Protection States Trust?: Major Power Patronage, Nuclear Behavior, and Alliance Dynamics

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Abstract

Why do some states that receive a nuclear security guarantee move towards, and sometimes back away from, nuclear weapons? To answer these questions, I propose alliance compensation theory. I argue that allies become more likely to engage in nuclear behavior when they doubt the reliability of the security guarantees they receive from their major power patrons (e.g., the United States and the Soviet Union). Specifically, I show that allies evaluate the strength of these guarantees by referring to their patron’s overseas conventional military deployments and foreign policy doctrines – in short, its strategic posture. When the nuclear-armed patron implements undesirable conventional military redeployments (e.g., unilateral troop withdrawals), the ally loses confidence in the patron’s earlier pledges to provide it with military support in a future nuclear crisis. These doubts encourage the ally to adopt policies that range from signaling an interest in an nuclear arsenal to activating a nuclear weapons program. Allies that covertly undertake nuclear activities are seeking to produce an independent deterrent. Allies that overtly engage in nuclear behavior are also bargaining over the terms of their patron’s security guarantees. I further argue that the interaction of two variables – the ally’s economic and security dependence on the patron – affect the major power’s ability to force the ally to credibly renounce nuclear weapons acquisition. To test this argument, I include three main cases on West Germany, Japan, and South Korea in addition to narrower cases on the United Kingdom, France, and Soviet allies. I also draw on statistical analysis to investigate the relationship between conventional military withdrawals and the likelihood of US allies to engage in nuclear behavior.
Dedication

For my parents.


“This is why I value that little phrase ‘I don’t know’ so highly. It’s small, but it flies on mighty wings. It expands our lives to include the spaces within us as well as those outer expanses in which our tiny Earth hangs suspended.”

Acknowledgements

Like anarchy, graduate school is what you make out of it.

When discussing graduate school and the process of dissertation-writing, people tend to offer two pieces of conventional wisdom. The first is that intense academic study must be anti-social and monastic. The second is that an advanced education requires you to focus exclusively on smaller and smaller questions that are disconnected from larger concerns.

Both views could not be more wrong. On the first piece of conventional wisdom, as a friend once told me, dissertation-writing is intensely social. You intervene in debates involving other academics, you engage a rich body of scholarship produced by other researchers, you interview regional experts to build case knowledge, you learn from your peers when they provide critical feedback, you develop a strong sense of camaraderie with your cohort, you meet graduate students from other programs at conference panels and summer workshops, you suffer the many rejections together and celebrate the few successes, you learn from your mentors, you put yourself out there.

I have benefited tremendously from my committee. John Ikenberry has been my adviser since the first day I arrived at Princeton University. He provided me with an extraordinary level of assistance and guidance over the years that I could not have envisioned when I began the doctoral program. Tom Christensen has kept me honest in the best way possible. He never shied away from saying that “this chapter is a disaster” and “don’t go down this road” when it needed to be said. At the same time, I never once felt discouraged. Keren Yarhi-Milo has been truly supportive and always made sure that I strive hard to reach my potential as both a scholar and thinker. Thankfully, David Carter was also never one to hold back on criticism. I have found his guidance and commentary particularly illuminating and helpful. It is my sincere hope that the quality of this dissertation meets their high standards. Beyond my committee, I am grateful to Aaron Friedberg for serving on my prospectus committee and his input on my project in its earlier stages. He provided me with significant moral and
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The second piece of conventional wisdom is that dissertation-writing involves thinking in increasingly narrow terms for the sake of esoterism and specialization. Yes, asking a
narrow question (e.g., “what sort of tone did South Korean diplomats use in their exchanges with their American interlocutors in late 1970?”) is part of the research process. But I firmly believe that they can add up and serve a higher purpose so as to illuminate bigger questions (e.g., “how do states respond to major and unforeseen alliance adjustments?”) that loom over international relations theory. In reading so many correspondences between foreign service officers and various diplomats, on a wide range of sometimes obscure topics, I was surprised by how many insights I gained into decision-making, cognitive and social psychology, and politics, more generally. I still approach these issues naively, but undertaking archival research for this project has been extraordinarily rewarding. I thus appreciate the services offered by the staff at the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter Presidential Libraries as well as the Diplomatic Archives at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US National Archives in College Park, Maryland.

