts on this strategy.<sup>415</sup>

Beijing began its attack on Quemoy on August 23, 1958, with 50,000 shells falling in the first day of the bombardment alone. In addition to the artillery barrage, Mao also instituted a naval blockade to prevent the Nationalists from resupplying.<sup>416</sup> As I will discuss shortly, both the United States and Soviet Union intervened to varying degrees within the first two weeks of the shelling. On September 6, Chou Enlai called for the resumption of suspended talks with the United States, which appeared to mark the end of the most dangerous phase of the crisis. By late September, the Nationalist position was no longer in

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<sup>412</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 209.

<sup>413</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 226.

<sup>414</sup> Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962) p. 207; Christensen p. 230; Lewis and Xue, p. 65; He Di, "The Evolution of the People's Republic of China's Policy toward the Offshore Islands," in Cohen and Iriye, p. 233.

<sup>415</sup> Luthi, p. 98

<sup>416</sup> Morton H. Halperin and Tang Tsou, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis," in Morton Halperin, ed., *Sino-Soviet Relations and Arms Control* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967), p. 275.

imminent danger of collapse, and on October 6, the Chinese Defense Minister called for an end to the siege.<sup>417</sup> Despite international efforts to the contrary, KMT did not withdraw from the islands after the crisis concluded. The PLA continued to bombard Quemoy on odd calendar days until the United States ended its security guarantee to Taiwan and recognized China in 1979.<sup>418</sup>

### **The United States in the Taiwan Straits**

In the year prior to the 1958 crisis, the United States had deployed Matador nuclear missile to Taiwan, and constructed a runway that could accommodate B-52 bombers.<sup>419</sup> Washington also observed a PLA buildup across from Quemoy during that summer, and preemptively increased its naval presence around Taiwan.<sup>420</sup> After the shelling commenced on August 23, Eisenhower's military intervention on behalf of the ROC was swift. He upgraded the combat readiness of and reinforced the Seventh Fleet.<sup>421</sup> Within days, the United States had assembled six carriers, three cruisers, forty destroyers and a submarine division in the Taiwan Straits.<sup>422</sup> On August 29<sup>th</sup>, the US Navy began to convoy escort Nationalist ships to help resupply the islands and break Mao's blockade.<sup>423</sup> In addition to naval assistance, Washington also provided Chiang with sophisticated weaponry. This included F-86 Sabre jets and Sidewinder missiles, to help the Nationalist

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<sup>417</sup> Chang, p. 197

<sup>418</sup> Luthi, p. 95.

<sup>419</sup> He, p. 232

<sup>420</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 196

<sup>421</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 196

<sup>422</sup> Chang, p. 185

<sup>423</sup> He, p. 235; Chang, p. 188.

troops seize and retain air superiority.<sup>424</sup> It also included massive amounts of ammunition, fuel, and other support equipment.

On Eisenhower's orders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff prepared the theater for the use of nuclear weapons, but the administration did not inform the public or their ROC allies of that order for fear of emboldening Chiang.<sup>425</sup> By September, 1958, 200 nuclear-capable aircraft were in theater, the US introduced 8-inch nuclear-capable howitzers to Quemoy, and the Commander in Chief, Pacific, was alerted to be ready to use nuclear weapons if the conflict escalated dramatically. Fearing escalation, however, Eisenhower rejected Chiang's requests to degrade Chinese artillery positions through strikes on the mainland.<sup>426</sup>

On September 4, the administration made its first public statement of the crisis. In his Newport Declaration, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles invoked the 1955 Formosa Resolution and declared that the United States' would help the ROC protect the islands because of their link to the broader defense of Taiwan.<sup>427</sup> By the third week of September, the blockade was broken and the US-ROC resupply effort was smoothly under way. Shortly thereafter, the Americans suggested demilitarization of islands under UN supervision, or a World Court decision on the future of the islands. They also began to pressure Chiang unilaterally to abandon Quemoy.<sup>428</sup> Washington ended the Seventh Fleet's convoy mission on October 8.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Marc S. Gallicchio, *The Best Defense is a Good Offense: Evolution of American Strategy in East Asia*, in Cohen and Iriye, eds. p. 78; Chang, p. 185.

<sup>425</sup> Telegram from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt), August 25, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc 44; on nuclear preparations see also Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail*, pp. 68-72.

<sup>426</sup> Among the arms provided to ROC troops were heat-seeking Sidewinder missiles to help them maintain air superiority. Bernard D. Cole, *Taiwan's Security: History and Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 23.

<sup>427</sup> Statement by the Secretary of State, September 4, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc 68.

<sup>428</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 232

<sup>429</sup> Zagoria, p. 215.

In sum, US military intervention in the crisis consisted of a military buildup in the area, a naval convoy to help Nationalist forces break the blockade, substantial arms shipments to the ROC, and secret preparation for nuclear use. Publicly, the United States suggested it would defend the islands after they had been under attack for two weeks, and then walked back that political support once the worst of the crisis appeared to be over.

### ***Entrapped in the Straits***

The American decisions to provide limited naval support, and later, public support to the defense of Quemoy and Matsu were linked to clear fears of entrapment. Eisenhower was committed to upholding the security guarantee to Taiwan, but was wary of entanglement in at least two different forms. First, the United States was committed to aiding Taipei so long as Chiang had not initiated or provoked the attack.<sup>430</sup> Second, it would defend Quemoy and Matsu if their assault was part of a larger offensive by Beijing. This first caveat had been relayed to Chiang when the US and Taiwan negotiated their treaty, and appeared in the treaty text itself. The second caveat was embodied in the 1955 Formosa Resolution, and one that Eisenhower repeated throughout the 1958 crisis. But how could the president determine whether an attack was truly unprovoked by his ally, and whether the crisis was part of a broader attack? <sup>431</sup>

Following the 1954-55 episode, US contingency planning formally provided for a first phase of crisis intervention in which Washington would provide logistics and support

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<sup>430</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower: Office Files, 1953-1961, pt. 2, International Series: Formosa, 1952-57, "The Taiwan Straits Situation, 1 September, 1958" as quoted in Victor D. Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the US Alliance System in Asia," *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2010), p. 173.

<sup>431</sup> Benson, p. 161; Chang, p. 184.

to the ROC, but would withhold direct military action pending evidence that conflict was not provoked by Chiang, and had the potential to be part of a broader assault on Taiwan.<sup>432</sup> This was precisely the plan that was used in August 1958. In addition to this phased strategy, Dulles and the National Security Council issued further guidelines to ensure that the ROC would not provoke the mainland during the crisis. Eisenhower gave orders that any airstrikes on the mainland by US or ROC forces would require his express approval.<sup>433</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff issued strict rules of engagement in an effort to prevent US clashes with Chinese military forces and inadvertent escalation.<sup>434</sup> US military engagement in the Taiwan Straits was prompt but tentative. This intervention directly reflected the fact that Eisenhower was committed to defending Taiwan, but reticent about being drawn into conflict unnecessarily.<sup>435</sup>

Because of these concerns, the President decided that he would provide military support to the ROC but would not immediately take a public stand on the crisis.

“Statements could be dangerous as they tended, sometimes unnecessarily, to limit and commit us,” he observed.<sup>436</sup> Eisenhower maintained this opaque position “to keep the communists guessing,” and to avoid giving Chiang a blank check.<sup>437</sup> Within several days, however Washington had determined that the assault had indeed been unprovoked, and

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<sup>432</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower: Office Files, 1953-1961, pt. 2, International Series: Formosa, 1952-57, “The Taiwan Straits Situation, 1 September, 1958” as quoted in Victor D. Cha, “Powerplay: Origins of the US Alliance System in Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2010), p. 173.

<sup>433</sup> “Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, Top Secret,” September 6, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. 19, p. 143.

<sup>434</sup> Cole, p. 24; Chang, p. 194.

<sup>435</sup> Telegram from Embassy of Republic of China, to the Department of State, August 24, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60* Volume XIX, China, Doc. 42.

<sup>436</sup> Summary of Meeting at White House on Taiwan Straits Situation, August 25, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc. 43.

<sup>437</sup> “Memorandum of Meeting,” August 29, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, pp. 73-74, 98; Chang, p. 186.

Eisenhower decided that Chinese “should not be led to believe that we would not intervene.” He therefore opted to clarify the equivocal US commitment.<sup>438</sup> This came in the form of the Newport Declaration, in which Dulles declared that offshore islands are “increasingly related” to the defense of Taiwan, and suggested that the US would consider bombing the communist mainland if China attempted to invade Quemoy.<sup>439</sup> Both the US strategy for military support to Taiwan, and its approach to public statements on the crisis were born of a desire to uphold the treaty commitment while minimizing the risk of entrapment in a wider war.

### ***Ambiguity in the Unilateral US-ROC Alliance***

Even after he had determined that Chiang was not responsible for provoking the crisis, the ambiguous status of Quemoy and Matsu in the US-ROC Mutual Security Treaty made it difficult for Eisenhower to draw clear red lines with respect to Beijing in 1958. He struggled both to signal and to bound his commitment to Taiwan because of the security guarantee. In devising the treaty commitment to Chiang Kai-shek, the Eisenhower administration deliberately replicated other defensive commitments but neither included nor excluded Quemoy and Matsu from the treaty area. American officials told their ROC counterparts in private that they would be willing to defend the Offshore Islands only if their attack was part of a larger threat to Taiwan, and that aid would only come following joint agreement.<sup>440</sup> Eisenhower later sought the Formosa Resolution so that he would have

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<sup>438</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Taiwan Straits, September 3, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60* Volume XIX, China, Doc. 64.

<sup>439</sup> As quoted in Zagoria, p. 208.

<sup>440</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, October 18, 1954, *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. 14, p. 774; Jonathan Trumbull Howe, *Sea Power and Global Politics in the Missile Age* (Cambridge: MIT, 1971), p. 167.

the authority to defend the islands if a broader Chinese attack appeared to be under way. The United States did not, however, specifically name the islands in that congressional resolution for fear of creating a hard and fast obligation to defend them in any contingency. Their uncertain status in the US-ROC alliance is likely why Mao chose to attack them again in 1958.<sup>441</sup>

As soon as the 1958 bombardment began, US State Department officials discussed whether the islands should be incorporated into the treaty area to clarify the American commitment. They also debated making an immediate, strong public statement in support of Taiwan, but ultimately demurred, fearing that a firm commitment to specific islands might invite Beijing to target others.<sup>442</sup> Eisenhower quickly enacted plans for naval assistance, but he and his top advisors could not determine how exactly they would judge if Chinese actions suggested an imminent attack on Taiwan that would invoke US treaty obligations.<sup>443</sup>

The United States began to strengthen its public commitment to Taiwan and the islands after Beijing began radio broadcasts announcing the “imminent invasion of Quemoy” and their intent to “liberate Taiwan.”<sup>444</sup> Had these threats been carried out, they would have more clearly invoked existing US commitments. The September 4 Newport declaration was an effort to clarify how the US-ROC alliance applied to the Taiwan Straits. In a public statement, Dulles reiterated the US treaty commitment to Taiwan, and the President’s authority through the Formosa Resolution to defend Quemoy and Matsu if he

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<sup>441</sup> Stolper, p. 58

<sup>442</sup> Howe, p. 184.

<sup>443</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Meeting in Pentagon on Offshore Islands Situation, August 28, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60* Volume XIX, China, Doc. 51.

<sup>444</sup> *New York Times*, August 29, 1958, pp. 1;3, as quoted in Howe, p. 207.

believed them to be part of a broader attack. The Secretary of State averred that the United States could not, at that time, either confirm or reject the fact that the assault was an effort to conquer Taiwan.<sup>445</sup> He stated that “securing and protecting of Quemoy and Matsu have increasingly become related to the defense of Taiwan,” using this to justify US military assistance to Chiang, and called upon Beijing not to escalate further.<sup>446</sup> The US position appeared the strengthen further still, when, following a private meeting with Dulles, a US Senator announced that the United States had “definitely” decided to use its own forces to prevent an invasion of Quemoy.<sup>447</sup>

Once the crisis began to subside, however, Washington stepped back from this obligation to the offshore islands. On September 30, Dulles declared in a public statement that the United States had no legal commitment to defend Quemoy or Matsu, or to aid the Nationalists in returning to the mainland.<sup>448</sup> Dulles and Eisenhower then began to pressure Chiang to drawn down his troops from the area. The security guarantee’s ambiguity on the offshore islands appears to have sparked serious entrapment fears and compelled US intervention when an attack was under way, but allowed for quick disassociation once danger had passed. Indeed, one scholar of the crisis has noted that Eisenhower and Dulles were careful to avoid declaring any legal commitment to the islands throughout the crisis, making the apparent September 30 volte-face quite compatible with their prior approach.<sup>449</sup> Of this enigmatic alliance approach, Eisenhower later declared: “I

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<sup>445</sup> “White House Press Release: Statement by the Secretary of State,” September 4, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60* Volume XIX, China, pp. 134-136.

<sup>446</sup> White House Press Release: Statement by the Secretary of State,” September 4, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60, Vol. XIX*, China, pp. 134-136.

<sup>447</sup> Howe, p. 210.

<sup>448</sup> Chang, p. 196

<sup>449</sup> Howe, p. 235.



wish it were as simple as drawing a line and saying in effect, ‘this far and no further.’ I assure you that there are a thousand and one complicated factors that prevented such an easy solution.”<sup>450</sup>

In addition to the ambiguity surrounding whether the US-ROC security guarantee applied to the islands, policymakers intervened because of the unilateral nature of the alliance. Throughout the crisis, Eisenhower’s position was informed by the belief that without US assistance, Chiang’s troops might not survive the bombardment and blockade. In the earlier days of the crisis, the United States believed that the shelling could well be part of a broader attack, and that if a wider war did ensue, Washington would have little advanced warning.<sup>451</sup> As time passed, they determined that a larger attack was less likely, but nonetheless agreed that Chiang could not stand his ground on Quemoy without US support.<sup>452</sup> The day after the bombardment began, US officials agreed that the Quemoy garrison would fall quickly if it could not be resupplied.<sup>453</sup> On August 26, Chiang told the American ambassador that he could not hold his position for more than a few days.<sup>454</sup> US military officials at the highest levels assessed that the Chinese could indeed cut off the Nationalists’ supplies quickly, and called the siege a “critical situation.”<sup>455</sup> Chiang’s relative

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<sup>450</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower as quoted in Benson, p. 166 (awaiting full citation from author).

<sup>451</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff assessed that the United States would have less than 24 hours warning of a broader attack. “Memorandum of Conversation,” Washington, September 3, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Volume XIX, China, Doc. 64.

<sup>452</sup> “Memorandum Prepared by Secretary of State Dulles,” September 4, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60* Volume XIX, China, pp. 131-134.

<sup>453</sup> Telegram from Embassy of Republic of China, to the Department of State, August 24, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60* Volume XIX, China, Doc. 42.

<sup>454</sup> Telegram from the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 25, 1958, *FRUS 1958-69*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc. 46.

<sup>455</sup> Telegram from the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 25, 1958, *FRUS 1958-69*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc. 46.; Telegram from the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 31, 1958, *FRUS 1958-69*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc. 57.

weakness meant that if the United States did not intervene, it faced the prospect of a much more serious war if Mao took Quemoy and then moved on to Taiwan itself.

### ***Offshore Interests at Stake?***

There is little evidence that Eisenhower intervened in the 1958 crisis because of a clear US interest in the islands themselves. Indeed, between 1954 and 1958, top US decision makers denied that the offshore islands were of any strategic import. During the 1955 crisis, some of Eisenhower's closest advisors, including the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Defense Secretary, and Treasury Secretary, thought that Quemoy and Matsu had no value whatsoever. They urged Eisenhower to defend Taiwan and the Pescadores and "let the others go."<sup>456</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed that "the offshore islands were not militarily necessary to the defense of Formosa."<sup>457</sup> During the 1958 crisis, Chief of Naval Operations Arleigh A. Burke told Eisenhower that the islands "don't mean anything...it's a purely symbolic thing."<sup>458</sup> During debates over US intervention that included the president, one high-level official called the Nationalist commitment to the islands "psychopathic."<sup>459</sup> Another advised Dulles "the Offshore Islands are not intrinsically of any real military significance."<sup>460</sup> Eisenhower himself was duly skeptical that the islands had strategic import.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> "Draft Message from the President to Congress," January 20, 1955, Eisenhower Papers, NSC Series, Box 6, as quoted in Chang, p. 103.

<sup>457</sup> Howe, p. 172.

<sup>458</sup> Burke Oral History, Nov. 12, 1972, pp. 44-45, as quoted in Chang, p. 185.

<sup>459</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation: The Taiwan Straits Situation," August 30, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, Doc. 54.

<sup>460</sup> Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning (Smith) to Secretary of State Dulles, September 3, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc. 63.

<sup>461</sup> Chang, p. 120; Stolper, p. 87.

Influential reporting corroborated this insider opinion. The *Washington Post* argued that US military involvement could lead to “war, probably nuclear, in the wrong place and at the wrong time over some wholly insignificant piece of real estate,” calling entanglement “tragically unwise.”<sup>462</sup>

This wisdom appears to have been reflected in Eisenhower’s position on the islands once the worst of the 1958 bombardment had passed. After providing massive US assistance to Taiwan to break the blockade, Eisenhower pressed Chiang to permanently withdraw his forces from the islands.<sup>463</sup> Dulles told the American press that it would be foolish to sustain major military deployments in the Straits if a cease-fire could be negotiated.<sup>464</sup> The president acknowledged that the islands were symbolically important but counseled Chiang that they were militarily useless. He came to believe, however, that as long as the KMT did not appear to have been driven from the islands, neither the US nor ROC would suffer reputational or material damage from their evacuation.<sup>465</sup> Washington also pushed for international arbitration on the islands’ status, demonstrating that it placed little value on Chiang’s retaining them.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Editorial, “Imminent War,” *Washington Post*, August 29, 1958, p. A13; Editorial, “Tail Wags Dog,” August 25, 1958, p. A22.

<sup>463</sup> Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, October 13, 1958, in *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX., p. 381-382; and Letter, Eisenhower to Chiang Kai-shek, May 17, 1956, in *FRUS 1955-57*, Vol. III, p. 361.

<sup>464</sup> Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 16.

<sup>465</sup> George C. Eliades, “Once More Unto the Breach: Eisenhower, Dulles, and Public Opinion in the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1958,” *Journal of American-East Asia Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1993), pp. 362-64.

<sup>466</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 232.

### ***Domino Decision-making?***

There is a small amount of evidence that the Eisenhower Administration considered a domino logic during the 1958 crisis. On September 4, President Eisenhower wrote to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that he feared a Nationalist loss of Quemoy would result in the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland, which could, in turn, jeopardize other non-communists governments in East Asia.<sup>467</sup> That this logic would be raised at all is not terribly surprising—President Eisenhower is believed to have pioneered the metaphor of falling dominoes.<sup>468</sup> There is also evidence that Chiang Kai-shek attempted to stoke Eisenhower’s fears that a Nationalist loss on Quemoy could lead to rapprochement between Taiwan and the Mainland.<sup>469</sup> Yet an intervention justification based on the interdependence of commitments does not pervade the historical evidence from the 1958 crisis. The policymakers involved appear to have been much more concerned about the potential for Chiang to be defeated in *that* standoff, as opposed to its implications elsewhere. The President and Secretary of State were most preoccupied with the idea that the fall of Quemoy could lead to the fall of Taiwan and reunification with China.<sup>470</sup> Furthermore, Eisenhower’s subsequent pressure on Chiang to evacuate the islands indicates that he did not view them as a crucible for the United States’ broader alliance reputation.

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<sup>467</sup> Letter from Secretary of State Dulles to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, pp. 136-139.

<sup>468</sup> Jervis, “Domino Beliefs and Strategic Behavior,” p. 22.

<sup>469</sup> Howe, p. 189.

<sup>470</sup> In a detailed memo written in consultation with the State Department and Joint Chiefs of Staff, John Foster Dulles detailed his fears that US non-intervention would lead to an amphibious assault on Quemoy, the broader defeat of Taiwan, and possible reunification with the mainland. “Memorandum Prepared by Secretary of State Dulles,” September 4, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, China, pp. 131-134.

### ***Shared Adversaries and US Intervention***

In the 1958 crisis, the United States made plain that it shared Taiwan's adversaries, even if it did not find an intrinsic interest in the dispute. Despite the fact that the White House was not actually certain whether Moscow had supported Beijing's attack, Eisenhower publicly stated that the Chinese and the Soviets were likely "working hand in hand."<sup>471</sup> He charged the Soviets with initiating the dispute and repeatedly referred to "Sino-Soviet armed aggression."<sup>472</sup> The United States mobilized for a full-scale war with China, and accused Moscow of "collusion for instigating the troubles."<sup>473</sup> Even though Eisenhower believed that the crisis was likely an isolated incident, he maintained that "the US was the prime target in the Cold War."<sup>474</sup> In a speech on August 19, before the attack had occurred, Dulles emphasized the need to maintain "the capacity and the will to retaliate against the Soviet Union." Simultaneously, he reaffirmed all of the United States' security guarantee commitments.<sup>475</sup> Despite the fact that relations with Moscow had improved in the year prior, Washington publicly took on both China and the Soviet Union in the interest of defending Taipei. There was no discernable daylight within the US-ROC alliance on the question of shared adversaries.

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<sup>471</sup> Department of State, *American Foreign Policy*, 1958, p. 1157, as quoted in Howe, p. 254.

<sup>472</sup> As quoted in Chang, p. 195; see also Betts, *Nuclear Balance and Nuclear Blackmail*, p. 75.

<sup>473</sup> Chang, p. 188.

<sup>474</sup> "Summary of Meeting at the White House on the Taiwan Straits Situation," August 29, 1958, *FRUS 1958-60*, Vol. XIX, China, Doc. 52.

<sup>475</sup> Secretary of State John Dulles, "Text of Address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars," August 19, 1958, *New York Times*, as quoted in Howe, p. 186.

## The USSR and the Taiwan Straits Crisis

### *Strait Talk from the Soviets*

Soviet intervention in the offshore islands crisis took different forms from that of the United States. Moscow provided some public, political support for its ally, but no direct military aid. In late July and early August 1958, with Mao's preparations for the bombardment firmly in place, Khrushchev paid a hurried trip to China.<sup>476</sup> Mao did not inform the Soviet premiere of his plans to launch the attack, or otherwise consult with him on the advisability of renewed rancor in the Straits.<sup>477</sup> After the bombardment commenced on August 23, Russian officials and the media were completely silent on the crisis for as many as five days.<sup>478</sup>

Initial public statements by Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders argued that there simply was no pressing threat in the Taiwan Straits.<sup>479</sup> After several days of bombardment, however, they changed their stance. On August 31, an editorial appeared in *Pravda*, with the byline "Observer," and was presumed to be a government statement. The piece warned that anyone who threatened China threatened the Soviet Union, and stated that Moscow would give China "the necessary moral and material aid in its just struggle."<sup>480</sup> This was widely interpreted as a reaffirmation of the Soviet security guarantee to the Chinese. On September 5, following Dulles' Newport Declaration, another "Observer" article declared that the Soviet Union could not "stand idly by" if the crisis escalated "at the frontier or on the territory of its great ally." The article went on to threaten that if the United States

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<sup>476</sup> Zagoria, p. 201.

<sup>477</sup> Chang, p. 188; Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 199.

<sup>478</sup> Zagoria, p. 211.

<sup>479</sup> Howe, p. 219.

<sup>480</sup> *Pravda*, August 31, 1958. As quoted in Halperin and Tsou, p. 281; Zagoria, p. 211.

attacked the Chinese mainland, Washington “should not calculate that a retaliatory blow will be confined to the Taiwan Straits, and no less the offshore islands.”<sup>481</sup> It went on to state, however, that the Russians “watch the efforts of the Chinese people and wish them success,” implying detached passivity where the Straits were concerned.<sup>482</sup> The Soviets clearly intended to defend Chinese territorial integrity, but they declined to make a commitment to the islands themselves. They also declined to specify what, if any, form their alliance aid might take.<sup>483</sup>

On September 7, Khrushchev sent a letter to Eisenhower, warning him directly against attacking the Chinese mainland. In the letter, he repeated the language of a security guarantee: “An attack on the Chinese People’s Republic, which is a great friend, ally, and neighbor of our country, is an attack on the Soviet Union. True to its duty, our country will do everything in order together with the People’s Republic of China to defend the security of both states...”<sup>484</sup> This missive still did not clarify, however, whether the Soviets considered the offshore islands to be Chinese territory, or otherwise articulate a position on their status.

In a September 18 speech to the UN General Assembly, Gromyko accused the United States of provocative actions over the Straits, warned that the Soviet Union would not hesitate to come to the aid of China, and declared that the situation could only be stabilized by US withdrawal from the area.<sup>485</sup> On September 19, as the crisis was subsiding but before the blockade had clearly been breached, Khrushchev sent another letter to Eisenhower.

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<sup>481</sup> As quoted in Halperin and Tsou, p. 282

<sup>482</sup> *Pravda*, September 5, 1958, as quoted in Howe, p. 221.

<sup>483</sup> Howe, p. 220.

<sup>484</sup> Text in Paul E. Zinner, ed. *Documents on American Foreign Relations* (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 449.

<sup>485</sup> Halperin and Tsou, p. 284

The Premiere warned that a world war over China was now possible, and that the Soviets intended to honor their alliance commitments. Khrushchev explicitly reminded Eisenhower that if the US was considering nuclear use, it should keep in mind that “the other side” possessed nuclear weapons as well. If China was the victim of a nuclear attack, the US would face a response by the same means.<sup>486</sup> The September 19 note was so pugilistic in its language that Eisenhower officially rejected its receipt.<sup>487</sup> On October 5, just before the siege ended, Khrushchev issued a final statement in *Pravda*, declaring “the Soviet Union will come to the aid of the Chinese People’s Republic if it is attacked from without, or, more concretely, if the USA attacks the Chinese People’s Republic.”<sup>488</sup>

After complete silence in the early days of the crisis, the Soviet Union made several strong public statements reaffirming its alliance commitments to the Chinese, but declined to clarify how the offshore islands fit into that commitment. It did not give direct military aid. Years later, it was revealed that during the month of September, Khrushchev had twice offered to send anti-aircraft squadrons to Fujian province on the Taiwan Straits.<sup>489</sup> He also offered up naval vessels equipped with nuclear missiles.<sup>490</sup> The condition of both offers was that the military hardware remain under Soviet command. Mao twice rejected them both.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> Halperin and Tsou, p. 284.

<sup>487</sup> Chang, p. 196.

<sup>488</sup> *Pravda*, October 6, 1958, as quoted in Halperin and Tsou, p. 285.

<sup>489</sup> Luthi, p. 102.

<sup>490</sup> Howe, p. 194.

<sup>491</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 234.



### ***Entrapment Fears in Moscow***

The Soviets' initial silence and subsequent public statements were almost certainly tied to a fear that they might become entrapped in a wider war with the United States, yet those fears presented differently than those that abounded in Washington.<sup>492</sup> The outbreak of the 1958 crisis took Moscow by surprise, and its immediate concern was that the Chinese had begun the "liberation" of Taiwan.<sup>493</sup> The Soviets' initial silence on the crisis signified that, like the Americans, they were trying to determine whether the bombardment was the first phase of a broader attack. Moscow was also taken aback by the rapid American moves to provide naval assistance, and feared that Eisenhower was preparing for a wider conventional and perhaps nuclear war.<sup>494</sup>

Even once they had determined that Beijing did not immediately intend to attack Taiwan, Moscow was still sensitive to the potential for entrapment. Gromyko was horrified to arrive in Beijing on September 5 to find Mao speaking of a larger war against the United States and Taiwan. The Chinese leader appeared to be unconcerned that that this could lead to US nuclear use, and he encouraged Moscow to begin thinking seriously about the use of nuclear weapons on China's behalf.<sup>495</sup> Letters between the USSR and PRC exchanged in 1960 state plainly that, during the crisis, the Russians had feared that their Chinese allies would drag them into a wider war that might include nuclear weapons.<sup>496</sup>

The Soviet dismay at Mao's calls for nuclear preparations was only compounded by the allies' differing views on escalation and nuclear weapons in general. Mao believed

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<sup>492</sup> Howe, p. 197.

<sup>493</sup> Luthi, p 101, quoting Brezhnev and Khrushchev's memoirs.

<sup>494</sup> Chang, p. 190

<sup>495</sup> Chang, pp. 191-193.

<sup>496</sup> Zagoria, p. 217.

sincerely that local wars could be fought and won for limited, coercive purposes. Mao's insistence that nuclear weapons were "paper tigers" implied that the communist allies should take a more assertive policy towards the US and Taiwan. Khrushchev and his colleagues, however, were fixated on the fact that the skirmish over the Straits could lead to general war and a nuclear exchange.<sup>497</sup> Russian civilian and military leaders scorned Mao's "paper tiger" concept.<sup>498</sup> Coupled with his sanguine stance on escalation in the Taiwan Straits, Mao's nuclear views distressed Moscow, and provoked a profound fear that his limited bombardment could invoke their treaty commitment and require nuclear aid.<sup>499</sup> In contrast to the Americans, who worried about the escalation of the conflict in general, the Soviets were primarily concerned that they would be entrapped in a nuclear exchange.

### ***Ambiguity, a Unilateral Guarantee, and Soviet Anxiety***

Soviet fears of entrapment do appear to have been linked to the vague nature of the Sino-Soviet treaty. Moscow's seeming absence in the early days of the crisis is now understood to have been a pause to allow the Kremlin to determine what exactly the bombardment meant for their alliance obligations. Had the ROC or United States attacked the mainland, Moscow would have been compelled to provide defensive aid. But Mao's decision to launch the attack without notifying Khrushchev had actually contravened Article IV of the Sino-Soviet Treaty, which called for mutual consultations in areas of peace and security.<sup>500</sup> Absent this consultation, or any broader understanding of Mao's intent,

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<sup>497</sup> Zagoria, pp. 218-219.

<sup>498</sup> Zagoria, p. 221.

<sup>499</sup> Lewis and Xue, pp. 66-69.

<sup>500</sup> Luthi, p. 99

Khrushchev was loath to take up a stake in the conflict whose purposes he did not entirely understand.

Two weeks into the crisis, seemingly-strong official statements began to emanate from Moscow. In reality, however, Khrushchev's letters and public remarks were no less ambiguous than the Sino-Soviet agreement itself. By reiterating Moscow's defensive commitment to Beijing, they aimed to dissuade Washington from sanctioning or executing an attack against the mainland, but they did not suggest direct Soviet support in the Straits. Puzzled by this uncertainty in the Sino-Soviet alliance, Eisenhower recalled wondering: "Was Khrushchev trying to hold Mao back, as some believed, or was he urging him on?"<sup>501</sup> Khrushchev's decision not to clarify his treaty commitments was quite purposeful: he hoped to avoid issuing a blank check to Beijing or an excessively binding ultimatum to Washington.<sup>502</sup> Moscow's vague treaty commitments to Beijing created some incentive to intervene, lest Washington take escalatory actions that could invite a wider war.

Unlike in the US-Taiwan relationship however, the Soviets did not feel compelled to enter the crisis because of their one-sided commitment and their ally's relative weakness. Indeed, Mao increasingly rejected alliance aid from the Soviet Union. From 1950-1958, the PRC was highly reliant on the USSR for economic and military assistance. As early as 1955, however, Mao had begun to push the Chinese military to develop its own modern weapons and doctrine.<sup>503</sup> The summer of 1958 marked the first phase of Mao's "Great Leap Forward"—a country-wide effort to increase Chinese industrial and military power relative

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<sup>501</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace*, Vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 293.

<sup>502</sup> Zagoria, p. 214.

<sup>503</sup> Christensen, p. 205.

to the Soviet Union as well as to the west. Scholars have argued that the 1958 bombardment may have been an effort to drum up domestic support for this new, revolutionary agenda.<sup>504</sup> The year before the crisis, Mao had warned Khrushchev against interfering in Chinese foreign policy without an explicit request from Beijing.<sup>505</sup> In 1958, Mao likely asked of Khrushchev “only very general statements” “designed to suggest Soviet defensive support,” but not implying a deeper Soviet involvement in the crisis.<sup>506</sup>

Indeed, some of Moscow’s public statements, while supportive of China, also spoke of Beijing’s independence. In the September 5 *Pravda* article, “Observer” averred “the Chinese People’s Republic has sufficient strength to counter the aggressors fully,” implying that Soviet aid was not essential.<sup>507</sup> In his September 7 letter to Eisenhower, Khrushchev stated that if a major war was forced on China, “we have not the least doubt that *the Chinese people* will strike back at the aggressor in a fitting manner.” In his September 19 letter, he warned that if American troops and vessels were not withdrawn from the area, “*People’s China* will have no other recourse but to expel the hostile armed forces from its own territory.”<sup>508</sup> In each of these instances, Khrushchev threatened Chinese, rather than Soviet action.

Beijing’s independence was also reflected in Chinese statements to their Soviet allies. On September 5, after the United States had issued the Newport Declaration, Chou Enlai told the Soviet Charge D’Affaires in Beijing: “if we get in trouble, China will assume all

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<sup>504</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 205

<sup>505</sup> Christensen p. 234.

<sup>506</sup> Halperin and Tsou, p. 287

<sup>507</sup> Zagoria, p. 212, emphasis in original.

<sup>508</sup> Zagoria, p. 214, emphasis in original.

consequences and will not drag the Soviet Union into the water.”<sup>509</sup> And when Gromyko expressed serious trepidation over being pulled into a nuclear conflict, he was assured that China would “make national sacrifices in case of war... and the Soviet Union would not have to participate.”<sup>510</sup>

The Chinese insistence on independence was not just represented in word, but in deed. In the early summer of 1958, Beijing had rejected a proposal for the development of a joint Sino-Soviet naval fleet, and refused to allow Moscow construct military radio transmitters on Chinese soil, calling both proposals an infringement on their sovereignty.<sup>511</sup> During the crisis, the Chinese ambassador in Moscow warned Beijing that the Soviets might use the skirmish to increase their military presence in the area. Mao consequently rejected two offers by Khrushchev to station Soviet interceptor squadrons near the Taiwan Straits because those forces were to remain under Moscow’s command. He offered Khrushchev a counterproposal to deploy them under PLA auspices, which Khrushchev rebuffed.<sup>512</sup> Mao later told the Soviets that the “offer had offended them.”<sup>513</sup> In contrast to the US-Taiwan alliance, in which the former felt entangled in the crisis by virtue of the latter’s weakness, Moscow was concerned about entrapment, but its intercession was circumscribed by Beijing’s vociferous insistence on independence.

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<sup>509</sup> Luthi, quoting the memoirs of Chou Enlai, p. 101.

<sup>510</sup> As quoted in Lewis and Xue, p. 64.

<sup>511</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 199.

<sup>512</sup> Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 234.

<sup>513</sup> Khrushchev, *Testament*, p. 262, as quoted in Luthi, p. 103.

## ***Soviet Offshore Interests***

As in the US case, there is little evidence that Moscow believed the Offshore Islands to be of any real strategic import. The Soviets consistently supported the Chinese position on Taiwan and condemned outside interference when it came to the issue of reunification.<sup>514</sup> Long after the Sino-Soviet split, Khrushchev maintained that he had backed Mao's attack on Quemoy and Matsu, and offered more support than the Chinese were willing to accept.<sup>515</sup> In 1955, however, the Soviets reportedly told their Chinese allies that they considered the offshore islands to be a local problem, and one that was inconsistent with their broader strategic aim of reducing Cold War tensions.<sup>516</sup>

Khrushchev did not reveal Moscow's fundamental lack of interest in Quemoy and Matsu while the crisis was at its height. But as it wound down, he laid bare the true Soviet position. In response to a question from a reporter, the Soviet Premier reaffirmed the Sino-Soviet alliance. But he added:

“Does this contain the slightest hint that the USSR is, as President Eisenhower would have it, ready to take part in a civil war in China? No, we have stated and do state something quite different: The USSR will come to the help of the CPR if the latter is attacked from without; speaking more concretely, if the United States attacks the CPR.”

Khrushchev added: “we have not interfered in and do not intend to interfere in the civil war which the Chinese people are waging against the Chiang Kai-shek clique.”<sup>517</sup> Moscow had presumably seen fit to keep ambiguous its position on the islands during the worst of the

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<sup>514</sup> Peter Ivanov, “U.S. China Policy in the Eisenhower Era: A Soviet View,” in Cohen and Iriye, eds. p. 218.

<sup>515</sup> Sergei Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev, Volume 3: Statesman, 1953-1964* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), pp. 441-445.

<sup>516</sup> Chang, p. 137.

<sup>517</sup> Zagoria, p. 216.

crisis. His October 5 statement made clear that the Soviets saw no intrinsic interests in the islands themselves, and had no intention of intervening unless the United States attacked mainland China.

### ***Sino-Soviet Dominoes?***

There is no evidence that Soviet intervention in the 1958 crisis was motivated by a domino logic. In his memoirs, Khrushchev offered up a defensive justification for Moscow's backing of Beijing—Chiang's outposts had to be eliminated lest he use them to retake the mainland—but the Premiere made no effort to connect this crisis to other Soviet commitments.<sup>518</sup>

### ***"Peaceful Coexistence" and Shared Adversaries***

The fact that Moscow saw Taiwan as an internal Chinese matter also had implications for how the Soviets thought about Beijing's adversaries. Khrushchev had spent the first few years of his tenure attempting to defuse tensions with the West. He had announced his "peaceful coexistence" strategy, and in summer 1958 was seeking a wide-ranging arms control agreement with the United States.<sup>519</sup> Months earlier, Mao had repudiated "peaceful coexistence," and increasingly feared that accommodation between the US and USSR would allow the world to coalesce behind a "two Chinas" solution, in which Washington bartered recognition of Communist China for Soviet recognition of Taiwan.<sup>520</sup> Mao had explicitly pressed Khrushchev to give Soviet support to the Chinese

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<sup>518</sup> Khrushchev, pp. 442-443.

<sup>519</sup> Chang, p. 187-191.

<sup>520</sup> Zagoria, p. 176; Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, p. 206.

“liberation” of Taiwan, and hoped that the United States could eventually be forced to withdraw from Asia altogether.<sup>521</sup> Mao’s “Great Leap Forward” program was also instituted without any consultation with the Soviets.<sup>522</sup> Scholars have suggested that Mao may have, in part, initiated the second Taiwan Straits crisis to sabotage the embryonic détente between Moscow and Washington.<sup>523</sup> Unlike Eisenhower, who did not demur from coupling Beijing with Moscow for the purposes of backing Taipei in crisis, the Soviet Union was not eager to face down Washington as an adversary in the Offshore Islands dispute, and completely derail efforts at reconciliation. Moscow and Beijing took very different views on how to engage this adversary.

Moscow verbally supported Chinese claims but hesitated to jeopardize its geostrategic interests on behalf of Mao’s gambit.<sup>524</sup> Khrushchev’s deep hesitation to risk a nuclear confrontation with Washington helped to convince Beijing that it could not rely upon Soviet aid in a crisis, which in turn helped to speed along the Chinese nuclear program.<sup>525</sup> Not eager to become entangled in a third Taiwan Straits crisis, Khrushchev suggested to Mao in 1959 that he halt further attempts to recover Taiwan by force.<sup>526</sup> The same year, the Soviet Union withdrew prominent advisors from China, including several who were crucial to Beijing’s nuclear endeavors. Chinese officials reported that they had the “ominous premonition” that Moscow was preparing to “tear up unilaterally all Sino-

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<sup>521</sup> Howe, p. 177.

<sup>522</sup> Khrushchev, p. 446.

<sup>523</sup> Chang, p. 187.

<sup>524</sup> Howe, p. 177.

<sup>525</sup> Halperin and Tsou, p. 303.

<sup>526</sup> Halperin and Tsou, p. 302



Soviet accords.”<sup>527</sup> Their fundamentally different views on both Taiwan and the United States were clearly catalysts in the Sino-Soviet split.

### **The Beagle Channel Crisis: A Dog that did not Bark**

In late 1978, Argentina and Chile found themselves at the brink of war over the Beagle Channel and three uninhabited islands that sit in it. The Beagle Channel dispute dated back to the colonial period. When Spain divided the Southern cone of South America into two states, it traced a line from north to south along the highest peaks of the Andes. Everything to the east of the line was apportioned to Argentina, and everything to the west was given to Chile. In 1881, the two countries concluded a boundary treaty to clarify ambiguous parts of the border, but that failed to settle their disagreements over the Beagle Channel.<sup>528</sup>

The Beagle Channel is 125 miles long, and links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, separating Tierra del Fuego from small islands to the south. Under the terms of the 1881 treaty, all territory to the south of the channel belonged to Chile. These terms were unambiguous, but the two countries did not agree on the channel’s position, and therefore disagreed on what was south and what territory belonged to Chile. At issue were three islands, Picton, Lennox, and Nueva, known as the PLN group. The islands themselves totaled only 40 square miles, but their possession established an additional 30,000 square maritime miles, rich in fish, and possibly in oil and minerals. These waters also allowed

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<sup>527</sup> Lewis and Xue, p. 72.

<sup>528</sup> James L. Garrett, “The Beagle Channel Dispute: Confrontation and Negotiation in the Southern Cone.” *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs* (1985), p. 82.

access to Antarctica, which both countries were eager to exploit.<sup>529</sup> In 1902, the British government was given arbitration power over the ongoing dispute over the 1881 treaty.<sup>530</sup> The exact position of the channel and the easternmost boundaries of Chilean sovereignty were not settled before the Second World War.

Figure 13- The Beagle Channel and PLN Islands, as decided in 1977<sup>531</sup>



In 1958, tensions between Argentina and Chile flared over the southern Snipe Isle, and negotiations over the border resumed. In 1967, Chile notified Argentina of its intent to submit the dispute to the UK government for arbitration.<sup>532</sup> Under its military government, however, Argentina had become increasingly assertive in its claims to the

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<sup>529</sup> Garrett, pp. 82-84.

<sup>530</sup> Child, p. 80.

<sup>531</sup> Map found in: Jack Child, *Geopolitics and Conflict in South America: Quarrels Among Neighbors*, (New York: Praeger, 1985), p. 81.

<sup>532</sup> Garrett, pp. 89-90.

Falklands/Malvinas Islands, and declared that the British government was not an impartial mediator.

*Figure 14-Argentine South Atlantic Claims, 1977<sup>533</sup>*



The case was therefore brought before a panel of five international judges with the British government having the power to accept or reject their ruling.<sup>534</sup> Argentina expected that, at worst, it would be awarded one of the three disputed islands. Instead, in May 1977 the panel found that Argentina could keep its one existing Beagle Channel naval base, but awarded all three islands to Chile.<sup>535</sup>

<sup>533</sup> Child, p. 83.

<sup>534</sup> Child, p. 80; Garrett, pp. 92-93.

<sup>535</sup> Garrett, p. 93.

The Argentine government was shocked, and feared that the ruling would allow Chile to claim significant parts of the Atlantic, undermining its longstanding “bioceanic principal,” whereby Argentina was an Atlantic state and Chile a Pacific one. Buenos Aires immediately descried the ruling, its Foreign Minister Oscar Montes declaring “[n]o commitment obliges a country to comply with that which affects its vital interests or that which damages its rights of sovereignty.”<sup>536</sup> Buenos Aires proposed joint governance of the Channel, which Chile predictably rejected, and Argentine ships and aircraft began to violate Chilean waters and airspace regularly.<sup>537</sup> In January 1978, Montes announced “the decision and Her Britannic Majesty’s Award...are null and void,” arguing that the court had misinterpreted the Argentine case and misconstrued historical facts.<sup>538</sup>

Further attempts at bilateral negotiations were fruitless, and Argentina began to stockpile sophisticated weaponry, purchasing 26 Dagger fighters from Israel and 17 tanks from Austria.<sup>539</sup> In June the Argentine army and air force began regular exercises near the Beagle Channel. During the summer, rumors began to circulate that Buenos Aires was contemplating occupation of the islands. In September, several cities in Argentina conducted air raids and blackout drills. Reports abounded that schools were being prepared to house troops, rail yards were being readied for military transport and red crosses were being painted on hospitals. The standoff became a full-blown crisis on October 12, when Argentina called up 50,000 reservists.<sup>540</sup>

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<sup>536</sup> Lanus, *De Chapultepec al Beagle*, pp. 515-516, author’s translation in Princen, p. 134.

<sup>537</sup> Garrett, p. 93

<sup>538</sup> Thomas Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 135.

<sup>539</sup> Princen, p. 137.

<sup>540</sup> Princen, p. 137.

In mid-October Chile also began to reinforce its military units, and minor clashes were reported near the Chilean border. Both countries began mobilization. Chile canceled long-planned exercises with Peru and the United States for fear that Argentina would take the opportunity to seize the islands, and both countries sent their armies to the border and navies southward.<sup>541</sup>

On November 10, with the crisis peaking, the United States called on the Organization of American States to mediate. The OAS is the treaty organization associated with the 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, or Rio Pact. The United States, several Caribbean countries, and most of Latin America, including Argentina and Chile, are parties to this defense pact. As will be discussed shortly, however, the Rio Pact is not a US security guarantee to Latin America.

In December, with little progress from the OAS, Chilean officials received word that Argentina had signed a secret pact with Peru for the simultaneous invasion of Chile, and speculated that Bolivia might be tempted to join the fray as well. In Argentina, rumors spread that Brazil would join the Chilean side.<sup>542</sup> In a December 14 meeting, Argentine President Videla informed a Chilean emissary that he had given orders to invade the islands, and that the invasion would take place on December 21 or 22. Videla explained that Argentina's military junta would remove him from power if he did not carry out the attack - "invasion was inevitable."<sup>543</sup> Chile put 45,000 troops on full alert on December 16,

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<sup>541</sup> Princen, p. 138.

<sup>542</sup> *Washington Post*, November 3, 1978; *Christian Science Monitor*, October 30, 1978, p. 15, as quoted in Princen.

<sup>543</sup> Princen, p. 143.

prompting Argentina to appeal to the UN Security Council, the OAS, and the Vatican to intervene. Chile pressed for prompt OAS intervention as well.

In Buenos Aires, December 22 was chosen as the date for the Beagle Channel invasion, and armed forces in both countries stood at full alert. When the date arrived, the operation was postponed for 24 hours due to inclement weather. In the early hours of December 23, however, Pope John Paul II notified both countries that he would dispatch personal emissaries to both capitals. Military action on both sides of the border ground to a halt. Argentina suspended maneuvers, reopened its borders, and quickly withdrew its fleet from the Southern cone. On January 8, 1979, under the Pope's supervision, Argentina and Chile signed the Act of Montevideo, committing them to avoid hostilities and settle the Beagle Channel dispute through mediation.<sup>544</sup> The Vatican-mediated treaty ending the Beagle Channel standoff was signed in 1985.

### ***The US and the Beagle Channel***

As the Beagle Channel crisis reached a fever pitch in November, Washington turned to the Organization of American States, encouraging it to help defuse tensions. On December 15, President Jimmy Carter publicly called upon both Argentina and Chile to cease belligerent acts and resolve the dispute peacefully. Despite pleas from Santiago that it take a more active role in the crisis, however, Washington did not.<sup>545</sup>

After both Chile and Argentina expressed a willingness to consider Vatican mediation, the United States acted as a conduit for information from the region to the Holy See. By the third week of December, American intelligence suggested that an Argentinean

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<sup>544</sup> Princen, pp. 146-149.

<sup>545</sup> Princen, p. 143.

invasion of the islands loomed. The Pope, however, was incredulous that one Catholic country would invade another during the Christmas season. Washington assured the Vatican that an invasion did appear to be imminent, but made no moves towards direct action despite the coming conflict. Indeed, had the Pope not reached out to both crisis actors on the morning of December 23, it is almost certain that war would have begun that day, without any direct US intervention. In sum, the United States' involvement in the Beagle Channel dispute consisted of entreaties to the OAS and to the Pope to mediate and some selective intelligence sharing. There was, however, no sign that the Americans felt that their treaty obligations gave them a stake in the crisis, and no consideration whatsoever of direct political or military action.<sup>546</sup>

### ***Entrapment Fears***

There is no historical evidence to suggest that the Beagle Channel crisis provoked fears of entrapment in the United States.

### ***Ambiguity in a Non-Security Guarantee***

The status of the Beagle Channel and PLN islands was no clearer to the United States than it was to Argentina or Chile. One obvious reason that the United States was not compelled to intervene more energetically in the crisis, however, is that its defensive treaty commitment to Argentina and Chile was in no way ambiguous when it came to its obligation to use force. This is because the Rio Pact, the United States' defense agreement with much of Latin America and the Caribbean, is not a formal security guarantee.

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<sup>546</sup> Princen, p. 144.

The 1947 Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance was Washington's first postwar multilateral arrangement, predating NATO. The pact is an extension of a 1945 agreement, the Act of Chapultepec, which served as a loose collective security arrangement at the end of the Second World War.<sup>547</sup> Concluded on March 6, 1945, the Act of Chapultepec aimed to secure the treaty area from pernicious outside influences, and in particular was intended to prevent collaboration with the Nazis. Washington worried that Argentina, which had not yet declared war on the Axis, might allow the Germans base access. For the United States, Chapultepec was essentially a negative security assurance, and a formalization of the Monroe Doctrine. The Rio Pact was simply a post-war extension of Chapultepec.<sup>548</sup> That the Rio Pact functions as a negative assurance to the region is confirmed by the ways in which it has been invoked since 1947. Perhaps the best-known instance was as justification for the United States' naval quarantine during the Cuban Missile Crisis.<sup>549</sup>

In addition to its status as a negative assurance from the United States, the Rio Pact and its attendant treaty organization, the Organization of American States, have a goal of promoting regional peace. Unlike NATO or the Warsaw Pact, the OAS is chartered through Chapter VIII of the United Nations, and relies on Articles 52 and 53 of the UN Charter, whereas most formal security guarantees rely solely on Article 51. This makes OAS a regional organization qualified to adjudicate disputes *among* members in the name of inter-American security. The Rio Pact is therefore different from most other US alliances in two ways: First, the US commitment to the arrangement comes in the form of a negative

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<sup>547</sup> The Act of Chapultepec, Gibler, p. 351; Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, Gibler pp. 369-371.

<sup>548</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, April 24, 2014.

<sup>549</sup> Abram Chayes, *The Cuban Missile Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 44-86.



security assurance intended to minimize external influence in the Americas; second, the organization itself has a regional conflict mediation function.