Lastly, this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my parents, Marek and Anna Lanoszka. I dedicate this dissertation to them. As I see it, I am not supposed to have the chance to submit a doctoral dissertation at Princeton University. After all, my parents met in communist Poland and fled to Canada. Their escape took place soon after martial law was lifted when communism still seemed invincible. Shortly thereafter I was born. Together we benefited from the generous opportunities for social mobility that Canada provides. I spent my formative years in rural Nova Scotia. I went to the University of Windsor for my undergraduate degree and received a stellar education in international relations that drew heavily on political science, economics, and history. And from there I crossed the border to Detroit and took my belongings to the hallowed halls of Princeton University.

I am not sure what the future brings, but I am so proud of the progress made since my dad anxiously boarded that ramshackle plane in Warsaw. If it were not for my parents’ strength and their inspiring model, I would not have made it this far.
Thank you, \textit{tatuś i mamusia}.

Alexander Lanoszka
Princeton, NJ
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Towards the end of March 2013, I was in Seoul, South Korea to meet with research assistants and conduct interviews with regional experts for this project on alliance politics and nuclear statecraft. The streets in the Gangnam District appeared normal enough. Local citizens did their everyday shopping. The coffee shops were busy serving overpriced lattes. The metro system had the crowds of a Fritz Lang film. And yet my timing was peculiar.

Now under the leadership of Park Geun-hye, South Korea was facing one of the most serious provocations in recent history. On February 12, the North Korean government successfully tested a nuclear weapon, with observers estimating its yield to be much higher than what earlier projections regarding the North’s nuclear capabilities had suggested. Eliciting widespread worldwide condemnation, the detonation set in motion a crisis in which the North Korean leadership adopted extreme and inflammatory rhetoric against South Korea and the United States. Kim Jong-un, the Supreme Leader of the North Korea, went as far as declaring that the state of armistice that came into force in July 1953 was no longer active.¹ In response to these provocations, the United States participated in joint military exercises with South Korea. On March 28, the United States dispatched two B-2A stealth bombers

¹ “North Korea ends armistice with South amid war games on both sides of border,” The Guardian, March 11, 2013.
to a roundtrip from Missouri to the Korean Peninsula where they dropped inert munitions on a South Korean bombing range. The following day, stock footage and photographs of the stealth bombers appeared on South Korean television reports and the front pages of the major daily newspapers in Seoul. Basically, B-2 bombers were flying over my head.

These efforts at deterring the North and reassuring the South took place as the South Korean government was looking to lift a ban on its ability to reprocess spent nuclear fuel. The United States has worried that lifting this ban would enable South Korea to divert nuclear energy towards military purposes. But why is the United States so worried? South Korea, circa 2013 is a liberal democracy with the twelfth largest economy in the world. It hardly resembles the typical country that attempts a nuclear weapons program in the twenty-first century. It is known for its smartphones and the frustratingly catchy song ‘Gangnam Style.’ It is not a theocracy, nor does it feature cults of personality and rogue dictators that starve their populations. South Korea looks so little like such countries as Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and North Korea – countries that had at best dubious policies towards nuclear weapons since 2000.