Beyond these two overarching aims that distinguish the Rio Pact, there are some additional features that make it distinct from true extended deterrence arrangements. First, while any Rio Pact member state retains the right to use military force to assist another member under the UN charter, collective military action is not easily invoked in the Rio Pact/OAS. The Organ of Consultation, OAS's central coordinating body, can recommend military action in case of armed attack against one or more member states, but action requires a 2/3 vote from member states.<sup>550</sup> Second, the treaty stipulates that no state can be required to use armed force without its consent.<sup>551</sup> If one or more member states becomes involved in war, then, the Rio Pact structure makes it highly unlikely that other members will vote to use force collectively, and even if they do, no state is obligated to give military aid. Under the Rio Pact, there is no contingency in which the United States is obligated to use force on behalf of another member. When Washington called for OAS mediation during the Beagle Channel crisis, it therefore did so with the knowledge that this intervention would not result in any military obligation to it. The features that distinguish the Rio Pact from a formal security guarantee mean that in the Beagle Channel Crisis, the United States had no impetus to intervene forcefully in the dispute to minimize more serious entrapment later if war broke out, as appeared likely in December 1978.

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<sup>550</sup> Article XVII, Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, Gibler, pp. 369-371.

<sup>551</sup> Article XX, Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, Gibler, pp. 369-371.

### ***Intrinsic Interests***

The United States had no obvious intrinsic interests at stake in the Beagle Channel dispute.

### ***Interdependent Commitments***

There is no evidence that US leaders considered the effect that their intervention or non-intervention in the Beagle Channel would have on other alliance commitments.

### ***Shared Adversaries***

The United States had defensive security arrangements, if not true security guarantees, with both Chile and Argentina. There was no treaty-based reason why Washington should have supported one state as opposed to the other in 1978. Before the Beagle Channel dispute was fully resolved in 1984-85, however, the United States might have had reason to favor Chile's claims over Argentina's. During the 1982 Falklands War, the United States remained officially neutral, but in fact supported the United Kingdom in its claims against Argentina. Washington provided London with extensive intelligence assistance and feared that the Soviets would intervene on behalf of Buenos Aires.<sup>552</sup> Chile also supported the United Kingdom's claims to the Falklands/Malvinas, and the dispute between the UK and Argentina over the islands was already ongoing at the time of the Beagle Channel crisis. Based on these alignments, one could argue that the United States

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<sup>552</sup> "Reagan on the Falklands/Malvinas: "Give [ ] Maggie Enough to Carry On...," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 374, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB374/>.

shared with Chile a rival in Argentina. Nonetheless, it did not have a history of outright animosity with either country, and did not support either side.

### **Analysis: Alliance and Crisis Intervention**

Taiwan Straits and Beagle Channel cases provide substantial support for Hypothesis 2. In 1958, the United States intervened in the Taiwan Straits with naval aid, weapons shipments, and later, public statements, and this intervention was linked to a clear fear of entrapment in a broader war on Taiwan's behalf. These entrapment fears were, in turn, connected to the fact that the US-ROC security guarantee was opaque in its commitment to the offshore islands, and the fact that the Eisenhower administration had not done much to clarify that ambiguity since 1955. Indeed, it had declined to clarify this commitment for the purposes of restraining Chiang and minimizing its own entrapment risk. Once the crisis was under way, however, the US clarified its commitment in the form of the Newport Declaration. Taiwan's relative weakness was also a key factor prompting swift US intervention. The unilateral nature of the alliance meant that if Washington did not enter the fray, the Nationalist position on Quemoy might not hold, inviting a broader attack on Taiwan in which the US would have had to provide defensive assistance.

The US case demonstrates little support for the alternative hypothesis, that Washington intervened based on intrinsic interests in the dispute. To the contrary, Eisenhower and his key advisors understood Quemoy and Matsu to have little strategic value, and their pressure on Chiang to abandon the islands once the crisis subsided laid this bare. And with regards to Hypothesis 1, US policymakers clearly saw themselves as sharing Taiwan's adversaries in both China and the Soviet Union during the crisis. Exclusively

shared rivals, which are one important factor in security guarantee formation, may have added to, or at least did not detract from the United States' decision to intervene.

One scholar of the Taiwan Straits Crisis has called Soviet policy a “mirror image” to that of the United States.<sup>553</sup> While the two nuclear patrons clearly took different approaches to their protégés, the logic of Soviet intervention also provides support for Hypothesis 2. First, the Soviet Union intervened only modestly in the crisis with public statements beginning in early September. Since 1958, Chinese analysts have often argued that this timing evinced a weakness of commitment on the part of their patron, because China had already signaled a willingness to return to negotiations on September 6.<sup>554</sup> This intervention pattern, however, may also be explained by clear Soviet entrapment fears, which peaked when Gromyko visited Beijing on September 5. After standing aloof from the crisis for nearly two weeks, the Foreign Minister was shocked to hear Mao talking of expanding the war against the United States, and suggesting that the Soviet Union make nuclear preparations. The Soviets may have decided to take a more muscular public stance not because the worst of the crisis had passed, as some Chinese allege, but because Beijing appeared to take such a sanguine view on the potential for escalation to catastrophic levels. Soviet fears, however, appear to have been linked to the prospect of entrapment at the highest levels of escalation—a nuclear war. Unlike their American counterparts, they did not appear to be preoccupied with the day-to-day conventional conflict in the Straits.

These nuclear entrapment fears were, in turn, clearly linked to the nature of the Sino-Soviet treaty commitment. All of Moscow's statements, whether public or in the form

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<sup>553</sup> Howe, p. 222.

<sup>554</sup> Halperin and Tsou, pp. 290-291; Chang, p. 192.

of correspondence, reiterated the Soviets' defensive commitment to China, and clearly aimed to dissuade a US attack on the mainland, but were silent on the question of the offshore islands themselves. This left Eisenhower and his advisors guessing about whether Beijing had Moscow's backing in the assault, or whether Khrushchev was trying to restrain Mao.

Soviet entrapment concerns were, however, circumscribed by the fact that Mao used the 1958 crisis to change the asymmetry in the USSR-PRC security relationship. In addition to pursuing independent economic and military policies, he had expressly decreed that the Soviet Union could not intervene in Chinese foreign policy without permission, and had rejected several forms of Soviet military support shortly before the crisis. Not only did he not consult with Khrushchev before launching the attack, but Chinese officials assured the Soviets on multiple occasions that they would bear the burdens of a major war if one occurred. Moreover, they actually rejected two offers of direct Soviet military assistance. Soviet intervention in the 1958 crisis was therefore relatively minimal because the Chinese expressly promised to bear the brunt of a wider conventional war, and Moscow's attempts at more comprehensive military assistance were spurned. As in the US-ROC case, the treaty commitment was ambiguous on the status of Quemoy and Matsu, but Mao was insistent that he would not accept asymmetric alliance aid. Soviet leaders clearly did not, however, see any intrinsic interest in the offshore islands, but this was not articulated to China or the United States until the crisis had passed.

The Soviet intervention decision was also informed by the factors identified in Hypothesis 1. Firmly committed to achieving some form of détente with the United States, Khrushchev was not eager to see his "Peaceful Coexistence" campaign sunk by Mao's

Offshore Islands bombardment, and did not want to take on the United States as an adversary. In addition to Mao's own resistance to the Soviet unilateral provision of aid, Moscow and Beijing increasingly did not share adversaries, and this, in turn affected Moscow's decision making in 1958.

The United States' non-intervention in the Beagle Channel dispute also provides support for Hypothesis 2. Although it cannot be proven that its inaction was solely attributable to the fact that the Rio Pact was not a security guarantee, the United States evinced no concern whatsoever that it would be drawn into conflict in Latin America as the crisis approached war. The fact that Washington did not have an open-ended, positive defense commitment to either country surely played a role in its ability to stand aloof. That it also did not have a true adversary in conflict may also have contributed to US non-intervention.

In all three cases examined, then, whether or not the patron state shared the client's adversaries may have shaped the patron's intervention incentives. Patron crisis behavior cannot be considered independently of the causes of security guarantee formation. We cannot conclude that security guarantee ambiguity and asymmetry are the sole causes of patron crisis intervention. Nonetheless, these cases have demonstrated that these factors did play a central role in explaining the origins of patron entrapment fears and great powers' involvement in disputes.

Indeed, ambiguous treaty commitments were a primary consideration for both Cold War superpowers in 1958. Each struggled to bound and signal its alliance commitment to contested territory. In both cases, this stemmed from a desire to restrain the client state and deter the challenger, reducing the risk of entanglement. For both the United States and

the Soviet Union, the ambiguous commitments that were best-suited to upholding general deterrence were not forceful enough once Beijing challenged Taipei's control of the Offshore Islands. Interestingly, as soon as the 1958 crisis began to subside, both Washington and Moscow backed away from commitments to the islands, stating clearly that neither had a legal obligation to defend them. For either superpower, however, this position would have been anathema during the crisis, when fears of escalation loomed large and more muscular intervention seemed necessary to support immediate deterrence. Interestingly, when the Beijing once again built up forces opposite Quemoy in June 1962, President John F. Kennedy, once a vocal critique of Eisenhower's Straits policy, invoked the Formosa Resolution to suggest the possibility of US intervention.<sup>555</sup> There is little evidence to be found that patron intervention patterns can be explained by intrinsic interests or domino logics, however.

Beyond the hypothesis examined here, the Taiwan Straits cases also shed light on the role that power asymmetries may play in security guarantees and crisis involvement. The Soviet entrapment fears were linked to the possibility of nuclear war, whereas the United States' concerns also included any escalation of the conventional conflict. This was because Moscow had expressly been told by Beijing that it would absorb the costs of conflict, and its efforts to provide conventional military aid had been rejected. Mao's efforts to shift the Sino-Soviet alliance from a traditional, asymmetric guarantee to something more closely resembling a relationship of equals meant that he would not accept direct conventional military aid from Moscow. Mao desired a great degree of conventional independence, but still hoped for a nuclear guarantee from his patron. The Soviet risk of

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<sup>555</sup> Howe, p. 282.

entanglement was therefore lower than the United States' with respect to Taiwan, and their overt intervention concomitantly measured.

Mao's rejection of alliance asymmetry, and the more limited Soviet intervention in the Taiwan Straits in turn had far-reaching effects on the security pact. Because of their hesitation to promise nuclear aid, Mao felt he could no longer be confident in the Soviet nuclear umbrella, and sped along China's domestic nuclear weapons pursuits.<sup>556</sup> Beijing's exhortations to the Soviets to commit to a nuclear war over Quemoy were an important driver in Moscow's 1959 decision to rescind a promise to give the Chinese a model A-bomb.<sup>557</sup> The Sino-Soviet split was not completely assured by the 1958 crisis, but the ambiguity of the Soviet commitment, and Mao's determination to recalibrate their unilateral relationship certainly helped to precipitate the alliance's unraveling.

The Sino-Soviet case also highlights a counterintuitive point about the role of power asymmetries in alliance bargaining and entrapment. Prevailing alliance theories suggest that great powers should run little risk of entanglement in the crises of much weaker clients, but that more symmetric allies will face stronger entrapment incentives. The Taiwan Straits crisis demonstrated the opposite: The United States felt obligated to defend Chiang militarily because the possibility of his defeat loomed large; the Soviets made only broad public statements because their Chinese ally would not accept much more. With a more equal power relationship came less risk of immediate entrapment, but also far less control over allied crisis actions.

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<sup>556</sup> Zagoria, 194.

<sup>557</sup> Luthi, p. 104.



## **Conclusions**

Influential alliance theory has suggested that large powers extending unilateral and vague promises defensive aid to smaller ones should face little risk of entanglement in unwanted conflicts. My theory of security guarantees, however, points in a different direction: the ambiguous and unilateral nature of nuclear umbrella pacts creates a substantial risk of patron entrapment in client state crises. When security guarantee arrangements are more circumscribed, however, so too is a patron's intervention impetus. In a non-security guarantee the patron's intervention impetus may be all but obviated. These cases have provided strong support for my hypothesis.

These findings have some important implications. If security guarantee patrons seeks to reduce the risk of crisis entrapment they may attempt to temper the degree to which their security guarantee is ambiguous, or the degree to which it is unilateral. In the case of the former, this means constructing an alliance or revising an existing pact to specify the conditions under which client states can expect aid, and specifying only those conditions in which the patron sees a vested national interest. The obvious consequence of this, however, may be that it allows adversaries to use so-called "salami tactics" to harass the client in ways that do not activate the patron's commitment. If this is unacceptable to the allies, an alternative is for patron and client to reduce among themselves ambiguities over the conditions under which the patron will intervene. This may be accomplished by developing within an alliance specific guidelines for patron and clients' expectations in crisis. If allies have specific plans for how to deal with the failure of general deterrence, patron intervention at high levels may be less necessary.

The second way patrons may mitigate their risk of crisis entrapment is by ensuring that their alliances are not completely unilateral. This means allowing and perhaps even encouraging the development of client state military capabilities that allow them to credibly defend themselves in more ancillary skirmishes and at lower levels of escalation. If the client state is not at risk of being pummeled and becoming the victim of a more serious attack, the patron's impetus to intervene at the crisis stage should be substantially less. This, however, creates the risk that the client state will use its capabilities independently and in ways that are inimical to the patron's interest. It may not only be able to defend itself from minor attack, but behave more aggressively than it otherwise might have, a classic moral hazard problem.

It is worth recalling, however, that while the vague and unilateral nature of security guarantees may increase the risk that patrons become entangled in crises, these same qualities may deter numerous crises and wars from breaking out at all, and lower-level crises from escalating. Indeed, nuclear patrons grant security guarantees for precisely this purpose, and as this chapter has demonstrated, lower-level intervention may prevent higher-level entrapment later on. Because we cannot observe those cases in which security guarantees have successfully deterred challenges, it is difficult to know how the costs of potential lower-level entrapment stack up against the deterrence benefits of these uncommon alliances. The absence of cases of full-blown attacks on client states' territorial integrity and sovereignty suggests that these patron intervention costs may be worth paying.

Any strategy for mitigating the risk of patron crisis entrapment also raises an additional conundrum: How can the patron reduce its own exposure to unwanted conflict

without provoking acute abandonment anxiety in its client? This is the subject of the next chapter.

**CHAPTER 5-ABANDONMENT IN ABSOLUTE ALLIANCES:  
INFORMATION ASYMMETRY AND DETERRENCE CONSULTATION**

“NATO is an alliance, not a psychiatrist’s couch!”  
Secretary Of State Dean Acheson<sup>558</sup>

“Skilled practice in the art of consultation is important to a big power. It helps to take the  
sting out of its bigness.”  
-Senator Henry M. Jackson<sup>559</sup>

**Introduction**

The history of alliance management in NATO can be told as a series of debates among the allies about the requirements of extended deterrence. These anxieties are by no means confined to the North Atlantic Alliance. For as long as they have existed, nuclear client states have worried that their patrons will not follow through on their vaguely-defined alliance promises. Beyond worrying that their patrons may stand aloof in the case of war, nuclear client states have persistently despaired that their patrons’ security guarantees are insufficient to prevent war from breaking out in the first place. *Allies’ concern that partners will fail to make good on their alliance promises—their fear of abandonment—is the second half of the alliance security dilemma.* In Chapters 2 and 3 of this project, I demonstrated that the unilateral and ambiguous nature of nuclear security guarantees means that the threat conditions of their formation are different from those associated with other defense pacts. In Chapter 4, I hypothesized that these same features had implications for the way that entrapment risks presented themselves in so-called

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<sup>558</sup> Quoted in Fareed Zakaria, “Obama’s Disciplined Leadership is Right for Today,” *Washington Post*, May 29, 2014. As told to the author by Stanley Hoffman.

<sup>559</sup> Henry M. Jackson, “The Atlantic Alliance: Unfinished Business,” in Henry M. Jackson, ed. *The Atlantic Alliance: Jackson Subcommittee Hearings and Findings* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 45.

umbrella alliances. In this chapter, I argue that another consequence of the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantees is that fears of abandonment also manifest differently in these alliances. I hypothesize, however, that because of the significant information deficits that plague security guarantees, these client abandonment fears may be managed by patron and client using some counterintuitive means.

Allies are generally said to abandon an alliance partner if they formally abrogate the alliance treaty, fail to support the ally when the agreement's *casus foederis* arises, or decline to back a partner in a dispute with an adversary.<sup>560</sup> A central challenge of any alliance is managing partners' fears that these events will occur, and the intensity of a given ally's abandonment fears has two components. The first is the subjective probability that its partner will defect. The second is the cost incurred by the client if it does.<sup>561</sup> The most common way a state can respond to its partner's abandonment fears is by increasing its alliance commitment to bolster perceptions of loyalty. This may increase the fearful ally's expected benefit from the alliance, and reduce its temptation to defect. Increased support, however, also increases the risk that one will be entrapped by the anxious partner later.<sup>562</sup>

As I will discuss shortly, the ambiguous and unilateral nature of nuclear guarantees gives client states significant reasons to fear abandonment by a patron. But these same alliance features mean that nuclear patrons have some unique tools at their disposal for combatting these anxieties. Prominent alliance theories suggest that allies' abandonment fears can be addressed when one partner increases its commitment to the other. I argue, however, that in some cases, security guarantees' anomalous features mean that patrons

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<sup>560</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 182.

<sup>561</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, p. 181.

<sup>562</sup> Snyder, *Alliance Politics*, pp. 181-183.

may attempt to address client abandonment fears without actually augmenting alliance aid. Instead, because of the information deficits that plague these pacts, patrons can mitigate their client's fears by revealing information about policies and strategies that are already in place using deterrence consultation mechanisms.

This chapter investigates the relationship between client fears of abandonment and deterrence-related institutions, and aims to explain why deterrence consultation mechanisms form, treating them as a dependent variable. I begin this chapter with a theoretical discussion of abandonment in nuclear security guarantees. I present one hypothesis on why patrons agree to nuclear consultation arrangements with their clients, as well as an alternative hypothesis and discuss case selection. I then move on to test this hypothesis on two primary case studies: the formation of United States' nuclear consultation arrangements in NATO, and in the US-Japan alliance. I also briefly examine the role of consultation in the US-Thailand alliance, to explore whether deterrence consultations are used to combat client abandonment fears in a non-security guarantee defense pact. I analyze the evidence from all three cases, finding strong support for my hypothesis and conclude.

### **Abandonment in Absolute Alliances**

Nuclear security guarantee clients may experience peacetime fears of abandonment that are unique in both degree and kind. As is the case in many defense pacts, nuclear client states may fear that their patrons will fail to intervene militarily on their behalf if they are victims of attack. This abandonment fear may be unusually severe in nuclear umbrella alliances, however: If a patron were to use nuclear weapons on behalf of a client state against a similarly-capable adversary, it would invite devastating retaliation on its own

homeland. This means that such a pledge is of dubious credibility, with credibility defined as incentive-compatibility.<sup>563</sup>

Beyond this, nuclear clients may experience persistent abandonment anxieties that are different in kind from those experienced by other allies. This is because the primary goal of a security guarantee is deterrence and the prospect of war is devastating: Client states accept unilateral patron pledges because they hope never to be attacked at all. Unlike other pacts, in which allies expect defensive aid if the treaty's *casus foederis* is met, client states hope for more than patron support in wartime. They must believe that, through the security guarantee, their patron is taking all necessary steps to prevent them from being the victim of aggression in the first place.

Because extended deterrence commitments are both ambiguous and unilateral, however, clients have neither a good a priori reason to believe that their deterrence needs will be met, nor the ability to meet them themselves if they are not. Clients do not possess the primary instruments of existential deterrence—nuclear weapons— and do not hold specific commitments from the patron that explain the conditions under which they will intervene. Nuclear security guarantee clients should therefore be especially hard to assure.

The costs to a patron of failing to assuage client states' abandonment fears may also be different from those that allies face in other types of defense pacts. Alliance patrons generally worry that their partners may defect and seek out other partners. Security guarantee patrons, however, must also worry that their clients will acquire the strategies and capabilities necessary to defend themselves, be those in the form of conventional

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<sup>563</sup> For good definitions and explanations of credibility and costly signaling, see: Robert F. Trager, "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2, May 2010, pp. 348-350.

military power or independent nuclear weapons capabilities. If this occurs, it may result in significantly curtailed patron influence over the client, diminishing the patron's power projection capabilities. Although a nuclear patron is not itself particularly dependent on its client for security support, its interests as a major power may nonetheless be seriously damaged by a client's anxiety-induced defection. The nature of extended deterrence relationships leaves client states persistently anxious about the patron's intentions to defend them. Patrons, in turn, must be reasonably attentive to their client's abandonment fears to keep these potentially precarious relationships intact.

In a security guarantees, however, allies also have significant common interests--namely, the client state's enduring political sovereignty and territorial integrity. The patron-client relationship may seem to be represented as an assurance game, also known as a Stag Hunt. In an assurance game, players with overlapping interests may reach two different equilibria. The first results from mutual defection—the condition that would obtain if client fears of patron abandonment caused it to seek alternative alliances or guarantee its own security, impoverishing patron influence. The second is a Pareto-superior outcome that may be reached through mutual alliance cooperation and a continued guarantee.<sup>564</sup>

*Figure 15-Assurance Game (Stag Hunt)*

	Cooperate	Defect
Cooperate	[4,4]*	[1,3]
Defect	[3,1]	[2,2]*

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<sup>564</sup> Lisa L. Martin, "Interests, Power, and Multilateralism," *International Organization* Vol. 46 No. 04 (1992), pp. 765-792.



Prominent institutional theories have argued that where Stag Hunt-like conditions prevail, allies form institutions to achieve a mutually best outcome.<sup>565</sup> We know that security guarantees contain broad, vague, long-lasting commitments that aim first and foremost to prevent conflict, but give little indication that they will actually do so. Alliance institutions may improve coordination and lower transaction costs. Defense institutions may also make security guarantees more credible in the eyes of allies and adversaries alike if they result in patron commitments that otherwise would have been absent, such as the forward deployment of trip-wire troops.

### **Hypothesis 3: Deterrence Consultation in Security Guarantees**

Contrary to expectations that assurance can be achieved using institutions for mutual policy adjustment, I posit that because of the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantees, deterrence-related consultations need not actually induce real cooperation between the allies. Rather, because client states have so little a priori information about how their patrons are providing for their security, deterrence institutions can address abandonment fears by giving patrons a vehicle through which to unilaterally communicate existing strategies and policies. I hypothesize that nuclear patrons form deterrence consultation mechanisms to assuage client abandonment fears through unidirectional information, and with the aim of keeping the guarantee unilateral and ambiguous.

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<sup>565</sup> Helga Haftendorn, Robert Keohane, and Celeste Wallander, eds. *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 6-7.

**H3:** *Patrons form nuclear consultation mechanisms to increase unilateral information sharing.*

The most obvious alternative explanation is that patrons respond to client abandonment fears in line with existing theories. Namely, patrons may use institutions to increase their commitment to the alliance by increasing burden sharing and lowering transaction costs, thereby changing the unilateral and ambiguous nature of the guarantee.<sup>566</sup> By engaging in security cooperation, defined as mutual policy adjustment, patron and client can make more binding commitments to one another and policy coordination may allow alliance partners to capture greater gains than would have been possible if the patron alone provided the guarantee.<sup>567</sup> Deterrence institutions may form when client abandonment fears give allies a common interest in developing cooperative strategies to cope with threats.<sup>568</sup> Patrons may be interested in forming nuclear consultation mechanisms because they lower the transaction costs entailed in confronting a common adversary, allowing allies to develop economies of scale in their coordinated strategies and policies.<sup>569</sup> If patron states make their commitments more binding, this may, in turn, also make the guarantee more credible in the eyes of allies and adversaries.<sup>570</sup>

**H3A:** *Patrons form nuclear consultation mechanisms to increase alliance cooperation.*

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<sup>566</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 31.

<sup>567</sup> Keohane, *After Hegemony*, p. 51.

<sup>568</sup> Haftendorn et. al., p. 3

<sup>569</sup> Haftendorn et. al., p. 30

<sup>570</sup> Robert F. Trager, *Diplomacy in Anarchy: The Construction and Consequences of Perceptions of Intentions*, Book Manuscript, 2012.

The primary and alternative hypothesis each beget some observable implications. H3 and H3A provide different explanations for what patrons hope to achieve with the establishment of deterrence-related institutions. If H3 is born out, evidence should reveal that patrons begin nuclear consultation to assuage client abandonment fears by providing those states with information about the policies and strategies they are already pursuing, but with no intention of making those any less unilateral. If H3A is born out, on the other hand, patrons should begin deterrence consultation because they hope to increase allied cooperation to facilitate burden sharing and economies of scale. More cooperation may be desirable because it makes a vague, one-sided alliance “stickier.” Cooperation may entail greater contributions by the client state to the alliance, or may entail some policy or strategy adjustment by the patron to meet perceived client needs.

*Figure 16- Hypothesis 3*



*Figure 17- Hypothesis 3A*



### **Case Selection**

Because I hope to locate in the historical record the origins of deterrence consultation mechanisms, I rely on qualitative case studies and use process tracing and the

comparative method. I select two security guarantees in which nuclear consultation mechanisms have formed. The first is NATO in the 1960s, and the second is the US-Japan alliance in 2010. Examining the motivations at work in both the NATO and Japan cases allows me to make broader generalizations about deterrence consultation than would be possible if only one case was analyzed. If patrons form nuclear consultations for similar reasons despite the regional, temporal, and structural differences in these alliances, this allows for stronger inferences. I also include a short case study on the US-Thailand alliance—an alliance that was formerly a security guarantee, and was transformed into a non-security guarantee defense pact. Including the US-Thailand case provides variation on the dependent variable and allows me to make inferences about whether or not consultation mechanisms are, indeed, a product of the ambiguous and unilateral nature of security guarantees as posited here, as opposed to being attributable to factors that are prevalent in other types of defense pacts.