Yet the United States has good reasons to worry. For one, about two-thirds of South Koreans polled in 2013 are in favor of their country acquiring nuclear weapons. Underlying this attitude is an inflated sense of threat. Yes, a rising China and an aggressive, nuclear-armed North Korea justify a perception of insecurity. Nevertheless, a poll commissioned by a Japanese think tank reported that a majority of South Koreans see Japan as posing a credible military threat. In this poll, South Koreans were asked to situate countries on a ten-point scale of favorability. North Korea scored 2.43, but Japan scarcely fared better with a score of 2.66. If South Korea is to act on such threat perceptions and develop its own nuclear arsenal, then the repercussions could be severe. In an interview in Tokyo, a

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5 “62% of South Koreans regard Japan as a military threat: think tank poll,” The Japan Times, October 30, 2013.
major public intellectual warned me that such an undertaking would shatter the nuclear taboo that presently exists in Japanese society.\footnote{Author’s interview with Yoichi Funabashi, Tokyo, Japan, March 2013.} A Japan with nuclear arms would not only undermine the existing alliance with the United States. It would also shatter the already delicate security architecture currently in place in East Asia by stoking fear in neighboring states (not the least of which is China) of a resurgent and militarist Japan. The stakes are high.

A historical precedent of the South Koreans attempting to develop nuclear weapons also explains US fears. It is useful to relate an anecdote that at once hints at this earlier effort and highlights some key themes of this project. In the late 1970s, when Park Geun-hye was in her mid-twenties, her father Park Chung-hee was the military dictator of South Korea. Tensions in South Korea were running high. Indeed, his wife – Park Geun-hye’s mother – was killed in an assassination attempt that looked to him a Japanese-North Korean conspiracy. Moreover, US President Jimmy Carter considered a complete troop withdrawal from the Korean peninsula, partly because the brutal autocratic rule that characterized South Korean politics at this time was wholly inconsistent with Carter’s human rights advocacy.

In order to obtain a greater understanding of how local elites regarded their country’s political situation, the US Ambassador in Seoul Richard Sneider met in June 1977 with a group of several key South Koreans. This group included one nuclear scientist. These individuals expressed concern regarding the direction of their country’s foreign policy. The nuclear scientist, in particular, was anxious that their government might embark on a nuclear weapons project. This fear was justified. Earlier that decade South Korea undertook a covert nuclear weapons program that had prematurely ended shortly after the US government discovered its operation. It was thus not inconceivable for Park Chung-hee to restart this program. To avert such a possibility, the nuclear scientist and his compatriots suggested to Sneider that the United States revise its alliance relationship with the East Asian country. Specifically, they recommended that the United States extend a nuclear umbrella to South
Understandably, the US ambassador left this meeting perplexed and frustrated. In a subsequent cable to his superiors in Washington, D.C., Sneider noted his surprise when he first heard this proposal. After all, following the Korean War armistice, the United States signed a mutual defense treaty with South Korea. As a consequence of this agreement, South Korea enjoyed a number of security benefits, not the least of which involved being placed under the protection of a nuclear umbrella. The term ‘nuclear umbrella’ is a convenient shorthand to describe the security guarantee that a nuclear-armed patron, like the United States or the Soviet Union, supplies to its ally. A shortcoming of this term is that it understates the offensive role nuclear weapons would play at the tactical level. The more appropriate term, ‘nuclear umbrella and sword’, seems to me too long and clumsy to use. For stylistic purposes, I will use the more popularly used term. Nevertheless, despite my decision, readers should not forget the tactical dimension of nuclear weapons. I thank Scott Sagan for raising this point.

Just the year before the United States demonstrated its resolve to North Korea by launching a military operation that involved cutting a tree down in the Demilitarized Zone. This show of force was a response to the North Korean killing of two US Army officers who had tried to cut a tree so as to clear visibility in the area. More critically, underpinning this nuclear umbrella was the forward deployment of US tactical nuclear weapons on the peninsula. That these individuals appeared ignorant of the nature of US alliance protection made Sneider uneasy. He was worried about South Korea’s prospects of acquiring nuclear weapons and the stability of the alliance. As he reported, “I am struck one [sic] again by evidence of ignorance at very senior Korean government levels of either costs or risks involved in the weapons development program over and above seriously adverse impact on US relationship [sic].” The extent to which the South Korean government actually engaged in nuclear weapons research in the late 1970s remains unclear. Still, the US government found itself reassuring the South Korean government of its alliance commitments.