Within the US-NATO and US-Japan case studies, I begin by presenting a simple summary of the facts leading up to patron decision to form a nuclear consultation mechanism with its client(s), and describe how the deterrence institution functioned once it was formed. I assess the degree to which the United States was motivated by a desire to provide allies with information unilaterally, and whether or not the deterrence institution remained a unilateral one once it was in place (H3). I also evaluate whether nuclear consultations were formed to encourage alliance cooperation and mutual policy adjustment (H3A). I briefly examine the US-Thailand case, to contrast these security guarantee dynamics with a non-security guarantee defense pact. I analyze the evidence

from all three cases, finding strong support for H3 and less for the alternative, and conclude.

### **Nuclear Planning in NATO**

From NATO's inception, European client states have had limited information about the form and function of the United States' nuclear umbrella in peace and wartime, and how it related to its broader alliance strategy. This was due in no small part to the 1946 Atomic Energy Act, also known as the McMahon Act, which prevented the United States from sharing with other countries information relating to nuclear weapons and their development.<sup>571</sup> The prohibition included a ban on discussions of how nuclear weapons might be used militarily, including with allies. This legislation was accompanied by a general policy of "nuclear exclusion"—the strong desire to restrict any discussion of nuclear strategy or technology out of a desire to keep other powers, including allies, from developing nuclear weapons.<sup>572</sup>

Although it had extended its umbrella to the alliance since its inception, in 1954 the United States first deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Europe as part of its guarantee to NATO. The alliance would no longer rely solely on the promise of nuclear aid from US bombers, and NATO countries could host nuclear weapons. This led to the policy of "nuclear sharing" in NATO, whereby some host countries owned the delivery vehicles while the United States owned and retained control over the NATO-dedicated warheads. These nuclear arrangements were governed through secret bilateral agreements between the

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<sup>571</sup> Hans M. Kristensen, "The Neither Confirm Nor Deny Policy: Nuclear Diplomacy at Work," Working Paper, Nuclear Information Project, February 2006, p 3.

<sup>572</sup> Harold L. Nieburg, *Nuclear Secrecy and Foreign Policy* (Washington: Public Affairs, 1964).

United States and the hosting ally.<sup>573</sup> “Shared” weapons only constituted a small fraction of US nuclear weapons in Europe. Host countries could theoretically veto a US decision to use a delivery vehicle based on their soil, but they had no say over US nuclear use decisions more broadly.

The deployment of nonstrategic (so-called tactical) US weapons for battlefield purposes changed the strategic posture of NATO.<sup>574</sup> It also raised for the allies a set of questions that would be debated throughout the Cold War: How and under what conditions might nonstrategic weapons be used in Europe, and what was their relationship to the United States’ strategic arsenal? The United States retained full custody and decision-making power over its NATO-dedicated weapons, but possibility of a limited nuclear war in Europe, or a war in which US-based nuclear weapons did not immediately become involved, made European allies hungry for more information about theater nuclear operations and strategy.

Following the NATO nuclear deployments, the United States amended the Atomic Energy Act in 1954 to allow the Department of Defense to discuss with NATO allies some nuclear information necessary develop of war plans, test capabilities, and train personnel.<sup>575</sup> These weapons were part of the “Overall Strategic Concept for the NATO Area,” known as MC 14/2, the implementation of Massive Retaliation in Europe. The introduction of these weapons and the secretive nature of the bilateral hosting agreements underscored to the allies the fact that central components of NATO’s defense strategy lay

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<sup>573</sup> Hans M. Kristensen, “US Nuclear Weapons in Europe: A Review of Post-Cold War Policy, Force Levels, and War Planning,” Natural Resources Defense Council, February 2005, pp. 12-13.

<sup>574</sup> Paul Buteux, *The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in NATO 1965-1980*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>575</sup> Kristensen, “The Neither Confirm Nor Deny Policy,” p. 4.

outside of any existing institutional framework that would allow them to understand their role.<sup>576</sup>

NATO clients' lack of nuclear-related information was exacerbated by prevailing strategies and policies in the 1950s. Eisenhower's Massive Retaliation strategy threatened an overwhelming US nuclear response to aggression against its allies, but NATO partners began to question its credibility in the face of growing Soviet capabilities, particularly intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).<sup>577</sup> Allies' anxiety increased after 1961, when the Kennedy Administration sought to revise Massive Retaliation in favor of a strategy of Flexible Response, which put greater emphasis on the role of conventional forces. The Kennedy revisions were an effort to address Massive Retaliation's "suicide or surrender" dilemma, but European allies feared that the increased emphasis on conventional responses was a US attempt to spare the homeland from nuclear war.<sup>578</sup> NATO allies were disturbed by the implication that conventional war was somehow preferable or more limited, and discussions of "thresholds" below which nuclear weapons would not be used seemed to ease the Soviet risk calculus in their eyes.<sup>579</sup>

European allies began to search for ways that they might exert some influence over the form and function of the US security guarantee, but consultation was not the immediate answer. The North Atlantic Treaty's only explicit commitment to consult came in the form of Article IV, which states: "The parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of

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<sup>576</sup> Buteux, p. 4.

<sup>577</sup> Buteux, p. 3.

<sup>578</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 276. For a competing argument see: Francis J. Gavin, "The Myth of Flexible Response: United States Strategy in Europe during the 1960s," *The International History Review* Vol. 23, No. 4 (2001), pp. 847-875.

<sup>579</sup> Freedman, p. 280-281.

any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any of the parties as threatened.”<sup>580</sup> NATO’s nuclear dilemmas did not constitute direct threats to the sovereignty or security of any state. Instead, allies first looked to assuage abandonment anxieties through physical proximity to the nuclear capability that backstopped their security, in the form of nuclear sharing.

Between 1959 and 1965, the United States entertained and rejected at least five proposals that would have provided NATO clients with some physical, multilateral control over NATO-dedicated nuclear weapons. Two proposals originated with Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) Lauris Norstad and conceived of ground-based stockpiles of medium-range weapons. These would have allowed for allied control over delivery vehicles, while nuclear warheads remained in US custody.<sup>581</sup> Two other proposals envisioned sea-based nuclear assets that would have been jointly operated by the US and its allies.<sup>582</sup> This included the proposal by Secretary of State Christian Herter, based on a report written by Robert Bowie, which is the most often-referenced Multilateral Force (MLF) scheme. Finally, the British also circulated a proposal for a sea-based Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF).<sup>583</sup>

All five MLF proposals were responses to allies’ doubts about the credibility of US guarantees and their desire for greater influence in policy concerning nuclear weapons. In none of the proposals, however, did the United States envision delegating to allies the decision to *use* nuclear weapons; the US President would have had the sole authority to

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<sup>580</sup> Harlan Cleveland, *NATO: The Transatlantic Bargain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 13; The North Atlantic Treaty, Article IV, April 4, 1949.

<sup>581</sup> Buteux, p. 16.

<sup>582</sup> Buteux, p. 17; 28.

<sup>583</sup> Buteux, p. 30.



order their release. The Kennedy Administration was skeptical of all nuclear sharing proposals, however, because it averred that a credible nuclear threat required an increase, not a decrease, in centralized control, and believed that the suggestion of allied veto power would erode the guarantee.<sup>584</sup> It continued to publicly entertain the proposals until 1965, however, with the hope of convincing the French to eschew their nascent nuclear arsenal and assuaging West Germany's desire for some access to the nuclear option. The possibility of these allies moving towards nuclear self-reliance was of paramount concern.<sup>585</sup>

As early as 1962, however, the Kennedy Administration began to advocate for nuclear consultations with NATO allies. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara pursued this approach in 1961 and 1962 through NATO briefings to allies. These covered relative US and Soviet force levels and US strategic concepts and contained more information on nuclear matters than the allies had ever received before. In his 1962 speech at NATO's ministerial meetings in Athens, McNamara called for the establishment of a NATO Nuclear Committee.<sup>586</sup> NATO allies were enthusiastic, but the momentum behind McNamara's initial efforts dissipated because there was no standing channel through which to regularly communicate sensitive information.<sup>587</sup>

By 1965, it was clear that none of the MLF proposals would be feasible or desirable, and McNamara revived his consultation initiative with a proposal for a NATO "Select Committee" of several allied defense ministers. The McNamara Committee, as it came to be

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<sup>584</sup> Buteux, p. 20.

<sup>585</sup> Jackson, p. 22.

<sup>586</sup> J. Michael Legge, "Theater Nuclear Weapons and the NATO Strategy of Flexible Response," (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1983), p 14; Buteux, p. 10.

<sup>587</sup> Buteux, p. 22.

known, would look for ways to augment the role of allies in planning for the possible use of nuclear weapons.<sup>588</sup> The McNamara consultation proposal was not advertised as a direct substitute for the nearly moribund MLF due to continued German interest in the latter, although it was widely understood to be one.

In November 1965, a nuclear working group was established and tasked with examining the nuclear resources at the alliances' disposal, the circumstances under which these might be used, and with organizing future discussions.<sup>589</sup> The first meeting of the working group took place in February 1966, was chaired by McNamara, and included defense ministers from Britain, Germany, Italy, and Turkey (France was preparing to withdraw from the NATO military structure). The group was given a detailed briefing on the difficulties involved in American nuclear planning. McNamara stressed the size and expense of the US nuclear infrastructure, and his discussion of Russian nuclear forces was so revealing that it disturbed the US intelligence community.<sup>590</sup> The group met three more times in 1966 and focused mostly on NATO's tactical nuclear capabilities and the potential circumstances under which they might be used.<sup>591</sup> The nuclear working group also recommended the establishment of a seven-member Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), which would be its successor organization. The NPG was where all nuclear consultation discussions would take place, and its membership was capped at seven defense ministers to reflect the American desire for intimacy surrounding nuclear information.<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Buteux, p. 39.

<sup>589</sup> Buteux, p. 45.

<sup>590</sup> Buteux, p. 50.

<sup>591</sup> "McNamara Press Conference Transcript," April 3, 1967, p. 1.

<sup>592</sup> "McNamara Press Conference Transcript," April 3, 1967, p. 1; Buteux, p. 57.

At the first meeting of the NPG on April 6, 1967, McNamara led discussions on strategic nuclear forces, ballistic missile defense, and possibilities for US-Soviet arms control. Other defense ministers led discussions on nuclear technologies that their country had an interest in exploring.<sup>593</sup> During its first few years, the NPG focused almost entirely on the role of theater nuclear weapons in the newly adopted Flexible Response strategy, as MC 14/3 had been instituted the previous year. The group debated the objectives and consequences of tactical nuclear weapons use in Europe, and explored what, if any, veto power a NATO ally might have in a decision to use these weapons.<sup>594</sup> McNamara also began to invite individual countries to prepare short papers on separate aspects of the theater nuclear weapons problem. A 1968 paper jointly prepared by the NPG focused on the role of TNWs in signaling and escalation.<sup>595</sup> In 1969, the NPG approved a document entitled “Provisional Political Guidelines for the Initial Defensive Tactical Use of Nuclear Weapons by NATO,” which suggested how allies might be consulted on nuclear use in crisis.<sup>596</sup> These documents served to generate some allied consensus on thorny issues, although they did not tend to reach particularly firm conclusions.<sup>597</sup> The final Political Guidelines, for example, recommended “appropriate use,” “low yields,” and “low collateral damage,” with the political wartime goal of restoring the status quo ante (already NATO’s strategic end).<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> “Significance of the First Meeting of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group,” Statement Made by Secretary of Defense (McNamara) at News Conference, April 3, 1967; “Communique Issued Following the Meeting of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group, April 6-7, 1967.”

<sup>594</sup> Buteux, p. 89.

<sup>595</sup> Legge, pp. 18-19.

<sup>596</sup> “Research Memorandum No. REU-35,” June 11, 1968, *FRUS 1964-68*, Volume XIII, Western Europe, Document 311.

<sup>597</sup> Legge, pp. 20-21.

<sup>598</sup> Katherine McArdle Kelleher, “NATO Nuclear Operations,” in Ashton B. Carter, John D. Steinbruner, and Charles A. Zraket, eds. *Managing Nuclear Operations* (Washington: Brookings, 1987), p. 463.

In addition to creating institutions for nuclear consultation, the United States also implemented arrangements for some allied access to the NATO nuclear planning process. At Supreme Allied Headquarters, Europe (SHAPE), SACEUR oversaw plans for the use of NATO-dedicated nuclear weapons. Although SACEUR is always an American, SHAPE's nuclear planning staff included other NATO allies. SHAPE nuclear planning is functionally separate from the NPG but taken together they constituted the political and operational avenues through which NATO allies gained proximity to US nuclear policy and strategy.<sup>599</sup> These secured for them a more substantial role in nuclear-related discussions that they could have hoped to obtain through participation in a small, joint nuclear force.<sup>600</sup>

NATO allies warmly received the new NPG. Defense ministers found McNamara's early "seminars" to be a great improvement over the "kindergarten" briefings they usually received on NATO nuclear policy and strategy.<sup>601</sup> One original NPG participant remarked that this was the first time that the United States had "take its allies fully into its confidence."<sup>602</sup> Another told McNamara "there had been more progress in NATO nuclear matters in the past 12 months than in the preceding 17 years."<sup>603</sup> The British Prime Minister praised the NPG for its role in promoting alliance unity on controversial nuclear questions.<sup>604</sup>

As time went on the NPG was used to discuss a number of politically sensitive nuclear weapons issues. American officials used the NPG to marshal support for the

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<sup>599</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, July 22, 2014, Washington, DC.

<sup>600</sup> Buteux, p. 60.

<sup>601</sup> NPG participant's personnel interview with Paul Buteux, as quoted in Buteux, p. 50.

<sup>602</sup> Buteux p. 72, quoting *New York Herald Tribune*, 10 April 1967.

<sup>603</sup> McNamara, p. 1.

<sup>604</sup> "Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting," *FRUS 1969-1976*, Vol. XLI, Western Europe and NATO, Doc. 29.

Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, particularly from the Germans. They also used the body to prepare allies for the advent of US-Russia bilateral arms control. Through the NPG, American officials briefed NATO allies on technological developments in the nuclear field, including the neutron bomb and long-range theater nuclear forces.<sup>605</sup> They also used it as a forum for discussing and garnering support for broader strategy and policy, such as the implementation of the Nixon Doctrine and American strategy in Vietnam.<sup>606</sup>

In 1977, another nuclear-related NATO body was formed. The High Level Group (HLG) was originally a task force concerned with theater nuclear weapons, but it became the working body for NATO nuclear issues, and continues to report to the NPG at annual meetings.<sup>607</sup> The HLG is comprised of senior subject matter experts from NATO capitals. Its Assistant Secretary-level officials meet several times per year to discuss nuclear strategy, policy, force structure, and safety. Since 1979, the NPG has been open to all NATO members who wish to attend (with the exception of France), including those countries that do not host nuclear weapon or delivery vehicles.<sup>608</sup> The HLG works at NATO headquarters with a staff that interacts regularly, and it delivers its reports to the NPG. An American always chairs the HLG and its reports are delivered by US officials or occasionally by SHAPE representatives.<sup>609</sup>

Particularly during and since the end of the Cold War, the NPG and HLG have been used as fora for issues beyond the conditions and consequences of tactical nuclear weapons

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<sup>605</sup> Legge, pp. 23-30; Buteux, pp. 160-166.

<sup>606</sup> Buteux, p. 124.

<sup>607</sup> Legge, p. 34.

<sup>608</sup> David S. Yost, "Assurance and US Extended Deterrence in NATO," *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4, (2009), p. 744.

<sup>609</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, July 22, 2014.

use in Europe. As the United States prepared for the 1991 unilateral drawdown of nuclear weapons known as the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives, it used HLG meetings to determine that vast reductions in Europe would not cause the alliance excessive anxiety.<sup>610</sup> This and other drawdowns took the number of US nuclear weapons in Europe from approximately 8,000 for most of the Cold War to the 200 that remain in 2014.<sup>611</sup> The NPG and HLG have been used to brief European allies about the content of the United States' three Nuclear Posture Reviews, before changes in doctrine or force structure are actually announced.<sup>612</sup>

The NPG and HLG were also used to reach the decision, announced in 1999, that NATO would no longer maintain formal war plans for the use of nuclear weapons against any particular adversary. Since that date, SHAPE planners use an "Adaptive Planning" method in which they draw up nuclear war plans for particular contingencies and discard them at the end of each workday. SHAPE planning relies on maps labeled with fictitious country names, so as to avoid formal nuclear planning against Russia.<sup>613</sup>

The NPG and HLG continue to review and discuss the strategy and policy governing the remaining 200 US warheads, despite the markedly changed strategic environment. Countries that have joined NATO since the end of the Cold War may participate in NPG briefings but are prohibited from hosting nuclear weapons.<sup>614</sup> In debates over whether to withdraw the remaining B-61 warheads from NATO countries, several allies have expressed opposition on the basis of the institutional, rather than the military effects of

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<sup>610</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, July 22, 2014.

<sup>611</sup> Hans M. Kristensen, "US Nuclear Weapons in Europe: A Review of Post-Cold War Policy, Force Levels, and War Planning," Natural Resources Defense Council, February 2005, pp. 27-29.

<sup>612</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, July 22, 2014; Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, August 6, 2014.

<sup>613</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, August 6, 2014.

<sup>614</sup> This is a stipulation of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. Yost, p. 771.

such a decision. If Europe was guaranteed by the United States' strategic arsenal and no NATO-dedicated tactical weapons remained, there would be no reason for the NPG and HLG to persist as alliance institutions.<sup>615</sup> Nuclear consultation, devised to make acceptable to allies US nuclear force structure and strategy, may now be at least as important to allied assurance as the weapons themselves.

### ***Patron Motivation in Deterrence Consultation***

Despite legal and normative prohibitions on sharing nuclear-related information with allies, the United States encouraged the development of nuclear consultation and planning institutions in NATO to combat European allies' abandonment fears. The issue of NATO nuclear control became salient because of the forward deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, the emergence of a Soviet ICBM capability, and, most importantly, Flexible Response—a strategy that aimed to keep US guarantees credible, but engendered acute abandonment fears in NATO. Once France had left the NATO military structure in 1966, the United States was most concerned that West Germany would follow, pursuing its own nuclear weapons and military self-reliance.<sup>616</sup>

In a sharp departure from controversial MLF proposals, Robert McNamara maintained that allies' abandonment fears could be assuaged without any changes in physical nuclear custody. If allies could see nuclear policy and strategy as Washington did, top officials argued, they could be brought around to supporting Flexible Response. This

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<sup>615</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, August 6, 2014.

<sup>616</sup> Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 283-351.

would require that the veil of nuclear secrecy be lifted somewhat, and that allies be given more detailed information about weapons technical characteristics, deployments, and operations.<sup>617</sup> In his Athens speech, McNamara proposed a nuclear consultation committee so that allies might be better informed about the location of nuclear weapons in Europe and the rationale behind American strategic policies.

Once the Nuclear Working Group was formed, American officials agreed that a standing consultation committee would “meet [ ] the needs of our allies,” and “end discussion” of the MLF for the anxious Germans and do much to assuage other allies’ abandonment fears.<sup>618</sup> Because NATO nuclear discussions were no longer taboo, allies related “newly and fruitfully to one another,” on major issues of strategy and “a great deal of fresh air” circulated in the alliance.<sup>619</sup> As they prepared to establish the NPG, US policymakers knew that they would be restricted in what they were authorized to discuss with allies -- the scope of consultations would be circumscribed to NATO nuclear operations only. In the first-ever NPG meeting McNamara set precedent by beginning with a briefing on American strategic policy, and all subsequent NPG and HLG meetings followed this model. In short, US officials believed that European abandonment fears would be mollified by sharing information on US nuclear strategy and policy, although they did not intend to allow consultation to meaningfully change either one of these.

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<sup>617</sup> Buteux, p. 22.

<sup>618</sup> “Summary Notes of the 566th Meeting of the National Security Council,” *FRUS 1964-68*, Vol. XIII, Western Europe, Doc 226.

<sup>619</sup> “Telegram from the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Regional Organizations to the Department of State,” December 17, 1966, *FRUS 1964-68*, Vol. XIII, Western Europe, Doc. 232.



Once these institutions were in place, US officials continued to maintain that the primary purposes of the NPG and HLG were to encourage allies to develop a “common view” of the strategic landscape facing NATO. NPG Meetings were aimed at encouraging allies to draw conclusions about the optimal mix of nuclear and conventional forces in Europe, with the basic assumption that client states would arrive at the same outcomes that Washington had already ascertained.<sup>620</sup>

Harlan Cleveland, former US Ambassador to NATO, observed that the primary purpose of deterrence consultation was to allow smaller, weaker allies proximity and some participation in those decisions that determined their fates. “The problem for smaller nations is to be taken seriously on big questions,” he observed. “For, to maintain themselves as primary objects of their citizens loyalties, the politicians who govern each nation must seem to have free and easy access to the places where ‘destiny decisions’ are made.”<sup>621</sup> Cleveland elaborated: “We Americans need [consultation] to keep our ‘destiny decisions’ more or less in line with our friends’ notion of what their destinies should be.”<sup>622</sup> The purpose, however, was “to discuss together before acting separately.” Nuclear consultation was not to be considered a constraint on US action.<sup>623</sup>

McNamara likewise believed that nuclear consultation was a “learning process” intended to exhibit to allies the nature of nuclear threats and the means that might be used to engage them.<sup>624</sup> As Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird noted, “the NPG was of value to us in exposing non-nuclear members of NATO to the realities and complexities of nuclear

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<sup>620</sup> Legge, p. 14; Buteux, p. 60.

<sup>621</sup> Cleveland, p. 11.

<sup>622</sup> Cleveland, p. 11.

<sup>623</sup> Cleveland, p. 13.

<sup>624</sup> Buteux, p. 189; p. 69.

issues and nuclear strategy.”<sup>625</sup> Indeed, in developing and implementing his nuclear consultation vision, McNamara highlighted the contribution of the NPG to planning as opposed to decision-making, because he did not want to suggest that the alliance might move towards multilateral nuclear control in crisis or war. Other US officials who have worked closely with NATO nuclear bodies aver that the purpose of nuclear consultation is to give allies “a full understanding of the capabilities, the weapons systems, and the nuances and intricacies of the planning process, and a fair and clear understanding of the threat, so that if things went wrong, there was a context into which to place all of this.”<sup>626</sup>

Beyond this shared strategic foundation, however, the US was also clearly interested in building support for specific American policies. At the NPG’s inception, the cause in question was Flexible Response, but as already noted it served as the vehicle for allied acceptance of all manner of strategic changes, which were almost always unilateral US decisions.<sup>627</sup> By keeping allies informed of nuclear-related changes before they occur, Washington managed to secure “passive acceptance which does not lead to outright dissent.”<sup>628</sup> One scholar of NATO institutions has argued that the NPG restricts allies to auditing an essentially American debate over force structure and strategy.<sup>629</sup> US officials have noted, however, that nuclear consultation has its benefits for the United States. Over time, the NPG and HLG came to represent a highly knowledgeable group of officials who forced the United States to examine and re-examine the force structure and strategy

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<sup>625</sup> “Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Laird to President Nixon: ‘Future of NPG,’” Washington, November 9, 1971, *FRUS, 1969–1976*, Volume XLI, Western Europe and NATO, Doc. 74.

<sup>626</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014; Interview with former senior Pentagon official, August 6, 2014.

<sup>627</sup> Buteux, p. 69.

<sup>628</sup> Buteux, p. 194.

<sup>629</sup> Buteux, p. 191.

surrounding some of its tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>630</sup> Others have called NPG proceedings “formal alliance endorsement of American strategic policy.”<sup>631</sup> In short, there is ample evidence that US officials sought to assuage NATO abandonment anxieties by sharing information about unilateral US policies and strategies.

### ***Unilateral Information Provision in Practice***

There is little evidence to suggest that the United States used deterrence institutions to change the unilateral or ambiguous nature of its guarantee to NATO once they were in place. Consider first the circumstances in which consultation was designed to operate. The NPG was devised as a mechanism for routine, ongoing dialogue. It was never designed to operate in crisis. In the event that actual nuclear use was being contemplated, it is wholly unclear whether and how allies would be consulted, as will be discussed in detail shortly. Instead, the purpose was to elucidate for allies those factors that might lead to a US decision to use nuclear weapons and to build confidence among them that a credible posture exists.<sup>632</sup> Due to the Atomic Energy Act and a political inclination towards “nuclear exclusion,” however, the United States has consistently kept tight control on the flow of information through the NPG and HLG, making it difficult for allies to challenge American positions or undertake independent initiatives. Consultation has always been circumscribed by available information.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>630</sup> Cleveland, p. 28.

<sup>631</sup> Buteux, p. 188.

<sup>632</sup> Buteux, p. 204.

<sup>633</sup> Buteux, 199-200.

Moreover, American personnel and US strategy have always dominated the joint planning that takes place at SHAPE headquarters. During the Cold War, military authorities in SHAPE who were responsible for NATO's General Strike Plan took primary guidance from Washington, because the GSP was linked to the SIOP. The SIOP was, in turn, developed by the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff (JSTPS), dominated by Strategic Air Command (SAC), and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. American officers, who are especially sensitive to US policy and strategy, also conduct the bulk of NATO planning. SHAPE planners remain subordinate to Strategic Command (STRATCOM) and the JCS today.<sup>634</sup>

Consultation is further circumscribed by the fact that it is limited to the NATO nuclear arsenal only. For the 1960-1980 period, the United States dedicated approximately 8,000 operational nuclear weapons for NATO use. Of that 8,000, however, approximately 6,000 were for US use only, while approximately 2,000 were under some type of NATO sharing arrangement and part of the Quick Reaction Alert Force (QRA).<sup>635</sup> The heart of the American nuclear posture in Europe was therefore always in exclusively American hands. This should also be compared to the total size of the US arsenal, which for many years hovered around 30,000 reentry vehicles. Consultation through the NPG and HLG and allied planning at SHAPE is concerned with shared NATO weapons only, a tiny fraction of the broader US arsenal. And while a hosting ally could theoretically veto the use of a nuclear weapon mated with a delivery vehicle on its soil, Washington retains the option of releasing another US weapon for the same purpose.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>634</sup> Kelleher, "NATO Nuclear Operations," p. 464.

<sup>635</sup> Kelleher, "NATO Nuclear Operations," p. 447.

<sup>636</sup> Kelleher, "NATO Nuclear Operations," p. 463.

Consultation, joint planning, and even nuclear sharing therefore do not circumscribe independent US action, as the bulk of American forces are subject to none of these and all NATO nuclear mechanisms are subordinated to US control.<sup>637</sup> Indeed, NATO-dedicated theater nuclear weapons became the NPG’s chief focus because the allies both appreciated their role in Flexible Response and recognized that they could never hope to affect American strategic weapons decisions from below. They also understood that the Americans retained the right to change their nuclear strategy at any time.<sup>638</sup> Changes in the US nuclear stockpile in Europe do not require consultation with or permission from those national authorities hosting the weapons.<sup>639</sup>

*Table 13- NATO-Dedicated Warheads and Warheads Subject to Consultation.* <sup>640</sup>

	NATO-Dedicated Warheads	Warheads Subject to Consultation	Total US Warheads in Arsenal
1960-1980	8,004	2,013	30,000
2014	200	200	2,130

Perhaps the greatest limitation on the role of allied nuclear consultation, however, is the fact that it in no way changes the US President’s unilateral war making authority. When McNamara first called for allied nuclear consultation in his 1962 Athens speech, he added the caveat that consultation in crisis would be “time and circumstances permitting”—a loophole that a former US Ambassador to NATO called “almost as wide as the commitment.”<sup>641</sup> This caveat has been applied to US nuclear consultation ever since, making

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<sup>637</sup> Freedman, p. 313.

<sup>638</sup> Buteux, p. 113.

<sup>639</sup> Kelleher, p. 453.

<sup>640</sup> Kelleher, “NATO Nuclear Operations,” p. 448; Hans M. Christensen and Robert S. Norris, “US Nuclear Forces 2014,” Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

<sup>641</sup> Cleveland, p. 16.

consultation a political factor to be considered rather than a true constraint.<sup>642</sup> In 1968, Germany pushed for special consultation weight to be given to the country on whose territory the weapons would be employed and to the country providing the delivery vehicle.<sup>643</sup> The United States agreed to honor this request in principle, but with the stipulation that the hosting country does not possess a national veto or in any way compromise the release authority of the United States.<sup>644</sup> Before the NPG was officially established, McNamara testified before the US Senate that NATO allies understood that the United States could not and would not delegate decision power over its use of nuclear weapons “to any other state or group of states.”<sup>645</sup>

As the NPG began, the President’s unilateral nuclear authority was not just of interest to US officials, but to the Soviet leadership as well. Following the first NPG, meeting, Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin sought assurances that the United State did not plan to “dilute the authority” of the President through consultation with allies. President Lyndon Johnson’s Special Assistant Walt Rostow assured him that the United States did not intend to do so, nor could it by law. Rostow assured Dobrynin that no NATO country had requested that Washington circumscribe or predelegate Presidential authority.<sup>646</sup>

One important way that the President’s unilateral decision authority was preserved was through the continued ambiguity of its guarantee. While the United States was

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<sup>642</sup> Buteux, p. 105.

<sup>643</sup> Legge, p. 22.

<sup>644</sup> Kelleher, “NATO Nuclear Operations,” p. 462; Buteux, p. 104.

<sup>645</sup> Robert S. McNamara, “The Alliance Agenda,” in Henry M. Jackson, ed., “The Atlantic Alliance: Jackson Subcommittee Hearing and Findings,” p. 269.

<sup>646</sup> “Telegram from the President's Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, in Texas-Washington, April 15, 1967, 11:09 a.m.,” *FRUS, 1964-1968*, Volume XI, Arms Control and Disarmament, Document 195.

perfectly willing to discuss potential uses and consequences of theater nuclear weapons, it was not willing to endorse firm guidelines or commit itself to any particular course of action in advance.<sup>647</sup> As Harlan Cleveland has argued of this consultation process: “Sovereign governments do not and cannot decide ahead of time how they will act or even whom they will consult; that depends on time and circumstance....The presumption of cooperation is not that strong.”<sup>648</sup>

In addition to passively preserving unilateral authority through ambiguous commitments, the United States has actively preserved it through the formal NATO channels for nuclear release authority. Bottom-up requests for nuclear release may come from NATO capitals or some commanders, and can be routed through the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) to the United States. NATO states can also place capital-to-capital nuclear release requests, but these too must be reported to the DPC.<sup>649</sup> The role of the DPC is to convey the views of concerned allies to the United States. Once a formal nuclear release has been approved by the United States, this decision must be passed down to NATO commanders as well as the North Atlantic Council itself. In formal NATO nuclear exercises, the bottom-up release of nuclear weapons has often taken two or three days from first release request to use.<sup>650</sup> The United States must therefore balance the political desirability of consultation with the need to avoid the addition of “inflexible or overly elaborate”

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<sup>647</sup> Buteux, p. 91.

<sup>648</sup> Cleveland, p. 63

<sup>649</sup> Authority to Order the Use of Nuclear Weapons, Prepared for the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the Committee on International Relations, by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, December 1, 1975, p. 7.

<sup>650</sup> Kelleher, p. 464

procedures to this chain of command.<sup>651</sup> The NPG/HLG play the role of ongoing peacetime body precisely because there existed a Cold War presumption that time and circumstances might not permit consultation in crisis.<sup>652</sup>

Sixty years after nuclear weapons were deployed in NATO these procedures remain in place. In its most recent declaration of its nuclear posture, NATO remains ambiguous on the circumstances under which forward-deployed nuclear weapons might be used. It also states that it remains the responsibility of NATO nuclear powers to determine how and when to threaten their use.<sup>653</sup> It continues to abide by a principle declared by McNamara in 1967: “Nuclear war is indivisible.”<sup>654</sup> In sum, the United States pursued nuclear consultation because it sought to assuage allies’ abandonment fears while also retaining ultimate control over its nuclear weapons and strategy. The intent of the NPG was to “mitigate” the impact of unilateral American power on its clients’ confidence in the commitment, but not actually to change it.<sup>655</sup>

### ***Consultation as Cooperation?***

There is relatively little evidence that the NATO nuclear consultation structures were founded to foster cooperation, defined as mutual policy adjustment. On a very broad level, the United States was interested in gaining allied support for its strategy of Flexible

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<sup>651</sup> “Authority to Order the Use of Nuclear Weapons,” Prepared for the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the Committee on International Relations, by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, December 1, 1975, p. 7.

<sup>652</sup> “Authority to Order the Use of Nuclear Weapons,” p. 8.

<sup>653</sup> NATO Deterrence and Defense Posture Review, May 20, 2012, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-193D7980-4A881D9C/natolive/official\\_texts\\_87597.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-193D7980-4A881D9C/natolive/official_texts_87597.htm?mode=pressrelease)

<sup>654</sup> Robert S. McNamara, “The Alliance Agenda,” p. 269.

<sup>655</sup> Buteux, p. 63.



Response. Flexible Response, in turn, sought to have the Europeans contribute more to conventional defense.<sup>656</sup> American officials also hoped (and found) that consultation would convince allies to forswear nuclear weapons of their own, while simultaneously centralizing all nuclear decision authority in Washington.<sup>657</sup> There is little to suggest, however, that the United States was interested in nuclear consultation because it expected to receive contingent conventional contributions from its allies in response. There is also no evidence that it expected to meaningfully adjust its own nuclear strategies and policies to assuage allied abandonment fears.

Much more than they intended to use consultation to induce cooperation across NATO military matters, McNamara and his colleagues thought the NPG would be useful in *isolating* nuclear weapons issues from other security issues. American officials thought that consultation would foster alliance cohesion precisely because it allowed NATO states to discuss a narrower range of nuclear issues and disentangle them from other thorny military matters.<sup>658</sup> While scholars and NATO practitioners often refer to a “Transatlantic Bargain,” whereby participating countries face tradeoffs between sovereignty and the resources they contribute to the alliance, the United States’ in no way intended to trade away any sovereignty when it decided to consult with allies to assuage their nuclear abandonment fears.<sup>659</sup>

There is also little evidence that the NPG was founded to augment the strength of the US guarantee to NATO, increasing for Washington the costs of backing down from its

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<sup>656</sup> Cleveland, p. 13.

<sup>657</sup> Freedman, p. 273.

<sup>658</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014; Buteux, p. 195.

<sup>659</sup> Harlan Cleveland, *NATO: The Transatlantic Bargain* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 12.

commitment. As has already been noted, no part of the nuclear consultation or planning process changed the US President's unilateral decision-making authority, or committed the United States to particular actions under particular circumstances. A premise for establishing the NPG was that neither of these things would be up for discussion. Furthermore, the fact that consultation never concerned more than a small fraction of US nuclear weapons also meant that it could no more restrain US action than it could enable it. Instead, consultation served the purpose of informing allies of those factors that would lead to a decision to use nuclear weapons, to build confidence among them that a credible US nuclear posture already existed, despite the fact that client states themselves could not determine how the guarantee would be implemented.<sup>660</sup>

Instead, nuclear consultation ensured client states' concerns would at least be heard, and created a vehicle that might allow these concerns to affect policy on the margins, even if this was far from guaranteed. Consultation could subtly transform the diplomatic context in which nuclear decisions were made by reducing their political sensitivity. Furthermore, the expectation that peacetime consultation would occur meant that the NPG and HLG became the fora for discussion US nuclear changes in progress. Whether it was Flexible Response, the debate over building the neutron bomb, or the decision to remove nuclear weapons from Europe as the Soviet Union collapsed, the existence of this institution meant that allies were likely to be informed of unilateral decisions earlier than they would have been otherwise.<sup>661</sup> Unlike in the 1960s, when Davey Crockett and Jupiter systems were withdrawn from Europe without any advanced notice to

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<sup>660</sup> Buteux, p. 204.

<sup>661</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014.

allies, the existence of a consultation institution reduced the likelihood that allies would be surprised, even if it did not foreclose it.<sup>662</sup>

Interestingly, both US officials and NATO allies believed that consultation should not compromise the unilateral nature of the guarantee if it was to remain credible.<sup>663</sup> If nuclear policy and planning had truly become multilateral, NATO would have faced many veto players in any nuclear use decision, making markedly less likely that it would respond using nuclear weapons and undermining its long-standing First Use doctrine.<sup>664</sup> Much as they wanted proximity to their patron's nuclear policies so that they might know that their security was, in fact, being provided for, NATO clients have consistently understood that limiting their patron's decision-making authority could compromise the whole enterprise. They also understood that continued ambiguity was in the alliance's interest. If the Soviets knew exactly under what conditions theater nuclear weapons or strategic weapons would be used, they could take provocative actions just below those thresholds.<sup>665</sup> It is actually curious that Ambassador Dobrynin was concerned that the NPG might compromise the US President's war making authority. If, in fact, the United States had opened up to multilateral nuclear decision-making, this should have advantaged the Soviets by making NATO nuclear use less likely, at least insofar as the logic held by the US and its allies is concerned.

Thus, without any intention of altering the unilateral or ambiguous character of NATO to increase cooperation or raise the costs of backing down in crisis or war, the United States established the NPG to assure allies. It sought to reveal to them enough

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<sup>662</sup> Buteux, p. 115.

<sup>663</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014.

<sup>664</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014.

<sup>665</sup> Buteux, p. 131.

nuclear-related information to allow them to believe that a functional US umbrella already existed, and that it could conceivably be used for their defense.

### **The Extended Deterrence Dialogues and the US-Japan Alliance**

The US-Japan alliance, signed in its original form in 1951, has existed for almost as long as NATO, but has involved no formal discussion of extended deterrence for much of its life. Several Japan-specific factors made the discussion of nuclear or deterrence-related issues a taboo subject within the alliance, even in periods when Tokyo feared abandonment by its patron. Only when Japan's leaders came to feel sufficiently anxious due to North Korea's nuclearization, China's rise, and major changes in US strategic policy did they demand and receive institutionalized assurance in the form of the Extended Deterrence Dialogues, which were founded in 2010.

As the only state to ever have had nuclear weapons used against, the Japanese have traditionally had a “nuclear allergy”—strong normative opposition to the presence or even discussion of nuclear weapons and related technology. Article 9 of the Japanese constitution underscored this robust aversion. Drafted with the help of its US occupiers, Article 9 renounces Japan's right to resort to war as an instrument of national policy, and has generally been interpreted to mean that Japan may only possess the military capabilities required for self-defense.<sup>666</sup> How exactly this is implemented has changed over time, but until June 2014, Article 9 was interpreted as prohibiting “collective self-defense”—that is, the use of military force to support an ally, guaranteed to all sovereign states by Article 51 of the UN Charter.

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<sup>666</sup> Richard Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 47.

Although the US-Japan alliance is termed a “Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security,” little about it was “mutual” before the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Unlike NATO, a true collective defense arrangement, or other US security guarantees in East Asia, American troops and personnel could not expect military aid from the Japanese if they became the victims of attack, and there was little interest in Japan in cooperative conventional defense planning. Although Article IV of the US Japan alliance provides for allied consultation relating to treaty implementation if Japan is threatened, Japan’s anti-militarist, nuclear-averse postwar foreign policy meant that this security guarantee was as unilateral as could be, and the nuclear component was rarely mentioned among the allies.<sup>667</sup>

Japan’s aversion to nuclear discussions only grew stronger during the height of the Cold War. In 1955, the Diet passed the Basic Atomic Energy Law, declaring that Japan would use atomic energy for peaceful purposes only.<sup>668</sup> Following the first Chinese nuclear test in 1964, Prime Minister Sato told his US counterparts that he was seriously considering an independent nuclear deterrent for Japan. Shortly thereafter, however, he announced Japan’s “Three Non-Nuclear Principles,” which were formalized by a 1971 Diet Resolution. The Principles state that Japan will not manufacture, possess or import nuclear weapons.<sup>669</sup> During the Cold War, this led Japan’s leaders to formally prohibit the transit of US nuclear weapons into its ports or through its territory.<sup>670</sup> It has since been revealed that a

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<sup>667</sup> “Japan-US Security Treaty, 1960,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>.

<sup>668</sup> Llewelyn Hughes, “Why Japan Will Not Go Nuclear (Yet): International and Domestic Constraints on the Nuclearization of Japan,” *International Security* Vol. 31, No. 4 (2007), p. 83.

<sup>669</sup> Hughes, p. 85.

<sup>670</sup> Kurt M. Campbell and Tsuyoshi Sunohara, “Japan: Thinking the Unthinkable,” in Kurt M. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn, and Mitchell B. Reiss eds., *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices*, (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 2004), p. 223.

clandestine agreement allowed the United States to bring weapons into Japan as was necessary to provide its client with a security umbrella, but this caveat in no way gave Japanese officials the ability to discuss the role of nuclear weapons in their security.<sup>671</sup>

Over time, the US-Japan pact has undergone some modest revisions to allow for conventional defense collaboration between the allies. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Tokyo grew anxious that its American ally was disengaging, following the 1964 Chinese nuclear test, President Richard Nixon's Guam Doctrine, and negotiations over the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese control. In 1976, the allies responded to this period of alliance anxiety by establishing a bilateral Security Consultative Committee, and drawing up US-Japan Defense Guidelines, which were the first-ever codification of any kind of cooperative military procedure between the allies.<sup>672</sup> Tokyo once again grew anxious that Washington was disengaging following the end of the Cold War. Following the US worldwide nuclear drawdown, the first North Korean nuclear crisis from 1993-1994, and a proposal to remove most US troops from East Asia, the US and Japan declared their intent to strengthen bilateral conventional cooperation with the 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto Doctrine.<sup>673</sup> In the 1997 Defense Guidelines that followed, the US and Japan provided for bilateral training and exercises, and Tokyo's leaders made some amendments to their interpretation of the ban on collective self-defense by promising some limited assistance to the United States in a

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<sup>671</sup>Akio Watanabe, ed., "Seminar: Okinawa Reversion—Its Long-Term Significance in US-Japan Relations, Past and Future," Commemorative Events for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reversion of Okinawa, p. 23; Personal Interview with former Pentagon Official, April 23, 2014.

<sup>672</sup>"Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation," November 27, 1978, Report by the Subcommittee for Defense Cooperation, <http://www.fas.org/news/japan/sisin1e.htm>.

<sup>673</sup>Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The US Japan Alliance: Past, Present and Future*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999), xi.

war on the Korean Peninsula or on behalf of Taiwan.<sup>674</sup> The 1997 Defense Guidelines laid the foundation for the US-Japan alliance to become a “normal” security guarantee.<sup>675</sup> But only after two major strategic changes in East Asia, and the perception that the United States was once again turning away from the region did Japanese officials insist that they receive more intimate knowledge of the US security umbrella.

North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile programs and China’s rapid rise and military modernization radically changed the way Japanese leaders perceived the regional threat environment, creating what many saw as the first “existential” postwar dangers the country had faced.<sup>676</sup> In 1998, North Korea tested long-range missiles that overflew Japan before crashing into the ocean—an incident Japanese officials have referred to as “our Sputnik.”<sup>677</sup> Eight years later, Pyongyang detonated its first nuclear device. In the wake of the test, President George W. Bush reaffirmed the US defense commitment to Japan and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made a statement pledging US defensive aid using “all available means” if Japan was the victim of attack. Japanese officials understood this to be an affirmation of the US nuclear commitment specifically, and were pleased when their American counterparts reiterated a willingness to use nuclear weapons on behalf of Japan at a May 2007 meeting of the Security Consultative Committee.<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation,” <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/security/guideline2.html>.

<sup>675</sup> Interview with Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official, February 3, 2014.

<sup>676</sup> Japan Seeks Assurances on Extended Deterrence,” April 18, 2007, Classified by Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks

<sup>677</sup> Interview with senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, February 3, 2014; Interview with senior National Security Council official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>678</sup> Interview with Senior Ministry of Defense official, February 5, 2014.

Despite these reaffirmations, officials in Tokyo began to request stronger deterrence commitments. By 2007, Defense and Foreign Affairs ministers were frustrated that Secretary Rice's "all available means" message had not been repeated publicly, or more consistently through other diplomatic channels.<sup>679</sup> For the first time, Japanese officials sought an explicit and regular declaration by the US that it intended to use nuclear weapons on its ally's behalf if it was attacked.<sup>680</sup> Japanese officials were also increasingly concerned that North Korean long-range missile developments would lead to "decoupling," whereby the United States would decline to use nuclear weapons on Japan's behalf for fear of devastating retaliation.<sup>681</sup> They insisted that they did not intend to pursue an independent nuclear capability, but nonetheless compared their strategic situation to 1964, when then-Prime Minister Sato had threatened to go nuclear.<sup>682</sup>

Officials in Tokyo also expressed consternation at Washington's demonstrated defense priorities. The Japanese were indignant when the United States eased sanctions against North Korea and later removed it from the State Sponsors of Terror list.<sup>683</sup> Japanese leaders feared that the United States had "lost focus" due to its engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, and had grown increasingly willing to accommodate Pyongyang because it was stretched thin militarily.<sup>684</sup> To their US counterparts, they cited testimony by then-

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<sup>679</sup> "Japan Seeks Assurances on Extended Deterrence," April 18, 2007, Classified by Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>680</sup> "Japan Seeks Assurances on Extended Deterrence," April 18, 2007, Classified by Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>681</sup> Roberts, p. 5.

<sup>682</sup> "Japan Seeks Assurances on Extended Deterrence," April 18, 2007, Classified by Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>683</sup> "Tokyo Scen setter for Deputy Secretary Steinberg," May 21, 2009, Classified by CDA James Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>684</sup> Interview with senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, February 5, 2014.



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Pace suggesting that deployments to Iraq had limited US ability to respond North Korean provocations.<sup>685</sup>

By 2008-2009 Japan was also growing increasingly concerned about China's rapid rise, military modernization, and lack of transparency.<sup>686</sup> China's defense overhaul emphasized power projection with the development of sophisticated naval, air, and missile capabilities, and Beijing was consistently posting double-digits defense expenditures each year.<sup>687</sup> China's investment in diversified delivery systems, including ICBMs, and its expanding nuclear arsenal provoked another wave of "decoupling" fears from the Japanese, which was exacerbated by Beijing's test of an anti-satellite weapon in 2007.<sup>688</sup> Officials in Tokyo also increasingly worried that their interest would fall victim to the "stability-instability" paradox: With an increasingly survivable second-strike nuclear capability, Beijing would feel free to pursue lower-level opportunism, amounting to "creeping expansion" at Tokyo's expense.<sup>689</sup> For years, the US security umbrella had meant that the US-Japan alliance would have dominated any regional conflict. The North Korean nuclear threat and China's emergence as a superpower meant that Japan had to contend with the prospect of a "security deficit" for the first time.<sup>690</sup>

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<sup>685</sup> "Japan Seeks Assurances on Extended Deterrence," April 18, 2007, Classified by Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>686</sup> "US, Japanese Officials Engage in Extended Deterrence Dialogue and Overview of 2009 Nuclear Posture Review," June 15, 2009, Classified by James P. Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>687</sup> Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2013 (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 2014), pp. 35-43.

<sup>688</sup> Brad Roberts, "Extended Deterrence and Strategic Stability in Northeast Asia," Working Paper, National Institute for Defense Studies Visiting Scholars Series, (Tokyo: NIDS, 2014), p. 7.

<sup>689</sup> Sugio Takahashi and Randall Schriver, "Managing Expectations in the US-Japan Alliance: US and Japanese Perspectives," Project 2049 Institute, 2013, p. 6.

<sup>690</sup> "PM Abe Assures PACOM of Full Support for Security Alliance," April 17, 2007, Classified by Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

In addition to their burgeoning nuclear abandonment fears, Japanese officials also began to assert a positive agenda: Beginning in 2007 they urged their US counterparts to initiate “bilateral planning activities” to convey “concrete” commitments to defend Japan against non-conventional threats.<sup>691</sup> Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told top US military officials that the Japanese “nuclear allergy” was on the wane, and that US conventional and nuclear extended deterrence was more important than it had ever been.<sup>692</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defense officials informed their US counterparts that they wanted to know more about “how US extended deterrence works in our alliance—we felt entitled to know that for the sake of Japanese security.”<sup>693</sup> Despite assurances that US extended deterrence had applied to Japan consistently since 1951, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense officials requested of their Pentagon counterparts “continued dialogue to gain better understanding of US policy and dissuade doubters in Japan.”<sup>694</sup>

In 2007, officials in Tokyo reached out to several former seniors US defense officials and began to ask questions about US nuclear strategy and policy. These officials were shocked by the change in substance—they had often spoken with Japanese colleagues about arms control or proliferation, but “we never, underscore never, talked about deterrence.”<sup>695</sup> The threats from North Korea and China, however, made Japanese officials “vitaly interested in talking to us.” Yet Tokyo’s initial entreaties were not embraced.

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<sup>691</sup> “Japan Seeks Assurances on Extended Deterrence,” April 18, 2007, Classified by Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>692</sup> “PM Abe Assures PACOM of Full Support for Security Alliance,” April 17, 2007, Classified by Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>693</sup> Interview with Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>694</sup> “US-Japan Roles, Missions, and Capabilities Working Group,” November 11, 2008, Classified by Amb. J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4, made public by Wikileaks.

<sup>695</sup> Interview with a former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014.

Cabinet-level officials in the George W. Bush administration were informed of Japan's desire for standing deterrence consultations, but no moves were made to establish them. Instead, in 2008, Japanese officials were invited to participate in a Track 1.5 dialogue at a Washington DC-based think tank, hosted by several nuclear strategy and policy experts.<sup>696</sup>

The initial Track 1.5 meeting was extended into a series of dialogues, all of which involved former US officials briefing their Japanese counterparts on US nuclear strategy and policy decisions. Japanese officials were eager to know how specifically the United States would respond to a nuclear attack on Tokyo by North Korea or by China, and were alarmed to learn that no single response was planned in crisis or war. They also asked numerous questions about the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile-Nuclear (TLAM-N) – a nuclear-armed cruise missile that was widely expected to be retired.<sup>697</sup>

When President Barack Obama was inaugurated in 2009, his new senior Pentagon and State Department appointees found that East Asian allies “had a lot of anxiety.”<sup>698</sup> They had come to view the United States as “not being as present or as committed as they thought appropriate.”<sup>699</sup> This was attributed to “hyperfocus” on Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>700</sup> They also worried that the new administration would privilege its relationship with China and ignore Japan.<sup>701</sup> Through the Strategic Posture Commission, a congressionally mandated review of US nuclear strategy that took place in 2008-2009, Japanese officials

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<sup>696</sup> Interview with a Former Senior Pentagon Official, July 22, 2014; Interview with a Former Senior Pentagon Official, August 6, 2014; Interview with Japanese National Security Council Official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>697</sup> Interview with Japanese National Security Council Official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>698</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014.

<sup>699</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, May 29, 2014.

<sup>700</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014.

<sup>701</sup> “Tokyo Scen setter for Deputy Secretary Steinberg,” Classified by CDA James Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

pressed their counterparts to provide them with more deterrence-relevant information.<sup>702</sup>

Those senior US officials who served on the Commission came away from it with the knowledge that Washington would need to make near-term revisions to its nuclear policy and strategy, and that concerted allied assurance would be necessary to assuage concomitant anxieties, especially in East Asia.<sup>703</sup>

In the spring of 2009, the Obama Administration began the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) process, another legislatively mandated assessment that would establish US nuclear strategy, policy, and force structure for the subsequent 5-10 years. As this review process was beginning, however, the President made a speech that would frame it as well as US assurance policy going forward.

On April 5, 2009, on a visit to Prague to mark the 10-year anniversary of the Czech Republic's NATO membership, President Barack Obama called for "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." He stated that the United States would reduce the role of nuclear weapons in its own security strategy, pursue further bilateral arms control with Russia, and support global nonproliferation efforts. President Obama also promised that as long as nuclear weapons existed, the United States would maintain an arsenal to deter any adversary and guarantee the security of its allies.<sup>704</sup>

Just as soon as the President concluded his Prague remarks, the White House received two phone calls: one from South Korea and one from Japan. Both Asian allies congratulated the administration on its ambitious agenda, and immediately asked what this

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<sup>702</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, May 29, 2014; Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, August 6, 2014; Interview with Japanese National Security Council Official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>703</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, May 29, 2014.

<sup>704</sup> "Remarks by President Barack Obama, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic," April 5, 2009, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary.

would mean for the umbrella that guaranteed their security.<sup>705</sup> Japanese officials were particularly keen to know how the Prague Agenda would change the “visible components” that comprised Pacific extended deterrence. Unlike the European landmass, where it was possible to envision how escalation might unfold and where the front lines of conflict would be, Japanese officials still knew little about how their US patrons thought about potential nuclear use in East Asia. Moreover, the United States no longer forward-deployed nuclear weapons in the Pacific. Would they retain the capabilities necessary to provide nuclear aid against North Korea and China?<sup>706</sup> Publicly, the Japanese praised the President’s Prague Speech, but privately they sought repeated assurances that nuclear reductions would not come at the expense of extended deterrence.<sup>707</sup>

One sensitive nuclear issue that the Prague Agenda thrust to the fore of the NPR was the status of the Tomahawk Land Attack-Nuclear Missile (TLAM-N): a nuclear cruise missile that had once been deployed on attack submarines, but had been in storage since 1992, following the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives. The TLAM-N technology was now obsolete, and its replacement would be costly, so the question was not whether the Navy’s last-remaining non-strategic nuclear weapon would be retired, but whether there would be a follow-on system when it was.<sup>708</sup> Despite their public support for the Prague Agenda, Japanese officials had repeatedly lobbied their US counterparts not to retire TLAM-N, or to

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<sup>705</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, August 6, 2014; Interview with Japanese National Security Council Official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>706</sup> Interview with Japanese National Security Council Official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>707</sup> “Tokyo Scen setter for Deputy Secretary Steinberg,” Classified by CDA James Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>708</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, August 6, 2014.

replace it with another cruise missile.<sup>709</sup> Their attachment to the system, however, was of Washington's own doing: at the conclusion of the 1994 Nuclear Posture Review, Japanese officials had been told that the non-deployed TLAM-N was earmarked as part of "their" umbrella because it could be redeployed to the Pacific in the case of crisis or war.<sup>710</sup> If the system was to be retired and not replaced as part of the Prague Agenda, the Japanese insisted, their counterparts in Washington should explain to them how the US could demonstrate its nuclear commitment if the circumstances required it.

The twin US goals of reducing the role of nuclear weapons while strengthening extended deterrence seemed to be broadly contradictory to Japanese officials. "The US says its deterrent is strong and unchanging, but at the same time reduces the role of nuclear weapons and prepares to take away one system that we were told exists to protect Japan. We needed to understand this 'strategic magic'." <sup>711</sup> Of the Japanese anxiety over the TLAM-N retirement, senior Pentagon officials insisted that no one weapons system provided extended deterrence to any one country. The retirement decision had not officially been made at the beginning of the NPR, however, so Administration decided to consult the Japanese during the process.<sup>712</sup>

Another pressing concern among the Japanese was the future of US-Russia arms reductions. It was well understood that the NPR would create some "headroom" for further strategic arms control in the form of a New START Treaty. <sup>713</sup> Japanese officials were

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<sup>709</sup> Jeffrey Lewis, "A Problem with the Nuclear Tomahawk," New American Foundation, December 1, 2009, pp. 2-3.

<sup>710</sup> Off-the-Record Conversation with Senior Pentagon Official, February 15, 2013.

<sup>711</sup> Interview with Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official, Tokyo, Japan, February 4, 2014.

<sup>712</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>713</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, July 22, 2014.

increasingly worried that the Chinese nuclear arsenal was expanding qualitatively and quantitatively, and feared that if the United States cut its numbers too low, the Chinese could “sprint to parity” with the Cold War superpowers.<sup>714</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defense officials impressed upon their US counterparts the importance of close consultations between the US and Japan prior to any “deep cuts” in the US arsenal, as these could embolden Chinese modernization efforts.<sup>715</sup>

Japanese officials were also concerned by rumors that the NPR might lead the US to change its nuclear declaratory policy. The United States has never circumscribed its right to the “first use” of nuclear weapons in conflict, but following the Prague Speech many advocates, practitioners, and scholars pushed for the adoption of a “No First Use” or “Sole Purpose” nuclear doctrine.<sup>716</sup> A No First Use doctrine declares that the country will not introduce nuclear weapons into a conflict unless it is first attacked by nuclear weapons. A Sole Purpose doctrine maintains that the nuclear power’s arsenal is exclusively dedicated to deterring the use of nuclear weapons. The ability to use nuclear weapons preemptively has long been considered crucial for extended deterrence by US allies and Japanese officials feared that the “loosening” of US nuclear doctrine would undermine the guarantee to Japan.<sup>717</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> “US, Japanese Officials Engage in Extended Deterrence Dialogue and Overview of 2009 Nuclear Posture Review,” June 15, 2009, Classified by James P. Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks; Linton Brooks and Mira Rapp-Hooper, “Extended Deterrence, Assurance and Reassurance in the Pacific in the Second Nuclear Age,” in Ashely J. Tellis, Abraham M. Denmark, and Travis Tanner, eds. *Strategic Asia 2013-14: Asia in the Second Nuclear Age*, Vol. 13. NBR, 2013.

<sup>715</sup> “US, Japanese Officials Engage in Extended Deterrence Dialogue and Overview of 2009 Nuclear Posture Review,” June 15, 2009, Classified by James P. Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>716</sup> See, e.g., Scott D. Sagan, “The Case for No First Use,” *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2009), pp. 163-182.

<sup>717</sup> Interview with Deterrence Expert, Japan, Tokyo, February 4, 2014.

Finally, in summer 2009, a former Japanese Vice Foreign Ministry leaked to the press the “secret” agreement with the United States that provided for the transport of US nuclear weapons into Japan, in violation of Japan’s third Non-Nuclear Principle. American officials assessed the leak was driven by the former Minister’s desire to generate debate about dropping the non-introduction principle to allow the US to once again forward-deploy nuclear weapons in Japan.<sup>718</sup>

This litany of Japanese extended deterrence-related concerns, coupled with increasing Japanese requests for sustained dialogue on nuclear issues led US officials to include their allies in the NPR process for the first time. In 1994 and 2001, officials in allied countries had been briefed about the NPR findings after the review concluded, but this had resulted in a great deal of confusion among nuclear clients. The process had been particularly fraught in 2001, when the George W. Bush administration decided to introduce the unfamiliar concept of a “New Triad,” leaving allies to wonder whether nuclear deterrence was being augmented or attenuated.<sup>719</sup> Instead of presenting allies with a nuclear posture *fait accompli* in 2010, Pentagon officials met with their allied counterparts throughout the review. Given their concerns and requests for information, the Japanese were briefed on a monthly basis, more than any other ally.<sup>720</sup> Moreover, prior NPRs had been conducted on a classified basis. This meant that when the 2001 document was leaked

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<sup>718</sup> “Moving From 3 to 2 Nuclear Principles in Japan,” July 24, 2009, Classified by Charge d’Affaires James P. Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks.

<sup>719</sup> The so-called “New Triad” consisted of: 1) Nuclear and non-nuclear weapons; 2) Ballistic Missile Defense, and 3) A revitalized defense infrastructure. This concept was later rolled back. David S. McDonough, “The ‘New Triad’ of the Bush Administration,” *International Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 613-634; Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, May 29, 2014; Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>720</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.



to the press, the administration could not clarify the now public content or its implications to allies. Clarity of communication with security guarantee clients was one of several reasons that the Obama Administration decided to conduct an unclassified review.<sup>721</sup>

Several times during the NPR review process, top Pentagon officials traveled to Tokyo and received their colleagues in Washington to explain how extended deterrence could be strengthened while the role of nuclear weapons in US defense policy was reduced.<sup>722</sup>

As the NPR process drew to a close, Japanese and US officials agreed that the allies should make permanent a standing deterrence consultation mechanism.<sup>723</sup> US officials agreed that a new deterrence institution should be a joint venture between the Defense Department and Department of State, and found strong support from the top leadership of both agencies, and from Strategic Command and from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>724</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the primary agency of responsibility in Japan, and the mechanism was termed the Extended Deterrence Dialogue. A discrete, but similarly structured bilateral consultation was formed between the United States and South Korea, and named the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee.<sup>725</sup> Both began to meet at the US Deputy Assistant Secretary Level in 2010.

From inception, the Extended Deterrence Dialogues (EDD) had three components: regular policy consultations on nuclear deterrence-related issues; visits to US sites relevant

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<sup>721</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>722</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, May 29, 2014; Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>723</sup> "US-Japan Security Sub-Committee Meeting," February 4, 2010, Classified by James P. Zumwalt for Reasons 1.4, made public through Wikileaks; Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>724</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, July 22, 2014; Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>725</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

to the maintenance of its security umbrella; and tabletop exercises and scenario planning.<sup>726</sup> Through the EDD, Japanese officials have visited ICBM silos at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana, toured a ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) in Bangor, Washington, and viewed the B-2 bomber wing at Whiteman Air Force Base.<sup>727</sup> They have also visited Sandia National Labs, although they cannot view actual nuclear weapons due to the Atomic Energy Act.<sup>728</sup> The Extended Deterrence Dialogue meets twice yearly and rotates between the United States and Japan.

### ***Unilateral Patron Motivation?***

Although Japanese officials' desire for deterrence consultation was not initially embraced in the United States, early Track 1.5 dialogues and later steps to create the EDD were motivated by the US belief that its allies' abandonment fears were reaching critical levels. In the eyes of these experts, nuclear dialogues were necessary to keep the alliance together, and the Japanese from growing increasingly interested in a nuclear capability of their own.<sup>729</sup> Obama Administration officials entered office aware of the fact that East Asian allies were in need of assurance given the growing threats from North Korea and China. After receiving allies' feedback following the Prague Speech, US officials knew that impending changes to Washington's nuclear strategy could very well estrange its already-jittery ally. And because US officials understood that the Nuclear Posture Review would

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<sup>726</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, July 22, 2014; Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>727</sup> Yoshihiro Makino, "Roberts: Japan Shown US Nuclear Facilities to 'Confirm' Nuclear Umbrella," July 31, 2013, *Asahi Shimbun*, [http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind\\_news/politics/AJ201307310073](http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/politics/AJ201307310073).

<sup>728</sup> "US-Japan Extended Deterrence Dialogue, June 10-12, 2014," US Department of State Office of the Spokesperson, June 9, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/06/227303.htm>

<sup>729</sup> Interview with a former senior Pentagon official, July 22, 2014.

probably end with the decision to retire TLAM-N, a uniquely neuralgic point for the Japanese, they understood that they “would have to engage in serious assurance just to break even.”<sup>730</sup> Furthermore, the leak of the secret Cold War-era US-Japan deal underscored for US officials how controversial of an issue extended deterrence was becoming domestically. They had no intention of considering the reintroduction of nuclear weapons to Japan, but this episode reinforced the need for the United States to explain to its client how it envisioned providing extended deterrence with fewer weapons and mounting regional security challenges.<sup>731</sup>

Pentagon officials decided to include Japanese officials in the NPR process rather than surprise them with its findings later. Like McNamara, they intended to expose the Japanese to challenges entailed in US nuclear policy and strategy, and believed that the more access to nuclear-related information Japanese officials had, the more likely they would be to support Washington’s twin goals of reducing its nuclear stockpile and strengthening extended deterrence. This aim remained as officials decided to formalize a consultation mechanism in 2010. Like NATO’s NPG, the Extended Deterrence Dialogue was never intended to change the fundamental nature of the US guarantee. The Extended Deterrence Dialogues have aimed and served primarily to educate the Japanese about the US deterrent.

As in NATO’s NPG and HLG, the agenda of the EDD is largely driven by the United States. US officials are eager to know what questions and concerns the Japanese have so

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<sup>730</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, July 22, 2014; Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, May 29, 2014.

<sup>731</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

that they can address them, but “the model is not allies as demandeurs.”<sup>732</sup> American officials, however, have purposely tried to dissuade direct analogies between NATO nuclear institutions and the EDD. Both South Korea and Japan expressed in 2010 a desire for a consultation mechanism that was “NATO-like.” This was inappropriate for North East Asia from the US perspective, however, because there are no forward-deployed nuclear weapons in the region, no nuclear sharing and no joint operational planning. Despite the fact that these factors in no way restrict US unilateral nuclear action in the European theater, they do give allies additional access points to that policy and strategy. From the American standpoint, attempting to replicate this model, itself an outgrowth of forward-deployed theater nuclear forces in Europe, would have been foolish.<sup>733</sup> The component of NATO that was applicable to East Asia and that was clearly missing from the US-Japan alliance was the political consultations that occur through the NPG and HLG.<sup>734</sup>

US officials came to believe that what the Japanese wanted when they requested “NATO-like” consultations was a seat at the table if and when nuclear weapons were going to be employed in the service of their interests.<sup>735</sup> This, however, was not difficult to provide: If the United States was to employ nuclear weapons against North Korea or China, it already planned to consult with allies. As in NATO, this assumes that time and circumstances permit, and does not allow allies any sort of veto power or positive decision authority. Nonetheless, it took only some policy transparency for the United States to

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<sup>732</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>733</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Washington DC, May 29, 2014; Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>734</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>735</sup> Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

manifest to its counterparts in Tokyo that Washington would not want to release nuclear weapons without their input if it could be avoided.

### ***Unilateral Information-Sharing in Practice***

Since the dialogues were made permanent in 2010, US officials have relied on political consultation, tabletop exercises, and on-site visits to share information with their allies about how they provide extended deterrence. The primary goal of the exercises is to demonstrate to Japanese officials how the United States would think through particular crisis or warfighting scenarios and make relevant political and military recommendations. The purpose of the Triad site visits is to expose allies to the vast US nuclear infrastructure that already exists. Despite the fact that US officials believe US-Japan deterrence consultations should not be based on a “NATO model,” the EDD shares with its predecessor the fact that the United States initiated it with the intent of making manifest and clarifying existing nuclear policies and strategies.

The Extended Deterrence Dialogues have served to make the existing US umbrella more concrete in the eyes of its clients, but they do not actually alter the ambiguity embedded in this unilateral commitment. When the US and Japan began track 1.5 dialogues in 2008, American participants regularly received questions from their counterparts on how exactly the United States would react to particular actions by North Korea or China. The Japanese expected, for example, that if the Chinese used a nuclear weapon on Tokyo, the United States would execute a standard, pre-planned nuclear response—that there was

a “nuclear cookbook” with recipes for allied defense. They were shocked and somewhat disappointed to find automatic contingency plans did not exist.<sup>736</sup>

Instead, tabletop exercises have aimed to make the Japanese more comfortable with that inherent ambiguity. By walking through how the United States would potentially think about nuclear use in specific scenarios, allies are exposed to the situations in which Washington may see an interest in employing them. Through scenario-based exercises, US officials can demonstrate their thinking on how to avoid or minimize escalation and can give allies a sense of the considerations that would go into recommendations for nuclear use.<sup>737</sup> These exercises do not actually take the ambiguity out of whether the United States would use nuclear weapons in a crisis, but they aim to mitigate some of the uncertainty over how it might approach that decision if it decided to do so.

The Japanese search for pre-planned US nuclear options led American officials to explain to their counterparts the consultation caveat that has defined assurance efforts since McNamara’s Athens speech: Despite the existence of war plans and sophisticated planning mechanisms, nuclear decision-making authority rests with the President alone.<sup>738</sup> In all of its security guarantees, the United States retains “the right to employ nuclear weapons on behalf of our allies.”<sup>739</sup> Rather than circumscribe or crystallize that prerogative, deterrence consultations serve to convince allies that their patron has taken the necessary steps to prepare for nuclear operations if they are deemed necessary. “It takes it from an

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<sup>736</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington DC, July 22, 2014.

<sup>737</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington DC, July 22, 2014.

<sup>738</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington DC, July 22, 2014.

<sup>739</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

abstract concept, a political commitment, into a world in which they have actually taken the necessary steps to give the President real options if it came to that.”<sup>740</sup>

Where military command authority is concerned, the US-Japan alliance is a far cry from NATO. The United States and Japan do not have a combined military command or a permanent body that allow them to coordinate operations in crisis or war.<sup>741</sup> A decision to employ nuclear weapons on behalf of Japan would be a top-down one by the US President alone. With no forward-deployed nuclear weapons or nuclear sharing arrangements, Washington would have no concrete obligation to inform its Japanese counterparts of its decision to do so (although presumably it would for obvious political reasons). The nuclear chain of command between the US President and use in Japan could not be more unilateral, and deterrence consultation has done nothing to change that fact. Nonetheless, the EDD has been well-received by the Japanese.

The Extended Deterrence Dialogues have been used to secure Japanese support for several US nuclear policies, including the Prague Agenda, the retirement of TLAM-N, and bilateral US-Russia arms control. It is used to discuss the strategic challenges posed by China and North Korea. The EDD also been used to keep the Japanese apprised of US strategic policy and technological developments. This includes US plans for missile defense deployments, research and development on Conventional Prompt Global Strike, the development of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and US nuclear stockpile modernization efforts.

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<sup>740</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington DC, July 22, 2014.

<sup>741</sup> Sugio Takahashi, “Upgrading the Japan-US Defense Guidelines: Toward a New Phase of Operational Coordination,” Project 2049 Institute, p. 9.

From the US perspective, Pentagon and State Department officials have found it useful to learn what their Japanese counterparts do and do not understand, and what kinds of information they seek.<sup>742</sup> They have found that by holding regular talks, they can explain to their Japanese counterparts how US strategic policy is changing and what its implications are for the recipients of extended deterrence.<sup>743</sup> American officials have also found that the quality of their deterrence-related exchanges with their Japanese counterparts improved dramatically after just a few meetings.

Although in most areas of government, Japanese officials remain reticent on nuclear issues, the dialogues have helped Tokyo to develop a small cadre of theoretically and strategically sophisticated thinkers who rival their nuclear patrons in their knowledge of deterrence. Officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Self Defense Forces who have participated in the Extended Deterrence Dialogues have read widely on deterrence theory and the history of the Cold War.<sup>744</sup> New policy officials in the US-Japan Treaty Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are instructed upon arrival to complete a syllabus of readings that is equivalent to a graduate-level strategic studies course at an elite American university.<sup>745</sup> Approximately 30-40 Japanese officials have participated in the EDD and moved on to other policy jobs. According to one former Pentagon official who was associated with the dialogues, this has made Tokyo “the most deterrence-fluent government out there... including, perhaps, my own.”<sup>746</sup>

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<sup>742</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, May 29, 2014.

<sup>743</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, July 22, 2014

<sup>744</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington, DC, May 29, 2014; Interview with Former Senior Pentagon Official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>745</sup> Interview with Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, Tokyo, Japan, February 3, 2014.

<sup>746</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.



Japanese EDD participants have received the institution enthusiastically. Beginning with the Track 1.5 dialogues in 2008-2009, officials found that these conversations helped them to become more comfortable speaking to their counterparts about nuclear issues, and more deterrence-literate. This, in turn, led to serving Pentagon officials being increasingly willing to engage with them on Japan-specific deterrence issues.<sup>747</sup> Since the EDD was permanently established, officials in Tokyo have found that the depth and breadth of their deterrence knowledge has expanded significantly.<sup>748</sup> Moreover, officials in Tokyo extol the effects of their on-site visits. Because Japan has traditionally not engaged with its patron on nuclear policy topics and it does not possess nuclear weapons, its leaders have not been able to associate US policy with anything concrete. Exposure to the US nuclear infrastructure makes tangible policies and strategies that they have long read about on paper.<sup>749</sup> Japanese officials also emphasize the importance of being briefed by and meeting the Air Force and Navy personnel who man US strategic delivery vehicles. “We are not allowed to see your nuclear weapons,” one official explained, “but the technology and the people are tangible evidence that the umbrella is real. That we should believe it.”<sup>750</sup>

One important remaining obstacle to assurance in Japan, however, is the fact that this small group of deterrence-savvy officials is much more comfortable discussing nuclear issues than the public as a whole. They do not publicize the activities of the EDD and their newfound knowledge of the nuclear umbrella because they do not believe that the Japanese public is prepared for the same type of acquaintance with US nuclear strategy and policy

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<sup>747</sup> Interview with Japanese National Security Council Official, February 4, 2014.

<sup>748</sup> Interview with National Security Council Official, Tokyo, Japan, February 4, 2014; Interview with Deterrence Expert, Tokyo, Japan, February 4, 2014.

<sup>749</sup> Interview with Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official, Tokyo, Japan, February 3, 2014.

<sup>750</sup> Interview with Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official, Tokyo, Japan, February 3, 2014.

that they have been receiving. This, in turn, makes it more difficult for them to communicate with domestic audience how Tokyo is thinking about threats from North Korea and China.<sup>751</sup>

Nonetheless, nuclear policy consultations and practical exposure has helped to convince Japan's leaders that the US nuclear umbrella is more than an abstraction. A National Security Council official explained: "Seeing those systems and talking with those who worked on them, it means something...we realize those technicians work partly for Japan. We don't have the weapons for ourselves, but at least now we have the familiarity." He added: "No particular weapons system is more important than the others, but seeing is believing, both on the enemy's side and on the ally's side."<sup>752</sup>

### ***Consultation as Cooperation?***

There is not much evidence that the United States expected the Extended Deterrence Dialogues to result in mutual policy adjustment, either in the form of more alliance contributions from Tokyo or in a less unilateral policy from Washington. One exception to this general rule is the fact that Washington consulted with Japan and South Korea over the possibility of changing its nuclear doctrine to adopt a No First Use or a Sole Purpose pledge during the NPR process. It is unknown whether there was enough Sole Purpose support within the Obama Administration for the doctrine to have been adopted if the administration had *not* chosen to consult with allies, but it is also clear that the

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<sup>751</sup> Interview with Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official, Tokyo, Japan, February 3, 2014; Interview with Senior Ministry of Defense Official, Tokyo, Japan, February 5, 2014.

<sup>752</sup> Interview with National Security Council Official, Tokyo, Japan, February 4, 2014.

Japanese and South Koreans voiced their opposition to this change during NPR consultations.<sup>753</sup> Ultimately, the United States did circumscribe its declaratory policy, but did not move as far as adopting a No First Use or Sole Purpose doctrine. It is possible, but not probable, that this was a significant nuclear policy adjustment made as a result of allied consultation.

Like the NPG, US-Japan extended deterrence consultations were instituted at a time when Washington was eager to have its allies contribute more to their own security. Following the largely unilateral foreign policy of the George W. Bush administration and the 2008 financial crisis, US President Barack Obama assumed office with the goal of restoring the importance of US alliances and partner contributions.<sup>754</sup> Despite this fact, there is little evidence that the Extended Deterrence Dialogues were established to induce conventional contributions from Japan. There is also scant evidence that the United States intended to significantly adjust its nuclear policies once deterrence consultation began.

Since its founding, the Extended Deterrence Dialogues, like the NPG and HLG, serve to hive off nuclear consultations from other security dialogues, creating less, not more, issue connectivity. And while a broad, diffuse pattern of bilateral security consultation may have encouraged Japan to increase its contributions to the alliance, discussions of Japanese conventional contributions take place in the Security Consultative Committee or the numerous other bodies devoted to US-Japan conventional defense issues.<sup>755</sup> Moreover, the EDD was established in 2010, while Prime Minister Shinto Abe's overhaul of Japanese security policy only began in 2013-2014. These changes are part of a long Japanese

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<sup>753</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Washington DC, May 29, 2014.

<sup>754</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

<sup>755</sup> Interview with former senior Pentagon official, Telephone, August 6, 2014.

evolution towards defense “normalcy,” and are not contingent responses to Tokyo’s improved nuclear umbrella knowledge.

The Extended Deterrence Dialogue also does not in any strict sense change the credibility of the US security guarantee by making it more likely that the United States will intervene on Japan’s behalf, or by clarifying the specific circumstances under which it will take specific actions. Indeed, as we have seen, nuclear decision-making authority remains with the US President and US officials cannot commit to their Japanese counterparts to taking any specific actions in crisis or war.

### **Consultation in the US-Thailand Alliance**

The United States began providing military aid to Thailand in 1950 after its military leader, Field Marshall Plaek Phibun, eschewed ties with the Soviet Union and People’s Republic of China.<sup>756</sup> After formally recognizing the French-backed Bao Dai government in Vietnam and sending food aid and troops to aid in the defense of South Korea, Bangkok received its first \$10 million in US aid, most of which came in the form of arms.<sup>757</sup> Phibun persistently pressed for a full-fledged bilateral defense pact with the United States, but was rebuffed until 1954.

Two days after the fall of the French fortress at Dien Bien Phu, John Foster Dulles proposed to the Thais a bilateral mutual defense pact in exchange for basing rights.<sup>758</sup> That summer, however, the US commitment to Thailand was folded into an eclectic multilateral

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<sup>756</sup> Daniel Fineman, *A Special Relationship: The United States and the Military Government in Thailand, 1947-1958* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1967), p. 66.

<sup>757</sup> Fineman, pp. 114-118.

<sup>758</sup> Fineman, p. 191.

security guarantee that included the United States, Thailand, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, and Pakistan.<sup>759</sup> The Manila Pact, signed on September 8, 1954, became the basis of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which Asian members hoped would be their regional NATO analogue.<sup>760</sup>

The Manila Pact is a collective defense treaty that uses similar language to the United States' other guarantees in East Asia. It declares that armed attack within the treaty area endangers the peace and security of all members, and pledges to meet the common danger in accordance with "constitutional processes."<sup>761</sup> The Asian members of the Manila Pact were disappointed that the treaty did not emulate the language of the North Atlantic Treaty, which many interpret to imply an automatic commitment, but they embraced it nonetheless. The Thais were especially enthusiastic and ratified the treaty just two weeks after signing it, hoping that it would effectively serve as a US-Thai bilateral pact that would protect them from the Viet Minh threat to Laos and potential communist subversion among Thailand's Vietnamese minority.<sup>762</sup> They also hoped for a significant increase in US defensive aid.<sup>763</sup>

American aid to Thailand quadrupled after the Manila Pact was signed, and the Thais became its most energetic participant.<sup>764</sup> The first alliance meeting was held in Bangkok, where SEATO was formally established. The organization's headquarters were

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<sup>759</sup> For a detailed history of why this group was chosen, see: Lesek Buszynski, *SEATO: The Failure of an Alliance Strategy*, (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983), pp. 1-71.

<sup>760</sup> Buszynski, pp. 29-30.

<sup>761</sup> "Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty," in Douglas Gibler, ed., *International Military Alliances 1648-2008*, (Washington, CQ Press: 2008), p. 397.

<sup>762</sup> Buszynski, pp. 29-30.

<sup>763</sup> Fineman, pp. 196-198.

<sup>764</sup> American aid to Thailand jumped from \$8,800,000 in FY 1954 to \$34,300,000 in FY 1955. Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington DC: Public Affairs, 1965), pp 132-33, 141.

placed there with a Thai at the helm. The alliance created a permanent secretariat and a military organization in 1955, so that members could consult about potential security dangers.<sup>765</sup> From the pact's inception, Bangkok pressed for SEATO-dedicated military forces and a joint military command structure, as existed in NATO and the US-ROK alliance. Both Thailand and the Philippines believed that these commitments would make US intervention practically automatic if a crisis did occur, but Washington resisted.<sup>766</sup> In 1957-58, the Thais and Filipinos consistently worried that the United States would abandon them to communist subversion despite the pact, so Washington agreed to engage in some limited, joint conventional military planning and consultation.<sup>767</sup>

SEATO quickly proved to be a wildly ineffective alliance, primarily because the threat of major power conventional or even nuclear military intervention was poorly suited to deterring and defending against communist subversion.<sup>768</sup> Members could not agree on whether or not the Laotian crisis invoked the pact, because it did not entail open armed attack. They also held sharply diverging views about the United States' war in Vietnam and their obligations to support it, and Britain and France began to disengage for that reason.<sup>769</sup> Because the security guarantee was increasingly viewed as ineffective, the United States made a private pledge to Bangkok to assist it outside of the Manila Pact if it became the victim of major communist aggression. Known as the Thanat-Rusk communiqué of 1962, this promise was extended to ensure Bangkok's basing support of US operations in Laos.<sup>770</sup>

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<sup>765</sup> Fineman, pp. 207-208; Buszynski, pp. 45-55.

<sup>766</sup> Buszynski, pp. 58.

<sup>767</sup> Buszynski, pp. 70.

<sup>768</sup> Buszynski, p. 2.

<sup>769</sup> Buszynski, pp 72-181.

<sup>770</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation: Notes of MVF Conversation with the President, May 3, 1962," *FRUS, 1961-63*, Volume XXIV, Laos Crisis, Document 339.

SEATO's demise was all but guaranteed by the election of Richard Nixon. In a pre-election *Foreign Affairs* article in 1967, Nixon had called the alliance an "anachronistic relic," and his 1969 Guam Doctrine made plain that the United States intended to draw down substantially from its Asian commitments once it disengaged from Vietnam.<sup>771</sup> Nixon stated, however, that the United States would continue to honor all of its existing treaty arrangements, including through the use of nuclear weapons if allies were so threatened.<sup>772</sup>

Thailand was the primary obstacle that prevented Washington from dismantling SEATO. After Pakistan withdrew from the treaty in 1972, all remaining members held distinct security guarantees from the United States through other agreements. The United States was not especially interested in attempting to form a separate bilateral security guarantee with Thailand, as its interests in the country would be limited once it was out of the business of fighting communism in South East Asia. It also believed that it would face congressional opposition if it attempted one.<sup>773</sup> Washington therefore convinced its other SEATO allies to keep the alliance in place for Thailand's sake, at least until the US withdrawal from Vietnam was complete.<sup>774</sup>

Aware that the other active members would not remain engaged forever and that the United States would not form a new bilateral pact, the Thais began to advocate for a reorientation of the alliance away from military issues and toward economic and political matters, which the other alliance members accepted.<sup>775</sup> In 1974, the allies approved a plan to dissolve the military structure of the alliance, which led to the decision to terminate the

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<sup>771</sup> Richard M. Nixon, "Asia After Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 1, October 1967.

<sup>772</sup> Buszynski, p. 158.

<sup>773</sup> Buszynski, p. 141.

<sup>774</sup> Buszynski, p. 181.

<sup>775</sup> Buszynski, p. 196.

treaty organization in 1975. The last official SEATO activities concluded in 1977, and headquarter buildings were returned to the Thais. American forces withdrew from Thailand entirely, but the Manila Pact was not abrogated, as it remained the only formal treaty tie between Washington and Bangkok.<sup>776</sup>

Since that date, the United States has not promised to guarantee Thailand's security if it is the victim of attack. There exists a tacit understanding that with the end of SEATO and the Manila Pact's "reorientation" to non-military affairs, the US commitment has been downgraded substantially. A 2012 US-Thai "Joint Vision Statement" signed by the Thai Defense Minister and the US Secretary of Defense reaffirmed that both governments still consider this to be a "defense alliance." It stated, however, that its purview includes: responding to natural and manmade disasters, confronting transnational threats, contributing to global peacekeeping, and addressing maritime security issues.<sup>777</sup> There is no language that suggests that the United States has a direct military obligation to aid Thailand if it is attacked, nor has any US leader suggested as much in a public statement. The United States and Thailand continue to conduct regular joint military exercises, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Since SEATO's demise, however, they have not had in place any formal defense consultation mechanism whatsoever. Without a security guarantee in place, the United States does not appear to have had much motivation to attempt to engage any Thai abandonment fears that might emerge.

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<sup>776</sup> Buszynski, pp. 207-212.

<sup>777</sup> "2012 Joint Vision Statement for the Thai-US Defense Alliance," November 15, 2012, US Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=15685>



### **Analyzing Nuclear Consultation Formation**

The NATO and US-Japan cases provide strong support for Hypothesis 3. Both deterrence consultation mechanisms formed in response to mounting allied abandonment fears. In both NATO and Japan, nuclear client states were plagued with chronic anxieties following the increase of a strategic threat from the adversary and what each feared to be a reduced commitment from its patron. In neither the NATO nor the Japan case did the United States believe that its allies would defect to another alliance, but rather that there was some risk that clients' abandonment fears would cause them to eventually acquire their own nuclear weapons, permitting self-reliance. In neither case did the United States form deterrence consultation mechanisms with the aim of fundamentally changing the nature of its guarantee: rather, it hoped to provide assurance by exposing allies to existing policy and strategy.

NATO nuclear consultations and the Extended Deterrence Dialogues were embraced by patrons and clients alike primarily because client states had possessed so little nuclear knowledge to begin with. By allowing allies to develop some understanding of how their security could be provided for in the event of war, and giving them proximity to the nuclear decision-making process, nuclear consultation made an abstract umbrella more concrete. Nuclear consultations do not circumscribe or compel the United States' ultimate use of nuclear weapons and do not change the fact that the US President retains sole nuclear war making authority. They also do not alter the ambiguous nature of a nuclear guarantee, because consultation and planning do not result in any commitments by the United States to use nuclear weapons under specific circumstances. These consultation mechanisms do not change the probability that the United States will defect from its umbrella allies in crisis

or war, or the cost to the client if it does so.

Deterrence consultations appear to have been embraced by non-nuclear allies precisely because clients' states began with so little information about the nuclear umbrella in the first place. Because of the significant nuclear information asymmetry that existed in each alliance, the opportunity to acquire basic deterrence literacy was celebrated by clients as a major innovation. Mechanisms that made more tangible the otherwise-abstract US nuclear guarantee helped clients feel significantly more secure, even if Washington's commitment to use it was not markedly changed. This was manifest in allies' accession to nuclear-related policies to which they had previously been hostile, including West Germany's embrace of Flexible Response and the NPT, and Japan's endorsement of the TLAM-N retirement and the broader belief that the US nuclear stockpile could be reduced without undermining extended deterrence.

There is much less evidence to support the alternative hypothesis. The United States did not initiate consultation arrangements with the aim of securing mutual policy adjustment, except in the broadest of senses. Both the NPG and EDD were born at times when nuclear patrons were hoping to increase conventional contributions by allies broadly, but there is no indication that the United States thought of nuclear consultations as a *quid pro quo* in either case, or that they served that role once they were in place. Nor did the United States seek to use these institutions to make their commitments more credible by increasing their back-down costs in crisis or war. Indeed, in both instances, the patron approach was to hive off nuclear consultations from other defense issues to more clearly explain nuclear policy and strategy. To the extent that nuclear consultations induced broader defense cooperation, this was at best a secondary motivation and

outcome. The United States also did not expect to adjust its own policies to meet allies' needs in either case.

The NATO and US-Japan cases permit a number of additional generalizations that are consistent with Hypothesis 3. Both nuclear dialogues were formed in similar international environments, characterized by increased adversary threats and client fears of patron disengagement, especially in the nuclear realm. In both cases, patron and client understood there to be a growing strategic threat from an adversary, but the most proximate precipitant of nuclear dialogue was the perceived change in commitment from the patron. To US policymakers, the Soviet ICBM threat and advent of strategic parity and China's rise and North Korea's nuclearization were important background conditions that contributed to client states' abandonment fears. Both the nuclear patron and its clients became convinced of the need to share nuclear information in conjunction with impending patron revisions to its nuclear strategy and policy in the forms of Flexible Response and the 2010 NPR, with plans for future arms control. Increased adversary threat and changes in patron commitment combined to create abandonment anxieties that made nuclear consultation desirable in Western Europe in the early-to-mid 1960s. The same forces only grew strong enough to break the nuclear gag rule in Japan in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Thailand "control" case also permits some inferences. Because Thailand was from 1954-1977 part of a formal security guarantee in the form of SEATO, and subsequently a client in a non-security guarantee defense pact, this case is as close as one might hope to come to an alliance "natural" experiment. When SEATO was active, the United States resisted but then ultimately agreed to formal military consultation and planning mechanisms in response to Thailand's fears about the regional communist threat.

SEATO allies did not request information about US nuclear capabilities, but nuclear weapons would have been ill suited to the defense challenges they did face. Had the treaty organization lasted, perhaps they would have demanded information to this effect. Once SEATO was disbanded, however, and only the hollowed-out Manila Pact remained, Thailand did not request nor did the US offer formal defense consultation mechanisms of any kind. These are similarly absent from the Rio Pact—Washington’s only other non-security guarantee defense pact.

The evolution of defense consultation in the US-Japan alliance is also instructive. For the first 25 years of the alliance, Tokyo wanted to know almost nothing about how it would be protected if it were the victim of attack. It changed this view following Nixon’s troop withdrawal from Asia, resulting in the earliest form of US-Japan conventional defense consultation. Conventional consultation increased again in the late 1990s, after Tokyo’s anxieties peaked following the end of the Cold War. Japan only began to request nuclear consultation when it faced growing *nuclear* threats from both China and North Korea, however. Recalling that Thailand’s request for military information sharing related to US responses to communist subversion, we can infer that detailed defense consultation may indeed be a response to the uniquely unilateral and ambiguous character of security guarantees. The specific nature of clients’ abandonment fears and patrons’ inclinations to provide assurance is, however, calibrated to the types of military threats they face.

This relationship between client assurances needs and security institution creation may help to shed light on some puzzling results in recent alliance scholarship. Surprisingly, scholars have not found a relationship between the level of alliance institutionalization and

alliance reliability.<sup>778</sup> That is, alliances that begin as more formalized, cooperative institutions make it no more likely that alliance partners will join one another if the *casus foederis* of the treaty is actually met.<sup>779</sup> One explanation for this may be that important alliance institutions evolve over time in response to the alliance security dilemma. Measuring levels of institutionalization at alliance formation does not capture this evolution. Additionally, if consultation mechanisms are not exclusively or primarily aimed at lowering transaction costs in war, as this literature posits, but are used in part as intra-alliance tools for ameliorating peacetime abandonment fears, these results make more sense. As we have seen, consultation need not induce mutual adjustment or bind partners to any particular course of action for it to make an abstract security guarantee more tangible.

The NATO and US-Japan cases also highlighted another assurance factor that is not addressed by the theory presented here. The former US Ambassador to NATO and senior Japanese officials both noted the importance of consultation mechanisms to client states' legitimacy vis-à-vis their own publics. Harland Cleveland underscored the need for NATO allies to seem as though they had access to the place where "destiny decisions" were made; Japanese MOFA and MOD officials noted that they still faced challenges in communicating that assurance to a public that remains largely anti-nuclear. This study has focused on the formation and management of security guarantees from an interstate perspective, but

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<sup>778</sup>Brett Ashley Leeds and Sezi Anac, "Alliance Institutionalization and Alliance Performance," *International Interactions*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2005), p. 196. For foundational work on institutionalization that makes these results puzzling, see: Kenneth W. Abbott, and Duncan Snidal, "Hard and Soft Law in International Governance," *International Organization* Vol. 54, No. 3 (2000), pp. 421-456; David A. Lake, *Entangling Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>779</sup> The ATOP 3.0 project measures the level of alliance institutionalization at inception only.

there may be important domestic elements at play.

If a state, and especially a sovereign democracy, contracts its security to a superpower patron, its leaders must not only convince themselves that they will not be abandoned at a time of extreme danger, but they must convince their publics of the same. If the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantees makes it difficult to assure clients, their constituencies will be all the more difficult to reach. Not only can a nuclear patron not make public the strategy and policy details that it might be able to share with client state leaders, but it is doubtful that a general populace would understand those details if it did. Client state leaders may therefore face pressure from both above and below to ensure that their vague but existential security commitments will be fulfilled.

Consultation may give them the information they need to make that case. Related to this is the fact that in both cases, client states seem to have believed that nuclear consultations conferred some prestige. Moving from a relationship of complete informational ignorance to one in which they had a seat at the table to observe unilateral policy and strategy seems to have contributed to client states' beliefs that they held a more equal role in the alliance, even if the relationship remained as asymmetric as it had been. The theory explored in this project does not account for domestic political or ideational factors per se, but these findings highlight the fact that the informational ambiguity and unilateral nature of security guarantees matter beyond the realm of defense strictly defined.

## **Conclusions**

Despite the fact that they have ample incentive to keep their guarantees ambiguous and unilateral, we have seen that nuclear patrons may respond to client abandonment fears

with the use of consultation mechanisms, in an effort to give allies a clearer picture of existing policy and strategy. Patrons' form deterrence consultation mechanisms in a deliberate effort to respond to clients' fears of abandonment. And as evidence from all three cases suggest, patrons have traditionally formed nuclear consultations to respond to nuclear abandonment fears, conventional mechanisms for conventional abandonment fears, and none whatsoever when the alliance in question is not a security guarantee. Deterrence consultation does not, however, appear to have been intended to change the level of cooperation among the allies in an effort to facilitate burden sharing or economies of scale, or a more binding guarantee. Patrons set up these mechanisms with little intention of making security guarantees any less unilateral.

The fact that security guarantee partners are able to locate a *modus vivendi* outcome in peacetime, however, does not make it more likely that the patron will be forthcoming in war, especially if intervention comes at great cost to itself. Unlike other forms of military cooperation, which may bind allies' wartime fates and change their values for fighting, information provision does not change the patron's willingness to intervene on an allies' behalf. One of the most surprising things about nuclear consultation as an assurance mechanism, then, is that it does not meaningfully mitigate the persistent dilemmas that characterize these guarantees. It simply focuses and makes them more apparent to their recipients.

The fact that deterrence consultations do not meaningfully alter the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantees casts some further light on the underlying dynamics of security guarantees. As these case studies demonstrated, simply by virtue of having received more information about the unilateral policies and their patrons were

already undertaking, client states appear to have been assured by nuclear consultation mechanisms. In neither case did the United States increase its commitment to its allies, but those allies gained some amount of additional insight into how the United States was thinking about that commitment. There remained a significant chance—indeed, probably an equal chance to the one that had existed prior to consultation—that patron would fail to aid client in wartime. But client anxieties were assuaged because they possessed an improved understanding of how their patron might approach the decision of whether or not to use nuclear weapons when and if it arose.

Most defensive alliance arrangements involve a risk of abandonment—there is some chance that one ally will fail to aid the other if the *casus foederis* is invoked. The client may have some sense of the probability that it will not receive aid, or it may face abandonment uncertainty and also be unsure of the probability that support will be forthcoming. As we have seen, however, security guarantees entail several layers of deep uncertainty. Clients generally have little *a priori* knowledge of their patrons' capabilities, and the conditions under which they might be able to use those capabilities in wartime. They also face uncertainty over whether the security guarantee is accomplishing its peacetime goal of deterring an attack by the adversary in the first place. Deterrence consultation of course cannot reveal to the client whether or not its adversary is being deterred. But without binding the patron to any particular action or raising the probability of its intervention, it dissipates some of the uncertainty surrounding the capabilities that patron might consider using on behalf of its client, and the circumstances under which it might see fit to intervene. In an alliance with existential stakes but few true guarantees of anything, this reduction in uncertainty provides some assurance, even if substantial ambiguity still remains.



This examination of deterrence consultation mechanisms permits at least one optimistic conclusion. Despite the many reasons that client states have to lament the credibility of their security guarantees, they also have incentives to trust them. As we saw in both the NATO and the Japan cases, nuclear consultations helped each alliance surmount a particularly tumultuous period, and allies welcomed their proximity to patron policy and strategy once these institutions were in place. For all the reasons that a client may doubt the ability of an abstract nuclear umbrella to deter and defend on its behalf, security independence is costly and comes with its own uncertainties. Security guarantees are designed to be long lasting and flexible, and they can accommodate an iterative assurance process if patron and client are so invested. As a Japanese official stated, “seeing is believing,” and client states would not be clients if they did not want to believe. Without paying the costs that we traditionally associate with maintaining credible commitments then, it may be possible for patrons and clients to manage abandonment fears in these seemingly implausible Absolute Alliances.

## CHAPTER 7-CONCLUSIONS

“As de Gaulle has often said, nuclear weapons make alliances obsolete. At the strategic level he was right. That is another reason for calling NATO a treaty of guarantee rather than an old-fashioned alliance.”<sup>780</sup>

-Kenneth N. Waltz

### Further Security Guarantee Research

This dissertation has demonstrated that security guarantees are fundamentally different from other “old-fashioned” alliances in the way that they form and the manner that they are maintained. Ambiguous treaty content and the unilateral provision of aid means that balancing, entrapment, and abandonment all manifest differently in these relationships. While I have found strong support for my initial hypotheses, this study is necessarily a preliminary exploration of so-called umbrella pacts. I hope that it has served to define this sub-class of alliance, identify some important underlying dynamics, and convince the reader that Absolute Alliances are, indeed, markedly distinct from other defense pacts. But much work remains.

Future studies of nuclear security guarantees should treat in far more detail the alliance dilemmas of entrapment and abandonment. I have identified one unique manifestation of each of these in this study, but they exist in many other forms, and the way that clients and patrons manage them is central to understanding why these pacts have persisted for so long. I have argued and found support for the notion that these alliances may cause patrons to intervene in client crises due to fears of entrapment in wider wars.

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<sup>780</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 182.

But the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantees means that clients may also have entrapment fears of their own. In particular, clients may worry that nuclear weapons, the instruments of catastrophic destruction that support their alliance, may be used on their behalf in ways that are inimical to their interests. Indeed, to their continued existence. During the Cold War, both Germany and Japan feared that their populations would face annihilation at the hands of their own nuclear patron. This same concern has become prominent in Seoul in recent years, as South Korea must for the first time entertain the possibility of a nuclear attack across the DMZ. Security guarantee clients may also fear conventional entrapment in their patron's wars, as some in Japan have begun to do since the United States has debuted its Air Sea Battle concept for engaging China. How precisely security guarantees' vast information deficits and one-sided nature stoke client fears of patron entrapment and how these fears are managed is certainly a worthwhile subject of further study, and one that must rely heavily on evidence from client states themselves.

There may also be instances in which the unilateral provision of information is totally insufficient to stem a client state's fear of abandonment. At the time that Robert McNamara was establishing the Nuclear Planning Group, for example, Charles de Gaulle was also preparing to exit NATO's military structure, having already acquired an independent deterrent for France. When client states choose to arm themselves in ways that contravene patron wishes this is a form of double-abandonment. Client states' own fears that they will not be protected in times of need result in their defection from a patron's guarantee. While nuclear proliferation by security guarantee clients is quite uncommon—a surprising fact, given the vexing information problems explored here—many more client states have seriously considered and abandoned independent nuclear

weapons programs, or pursued particular conventional capabilities over their patrons' objections.<sup>781</sup> Good work is presently being done on client states' inclinations towards nuclear proliferation, but the conventional dimension of this dual abandonment dilemma has not been closely studied.<sup>782</sup>

Beyond these additional entrapment and abandonment dimensions, future work should also investigate how major changes in the international system shape and redound within security guarantee alliances. Russia's decision to completely dismantle the Warsaw Pact, and later found the Collective Security Treaty Organization is one important line of inquiry, which may be difficult to undertake due to a lack of available sources. The US decision to repurpose and expand NATO is a parallel security guarantee study that would suffer from far fewer evidentiary afflictions. Another research agenda is an investigation of how security guarantees may interact with the rise of a new major power. This line of inquiry will be discussed later in this chapter. Beyond these avenues for future research, however, this dissertation also speaks broadly to the continued relevance of the study of security guarantees and has some important implications for policy practitioners.

### **Absolute Alliances in History and Policy**

Nuclear umbrella alliances are often discussed as relics and vestiges of the Cold War. While there can be no doubt that the superpower standoff was their genesis, this project opened with the observation that this category of defensive alliance is much broader than

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<sup>781</sup> For a study that treats three cases in which this did occur, see: Avery Goldstein, *Deterrence and Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: China, Britain, France, and the Enduring Legacy of the Nuclear Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

<sup>782</sup> Gene Gerzhoy, *Coercive Nonproliferation: Security, Leverage, and Nuclear Reversals* (University of Chicago: PhD Dissertation, 2014); Alexander Lanoszka, *Protection States Trust?: Major Power Patronage, Alliance Dynamics, and Nuclear Behavior* (Princeton University: PhD dissertation, 2014).

NATO and the Warsaw Pact. It includes alliances that were extended by the USSR and the United States in Asia, and Great Britain also extended its own guarantees. It also includes post-Cold War cases, with the United States adding Eastern European members to NATO and Russia extending its umbrella to the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Moreover, as this project has demonstrated, there are significant similarities between these pacts across time and space—parallels that can be best understood with an eye to security guarantees' vague content and the fact that they provide unidirectional support. The abandonment anxieties that plague the Japanese in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century are not so different than those that seized NATO in the 1960s, and similar tools for addressing those appear to be effective.

The end of the Cold War brought with it the widespread belief that extended deterrence and the security guarantees through which it is imparted would cease to be relevant tools of foreign policy. Recent trends and events, from China's rise, to North Korea's nuclearization and Iran's quest for the bomb, to Russia's invasion of its former Warsaw Pact ally, Ukraine, however, reveal that this is not so. This study generates some insights on the future of nuclear security guarantees in practice as well as in theory.

### ***The Enemy of my Friend in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated that security guarantees are likely to form where a prospective patron and client have exclusively-shared adversaries. That is, the client does not have adversaries that the patron does not also share. This is because the ambiguous and unilateral nature of umbrella alliances mean that a patron cannot tailor its signaling to

a given client adversary, and risks making new enemies and being dragged into war if it extends a guarantee to an ally who has unshared foes.

Principal US policymakers, including President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, have stated that if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, the United States may extend its “security umbrella” over the Gulf.<sup>783</sup> The United States, however, has not extended a new security guarantee since 1954, and there is reason to believe that this would be difficult to achieve domestically. Beyond this, we have good reason to doubt whether a US umbrella would be possible in the Gulf, even if the US Senate supported such a move.

If Iran does go nuclear, the United States will be concerned primarily with reassuring the Arab monarchies that comprise the Gulf Cooperation Council, in addition to Israel. The GCC states, however, all have adversaries that the United States does not share. The Gulf monarchies have persistent territorial and political rivalries amongst themselves, and many also count longstanding US partners, including Turkey and Israel, among their foes. This makes it highly unlikely that US policymakers would actually decide to extend formal treaty guarantees to these states.<sup>784</sup> Chapters 2 and 3 suggest two alternative courses of action.

First, US policymakers may find it prudent to keep alliance relations with Gulf States informal, as in the case of Israel. In this type of relationship, the United States may provide Gulf States with second-order deterrent tools in the form of augmented arms sales, defense

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<sup>783</sup> Julian Borger, “US Ready to Upgrade Defenses of Gulf Allies as Iran Builds Nuclear Arms,” *The Guardian*, July 22, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/22/clinton-iran-nuclear-umbrella-gulf>.

<sup>784</sup> Zachary K. Goldman and Mira Rapp-Hooper, “Conceptualizing Containment: The Iranian Threat and the Future of Gulf Security,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 128, No. 3 (2013), pp. 589-616.

training, and relatively informal military advising. The United States may maintain a political affiliation with the GCC as an organization, but give military aid and consult on a bilateral basis, for the purposes of avoiding intra-Gulf lines of enmity. Washington must be aware, however that the failure to extend to these prospective partners formal guarantees means that it will have less control over Gulf monarchies' armament decisions as a result, as Chapter 4 underscored. This is particularly worrisome in the case of Saudi Arabia. If Iran goes nuclear, experts debate whether Saudi Arabia may develop its own arsenal, or attempt to purchase a small stockpile from Pakistan—the Islamabad deterrent.<sup>785</sup> Some have also argued that an Iranian bomb may cause Pakistan to become a nuclear patron for the first time, extending a formal guarantee to the Saudis.<sup>786</sup> Given serious concerns about Pakistan's nuclear command and control, this is a terrifying prospect.

A second option for the United States is to extend new, formal treaty promises to GCC states, but to stop short of extending broad, one-sided security guarantees. Indeed, as the Franco-Russian case instructs, prospective allies can press forward with formal pacts despite unshared adversaries if they make those alliances specific and contingent. It has extended relatively few non-guarantee defense pacts, but this does not prevent Washington from reconsidering its treaty design under changed circumstances. Given that the United States faces resource constraints that it did not in the early Cold War, and because its leaders are fundamentally uncertain how deeply and permanently invested they want to be in the Middle East, policymakers should explore the possibility of extending more specific defense pacts. These could make US aid to Gulf states conditional on a crisis or conflict with

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<sup>785</sup> Colin Kahl, Melissa Dalton and Matthew Irvine, "Atomic Kingdom: If Iran Builds the Bomb Will Saudi Arabia Be Next?" February 19, 2013, Center for a New American Security.

<sup>786</sup> Kahl et. al., p. 5, 27-30.

Iran—the most –likely, shared adversary—without requiring Washington to make broader, more polarizing commitments. It is possible, however, that Iran would find ways to undermine these contingent commitments, such as through the use of proxy groups like Hezbollah. To maximize the deterrence power of an Iran-directed defense commitment, Washington may want to consider including proxy groups as adversaries in any new agreements. It should, however, return with great caution to a more traditional defense pact structure, and insure that none of its agreements involve secret clauses, and that its promises in crises are consistent with those objects over which it is actually willing to fight.

The exclusive rivalry alliance formation condition also generates insights on US alliances in Asia. When it extended security guarantees in the Pacific in the early Cold War, the United States relied primarily on a “hub-and-spokes” system of bilateral alliances. This made good sense: many of its prospective allies had at least one enemy that Washington did not share—Japan. With the Second World War barely a memory, there was little hope of cooperation between Tokyo and other Pacific powers, and the US-Japan alliance was originally the second phase of US occupation. With China rising and the legacy of World War II in the distance, however, the patterns of enmity that governed early-Cold War alliance formation no longer prevail. This does not mean that that bilateral alliances will be folded into a multilateral structure—historical contingency and organizational stickiness will likely prevent this—but it does mean that US security guarantees in East Asia may come to resemble webs as opposed to spokes.

As US allies in the Pacific grow increasingly alarmed by China’s rise, we should expect deepening defense cooperation between US security guarantee partners. This will include the rise of trilateral relationships such as the United States, Japan, and Australia



and the United States, Japan, and the Philippines. Without requiring new formal treaty commitments, we can expect to see regular, sustained cooperation among US client states that now share a potential adversary. We may also expect to see the formation of more intra-regional security relationships and institutions, as US clients who are used to being on the unilateral end of a broad security guarantee see fit to make deterrence more tangible by doing more for themselves.

The original conditions that shaped US alliance structures in the Pacific are not wholly transformed, however: To Washington's consternation, the longstanding rivalry between Japan and South Korea remains intense and impedes cooperation on North Korea and China between these two close US allies. While many US allies are supportive of Tokyo's decision to reinterpret Article 9, the "peace" clause of its constitution, and to begin some foreign military sales, Seoul remains highly concerned that these are signs of resurgent militarism. This example aside, however, the United States is likely to find that its friends in Asia increasingly share adversaries, with few or no unshared adversaries among them.

### ***Immediate Entrapment Ahead?***

As Chapter 4 demonstrated, the unilateral and ambiguous nature of security guarantees may mean that patrons feel a pull to intervene in relatively peripheral client state crises, lest that weaker ally be defeated, dragging the patron into a wider and more serious war. This lower-level crisis entrapment may be the price that patrons' pay for the higher-order deterrence that may dissuade challengers from attacking clients in the first place, but this tradeoff is near impossible to measure empirically. As we have seen, if

patrons become overly anxious about crisis entrapment, they can take steps to reduce the unilateral or ambiguous nature of their guarantee. But before discussing these, it is worth considering the alliances in which the United States is likely to face crisis entrapment.

The most obvious present-day analogues to the Taiwan Straits Crises lie in the East and South China Seas. In these regions, two US umbrella clients lay claim to islands whose sovereignty is disputed. In the South China Sea, the gravest concern is the Philippines' claims in the Spratly Islands, which are also claimed by China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei, and Vietnam. In the East China Sea, the serious concern is Japan's claim to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which are also claimed by China and Taiwan. As in the US-ROC pact, the status of these islands in the alliance is highly ambiguous and raises serious questions about when the United States might intervene in a war over them on Japan or the Philippines' behalf, if it would at all.

The ambiguity surrounding disputed islands varies substantially between the US-Philippines and US-Japan alliances. The United States has officially adopted a position of neutrality towards the sovereignty claims of all Pacific claimant states. In 2012, during a standoff over the Scarborough Shoals, it declined to declare that its security guarantee to the Philippines in any way applied to the area, and forced its ally to negotiate with China. This resulted in Manila being ousted from the area after Beijing failed to uphold its side of the deal. Washington has made clear that it intends to defend the Philippines home islands if they are attacked, but has not suggested any broader alliance commitment than that.

The situation in the East China Sea is quite different. The disputed Senkakus are part of the Ryukyu Islands, which include Okinawa and were administered by the United States for nearly three decades after the Second World War. While the United States' neutrality on

sovereignty disputes applies to these islands, it also takes the position that the US-Japan security guarantee applies to them by virtue of the fact that Japan administers them. According to Washington, Tokyo has done so since it reverted control of the Ryukyus in 1972, and the security guarantee stipulates that the United States is bound to protect “the territories under the Administration of Japan.”<sup>787</sup> The fact that Article 5 of the treaty applies to the islands, however, says nothing about the actions that the United States would actually take if Japan became embroiled in conflict there. As we know, the treaty does not compel Washington to take any specific action under any particular circumstance. With almost no vested national interest in these uninhabited atolls, a strong compunction to avoid war with China, and the closest US military installation some 200 miles away, Washington may well hesitate to join a Senkaku skirmish.

Could the United States or its allies take actions to mitigate the risk of crisis entrapment over disputed territory in the Pacific? In the East China Sea, Washington has already taken some steps to reduce ambiguity over its position. In 2012, Secretary Clinton reaffirmed that the US-Japan alliance applied to the Senkakus by virtue of Japanese administration, and added a warning that the United States would oppose efforts to change by force Japanese administration of the islands. This was intended to signal to both Japan and China that Beijing could not undermine the US security guarantee through salami-tactics or a *fait accompli* seizure that rendered Japanese administration inapplicable. Whether and how the United States would fight for these islands remains uncertain, and this is an alliance focal point as the Washington and Japan revise their bilateral defense

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<sup>787</sup> Mark E. Manyin, “Senkaku (Diaoyu/Diaoyutai) Islands Dispute: US Treaty Obligations,” January 22, 2013, Congressional Research Service, p. 1.

guidelines in late 2014. Of course, if the United States makes more apparent the conditions of its intervention, it may increase general deterrence while raising the price of its own non-fulfillment of the pact if Beijing should mount a challenge.

Where the unilateral nature of the US-Japan alliance is concerned, Tokyo is already taking steps to provide for its own defense at lower levels of escalation, which may reduce the United States' impetus for immediate crisis intervention. Japan is in the process of reinterpreting Article 9 of its constitution, which will allow it to give security assistance for the first time, rather than solely being a recipient of US defensive aid. It is also seriously contemplating the development of long-range missile capabilities, which have long been prohibited as offensive weaponry. If Tokyo moves forward with these initiatives, this increases the chance that it could take sole or primary responsibility for a Senkaku campaign. But as always, independent patron capabilities also raise the risk that the United States could become entrapped by virtue of that independent action.

Ambiguity in the US-Philippines relationship presents itself quite differently. Where the Spratlys and Scarborough Shoal are concerned, the United States has reaffirmed its defense commitment to the Philippines, but has declined the Philippines' request to state publicly that the mutual defense treaty covers the disputed territory.<sup>788</sup> Even if the United States does not acknowledge Philippine administration, however, it still retains the right to intervene in the dispute because the US-Philippines treaty includes a provision for aid in

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<sup>788</sup> Floyd Whaley, "U.S. Reaffirms Defense of Philippines in Standoff with China," *New York Times*, May 1, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/02/world/asia/us-reaffirms-defense-of-philippines-in-standoff-with-china.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/02/world/asia/us-reaffirms-defense-of-philippines-in-standoff-with-china.html?_r=1&).

the case of an attack on either party's "armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the Pacific."<sup>789</sup>

Unlike in the Japanese case, where Washington has incrementally reduced the ambiguity of its treaty commitment to the Senkakus, it has done little to specify any South China Sea interests on behalf of the Philippines. Instead, it has pressed for mediation by the Association for South East Asian Nations, and supported the Philippines' decision to bring international arbitration against China.<sup>790</sup> If Washington sought to reduce this South China Sea ambiguity without increasing its commitments, it could, of course circumscribe the Philippines' claims from the treaty. This may, however, lead Beijing to feel emboldened, and that these reefs and islets are its for the taking. It seems reasonable to assume that the US-Philippines treaty guarantee will retain its present form. If the Philippines does become victim of a Chinese attack in the Spratlys, however, Washington may nonetheless see fit to intervene. At present, then, it may be mitigating its own risk of crisis entrapment by increasing the risk of crisis instability later.

If the United States did intervene in a South China Sea conflict, one likely reason would be the fact that the Philippines is so weak. With a feeble Coast Guard and Navy, Washington's failure to back Manila in armed conflict against Beijing would almost certainly lead to the former's defeat. In the last few years, Washington has increased Coast Guard aid to Manila, and recently signed an Enhanced Cooperation Agreement, which gives it rotational base access, but these actions only underscore the Philippines' scant capacity

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<sup>789</sup> Walter Lohman, "Scarborough Shoal and Safeguarding American Interests," *The Heritage Foundation*, May 14, 2012, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/05/south-china-sea-dispute-between-china-and-the-philippines-safeguarding-americas-interests>.

<sup>790</sup> Patrick Ventrell, "South China Sea," U.S. Department of State, Press Release, August 3, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/08/196022.htm>.

for self-defense.<sup>791</sup> Because of US alliance ambiguity and the Philippines' maritime weakness, patron crisis entrapment seems to be the most serious risk in the South China Sea.

In both Japan and the Philippines, the United States may see fit to reduce the ambiguity of its commitments with its allies, even if it does not do so publicly. If Washington specifies to its clients, for example, that it will only provide military aid over an island dispute if Japan or the Philippines is the victim of a completely unprovoked attack at these sites, this reduces the chance that either ally assumes it will have US backing in all territorial contingencies. Of course, it is very difficult to know how to define an "unprovoked" attack, and as the Taiwan Straits Crises demonstrate, to know if one has occurred, especially if it takes place at sea.

### ***The Future of Allied Assurance***

As Chapter 5 demonstrated, alliances consultation mechanisms may be useful tools for engaging client state abandonment fears, despite the fact that they do not necessarily strengthen security guarantees. Although deterrence dialogues have recently been instituted in South Korea and Japan, these are likely to become ever-more important as China continues to rise, especially in Tokyo. Because it has had little exposure to nuclear or conventional deterrence strategy until very recently, Japan will naturally have new alliance anxieties that are not yet addressed by the Extended Deterrence Dialogues as China's military reach expands. Deepening existing consultations and adding new elements to

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<sup>791</sup> The Philippines has 125,000 active duty military forces between its army, navy and air force, but no principle surface combatant ships. *The Military Balance*, International Institute for Strategic Studies (London: Routledge, 2014), Chapter 6: Asia.

address the client's perceived threats, such as conventional exercises that address Beijing's growing Anti-Access/Area Denial capabilities and tactics would help to engage those concerns.

Additionally, the United States has no standing deterrence consultations with the Philippines, despite the fact that this is one of its oldest umbrella guarantees. Assuming that China continues to press its claims in the South China Sea, the United States may see fit to establish formal consultations with Manila to engage the abandonment anxieties that it is likely to feel as competition near its coastline increases.

In Europe, US policymakers are already facing a resurgence of abandonment anxiety among NATO allies, but this time the angst will be found primarily among the alliance's newest members. Russia's invasion of Crimea has stoked fears in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia that they will be the next victims of lower-level aggression and coercion. This is, of course, unlikely, as Moscow is well aware that any military action against a NATO ally would provoke a far different international response than the one it faced over Ukraine. But this logic is unlikely to calm jittery Baltic States. This is a particularly difficult conundrum, because some of the tools that nuclear patrons have often used to manifest their otherwise-vague treaty commitments to specific allies, such as forward-deployed troops or nuclear weapons, are unavailable to the United States in this case.

NATO has pledged through a 1997 act not to permanently station troops or NSNWs on the soil of the alliance's newest members.<sup>792</sup> The most overt security guarantee signals that a patron can send to its adversaries and allies cannot be used in this case, at least not

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<sup>792</sup> "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1997, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_25468.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm).

on a permanent basis. This means that candid, regular consultation will be especially important to reassure anxious clients. Additionally, because many of the most apprehensive European states were only admitted to NATO in 2004, they have had minimal exposure to US nuclear strategy and policy. The NPG meets only once a year and these states do not participate in the more regular work of the HLG, so they have very limited deterrence-relevant information compared to their Western European counterparts. This suggests that “special” deterrence consultations—crash courses in NATO defense and deterrence policies and strategies—may be helpful in addressing these newer clients’ fears. Special contingency planning and exercises with these allies may also be advisable.

This NATO assurance challenge is likely to be accompanied by another intra-alliance problem: NATO states near Russia’s borders are experiencing significant abandonment anxiety, while Western European countries have been hesitant to react to Russia’s Ukraine transgressions. How will the alliance undertake the signaling necessary to assuage newer members without the full backing of the original allies? One can imagine, for example, that Eastern European states would like to see the alliance abandon its “Adaptive Planning” process and resume explicit preparations for nuclear contingencies that involve Russia. Whether or not this will appeal to “Old Europe,” however, is another question entirely. Put differently, NATO expansion came at a time when the allies considered resurgent Russia a potential, but mostly theoretical foe. The threat from Moscow has since become manifest to many former Soviet states, but Western European countries do not judge it to be nearly so pressing. How a multilateral security guarantee signals its commitment when members do not agree on the extent of the threat from the shared adversary is no small problem. In all likelihood, it is also one that is likely to fall to the United States as unidirectional guarantor.



Far from being a Cold War alliance concern, security guarantee formation and entrapment and abandonment continue to present themselves in unique ways by virtue of the unilateral and ambiguous nature of these pacts. These dilemmas may reveal themselves in novel contexts, but many of the patterns are familiar and the tradeoffs are no less vexing.

### **Extended Deterrence in Transition**

This study suggests another research agenda that is relevant to both IR theorists and policymakers. As I have demonstrated, security guarantees are unique to the nuclear age, and until very recently, extended deterrence was thought of as a defunct Cold War concern. Scholars have not considered the fact that we have never experienced a major power transition when the dominant state in the international system has a longstanding network of security guarantees in place.<sup>793</sup>

When modern extended deterrence was conceived in the late 1940s, the Cold War was already under way. The international system was clearly bipolar in its structure, and the superpowers' alliances were instruments for consolidating their spheres of influence. NATO was founded after the Soviets had fortified their reach in Eastern Europe in the immediate postwar years. Its military structure was largely a response to the first Soviet nuclear test in 1949 and North Korea's 1950 invasion of the South. The Warsaw Pact was, similarly, a reaction to West Germany's rearmament and accession to NATO. Security guarantees were, at the outset, a symptom, rather than a cause, of major power rivalry, although they certainly became a catalyst for conflict as the Cold War dragged on.

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<sup>793</sup> For a fuller treatment of this argument, see: Zachary Cooper and Mira Rapp-Hooper, "A New Model of Great Power Transitions?: Extended Deterrence, Status Quo Perceptions, and US-China Relations," Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meetings, August 29, 2014.

Today, the vast majority of the United States' Cold War extended deterrence commitments remain in place and have been adapted to new security challenges, including China's rise. Never before has a new major power risen in a region that is rife with another's extended deterrence guarantees. Power transition theorists have argued that alliances may help to stabilize the status quo during a time of structural change, but scholars and strategists have not analyzed this proposition in any detail.<sup>794</sup>

Power transitions are particularly fragile moments for the international system. We should expect that the existence of umbrella guarantees may have some effect on the likelihood of conflict during a tenuous period. At times of stasis as well as transition, all states exhibit some degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the distribution of benefits in the international system.<sup>795</sup> The most powerful states have typically had the most influence in creating the existing order, and they therefore benefit disproportionately from that system. In times of stability, the distribution of power is well matched with the distribution of benefits. Those states that are satisfied with the status quo have little incentive to alter the status quo while those states that are dissatisfied have little ability to do so.

Power transitions, however, upend this condition by skewing the distribution of power and the distribution of benefits. When weak states acquire power relative to their stronger peers, power is typically transferred from more satisfied to less satisfied states.

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<sup>794</sup> Ronald L. Tammen, Jacek Kugler, Douglas Lemke, Allan C. Stam III, Carole Alsharabati, Mark Andrew Abdollahian, Brian Efirid, and A.F.K. Organski, *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century* (New York: Chatham House Publishers, 2000), p. 13.

<sup>795</sup> See Organski, A. F. K. *World Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958). Also see Organski, A. F. K. and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

Moreover, an increase in a state's capabilities may motivate that state to desire a change in the prevailing order.<sup>796</sup>

Extended deterrence complicates this dynamic condition precisely because it is a tool of status quo preservation. As we know, the United States and Soviet Union brought allies under their umbrellas to prevent changes to the political and territorial status quo and to exercise some influence over their client states' security policies. These alliances were intended to lock in each superpower's sphere of influence.

Decades on, the United States still maintains most of its Cold War guarantees, but has repurposed them to meet contemporary defense challenges. This has been possible in large part because the treaties themselves are so vague, and specify almost nothing about their targets. But while Washington views its robust alliance presence in the Pacific as a fundamental part of the political status quo, Beijing increasingly argues that its continued presence there is revisionist—the vestige of a bygone conflict that should have been dismantled along with the Berlin Wall.<sup>797</sup> Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for the creation of an Asian alliance that excludes the United States and suggested that US guarantees create a moral hazard problem among its clients.<sup>798</sup> Alliances, which Glenn Snyder has called “quasi-structural,” may be more than a quasi-problem as Chinese power continues to grow and the structure of the international system itself shifts.

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<sup>796</sup> Organski notes: “A rapid rise in power thus produces dissatisfaction in itself.” Organski, *World Politics*, p. 367.

<sup>797</sup> Helene Cooper and Jane Perlez, “US Sway in Asia is Imperiled as China Challenges Alliances,” *The New York Times*, May 30, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/31/world/asia/us-sway-in-asia-is-imperiled-as-china-challenges-alliances.html?hp&r=0>;

<sup>798</sup> “China's Xi Calls for Asia Security Framework at Summit,” *Bloomberg News*, May 21, 2014, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-05-21/china-s-xi-calls-for-asia-security-framework-at-summit.html>.

How precisely may US security guarantees affect the propensity for conflict during a power transition? This study suggests that they may reduce the risk of some types of conflict, while increasing the risk of others. If power transitions are generally associated with some changes to the political and territorial status quo, extended deterrence may forestall these. Although the treaty guarantees themselves contain almost no information, the fact that US alliances with South Korea and Japan have been in place for 60 years means that close political relationships have followed these treaty guarantees. If Beijing had any interest in attacking Tokyo or Seoul, which it probably does not, it could not do so and expect Washington to stand aside. Where guarantees have been maintained over long periods of time, red lines are drawn and vital interests manifested.

Washington's intent to defend its client states is not always so apparent, however. Its alliance with the Philippines was hollowed out after Manila ejected it from Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay in 1992, and is only just being restored in response to China's rise. Taiwan is no longer a full security guarantee client, but holds a contingent defense commitment from the United States in the form of the Taiwan Relations Act.<sup>799</sup> And as noted above, several US treaty allies have territorial claims whose status within the broader alliance is uncertain. Where US actions over time have not clarified its clients or parts of their territory to be vital interests, its guarantee treaties continue to provide little evidence of how precisely it may respond in specific contingencies, if at all. It is in these ambiguous areas that extended deterrence may raise the risk of conflict in a power transition.

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<sup>799</sup> "Taiwan Relations Act," American Institute in Taiwan, <http://www.ait.org.tw/en/taiwan-relations-act.html>.

Fuzzy commitments may present appealing targets for opportunism if a rising power is dissatisfied with the political and territorial order in any way. Where US alliance commitments are poorly defined, China may calculate that it can challenge those incrementally, in an effort to reveal the United States' limited interests and erode confidence in its guarantees. How the United States is likely to react to such challenges, even where its interests are minimal, however, is another question.

In general, when a dominant state is faced with a rising challenger, it has at least four possible avenues of recourse: retrenchment, burden-sharing with allies, accommodation, or preventive war.<sup>800</sup> The United States is already encouraging greater burden sharing within its alliances, but a formal system of extended deterrence makes it much harder for it to contemplate even limited alliance retrenchment. If it forswears or fails to make good on any one commitment, policymakers are likely to worry that allies and adversaries alike will make broader inferences about the remainder of its umbrella. Because its treaty commitments are vague and long-lasting, the United States is unlikely to be able to dismantle any of these selectively, or to allow them to lapse over time. Moreover, the fact that the United States has ambiguous commitments to specific allies or territories does not mean that it will not act to defend them if China uses coercion or force in those areas. But in cases like these, where US interests are less than clear, security guarantee commitments may invite crisis instability or conflict between the two superpowers where it might otherwise have been avoided. This phenomenon may be thought of as a Clarity-Ambiguity Paradox of security guarantees.

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<sup>800</sup> Organski and Kugler, p. 25.

This paradox leads us once again to the dilemma of whether the United States should clarify or circumscribe its guarantees in the face of entrapment risks. If it explicitly states a willingness to fight for the Senkaku Islands or Scarborough Shoal, it must be prepared to do so. Alternatively, if it communicates to its allies and allows China to infer that it will not defend certain territories or states, it can expect to be challenged there. The existence of an alliance treaty, however, makes it harder for it to back away from a less-than-vital commitment, making it more likely that the United States will stand firm despite the fact that its vested political interests do not require it.

One key difference between the Cold War conflict and the emerging US-China dynamic, however, is that Washington and Beijing are not sworn adversaries; US allies in East Asia do not at present need to choose between their economic and social ties to China and their close security and political ties to the United States. Both Washington and Beijing also have strong incentives to convince one another that they seek to avoid war. In addition to the long-employed influence strategies of extended deterrence and assurance that are associated with security guarantees, then, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has already seen an emphasis on a third strategy: adversary reassurance, whereby one power seeks to convince a potential foe that no harm will come to it if it acts with restraint.

The desire to send benign signals to China may well inform some of the security guarantee dynamics studied here. The United States may, for example, be less likely to intervene militarily in an ally's crisis for fear of provoking China, and less inclined to rely on overt signaling on behalf of its allies. This, in turn, may make assurance through consultation all the more important as umbrella allies worry whether Washington's efforts

to defuse US-China tensions are indicators that its patron will not support it militarily against Beijing.

Even with this profound change—the rise of a new major power that is not necessarily a sworn adversary—it seems highly unlikely that US security guarantees will be transformed or dismantled. In many ways, both the United States and its East Asian client states are relying more heavily on these relationships now than they ever have. Instead, as in the case of NATO, these security guarantees' vagueness will likely allow them to adapt to patron and clients' needs as power shifts and the international context changes. The longest-lasting alliances in international politics are likely to persist, precisely because they promise so much and specify so little. What Thomas Schelling remarked of deterrence commitments in general is doubly true of these Absolute Alliances: “we can wait—preferably forever; that’s our purpose.”<sup>801</sup>

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<sup>801</sup> Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 72.

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