These two different episodes – drawn from very different contexts in South Korean – suggest a connection between the military power of the stronger ally (in this case, the United

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7The term ‘nuclear umbrella’ is a convenient shorthand to describe the security guarantee that a nuclear-armed patron, like the United States or the Soviet Union, supplies to its ally. A shortcoming of this term is that it understates the offensive role nuclear weapons would play at the tactical level. The more appropriate term, ‘nuclear umbrella and sword’, seems to me too long and clumsy to use. For stylistic purposes, I will use the more popularly used term. Nevertheless, despite my decision, readers should not forget the tactical dimension of nuclear weapons. I thank Scott Sagan for raising this point.

States), reassurance, and nuclear proliferation. This connection appears to be motivating US crisis behavior in East Asia to this day. Both episodes also highlight a particular view of how weapons technologies buttress security guarantees. Indeed, misunderstandings regarding the relationship between conventional military power and nuclear statecraft can paradoxically influence state perceptions of alliance reliability and, by extension, the incentives for states to move towards nuclear weapons acquisition.

These observations also point to an important question around which this book is organized: why do states that have the security guarantees of a nuclear-armed patron strive towards, and sometimes back away, nuclear weapons acquisition? By patron, I refer to such major powers as the United States, the Soviet Union/Russia, and even China – states that are capable of extending nuclear deterrence to at least one of its allies.\(^9\)

That some allies choose these actions and not others in the nuclear era is puzzling for several reasons. First, because these states are aligned with a major power, they fall under a nuclear umbrella and thus theoretically enjoy extended deterrence. Accordingly, we would expect that these states have fewer incentives for possessing these materials. Indeed, we expect these states to free ride on the security granted to them by their patrons. Second, the mere acquisition of these technologies is destabilizing in international politics. The risk for proliferation raises the level of threat perceived by states belonging to an adversary alliance, thus increasing the likelihood for preventive attack. By generating such uncertainty, movements towards nuclear weapons acquisition (i.e. nuclear behavior) also compromises those alliance structures on which these states depend for their own security. Put differently, whereas major power patronage offers protection and stability, an ally’s nuclear behavior can renew international tensions and spark dangerous crises.

Despite these disincentives for pursuing nuclear behavior, numerous instances of allies

\(^9\)The capacity of Great Britain and France to extend nuclear deterrence to security partners beyond continental Europe was extremely limited until they developed intercontinental ballistic missiles. The same could be said for the Soviet Union and the United States. China and Russia face significant limits to project its nuclear power to this day. For a discussion of US nuclear primacy in the post-Cold War era, see Lieber and Press (2006).
engaging in such activities can be found in the historical record. We are aware of the ‘usual suspects’ of nuclear proliferation. The United Kingdom and France both successfully acquired an independent nuclear capability. China chose to acquire nuclear weapons in spite of its alliance with the Soviet Union. Yet other, less familiar examples exist of states that engaged in at least lower levels of nuclear behavior. Aside from South Korea, these states include West Germany, Italy, Spain, Norway, Romania, and Taiwan. These cases are not restricted to the Cold War. South Korea surreptitiously obtained heavy water and utilized it to enrich weapons-grade uranium in 2001 — a move that earned it sharp censure from the international community. Indeed, the case of South Korea demonstrates the enduring importance of understanding the connection between patron military power, extended deterrence, reassurance, and nuclear proliferation.

The Argument in Brief

Why do states that have a formal defense pact with a nuclear-armed patron begin, and sometimes cease, nuclear behavior? I advance a new theory called *alliance compensation theory*. This framework emphasizes the role of major power credibility and alliance dynamics. I argue that leaders of allies continuously evaluate the reliability of their patron’s security commitments. To infer credibility, allies look to the conventional military deployments and foreign policy doctrines of their patron — that is, their patron’s strategic posture. When these indicators suggest alliance abandonment — as in the instance of a unilateral troop withdrawal from the ally’s territory — the ally becomes more likely to engage in nuclear behavior. The most general purpose underlying this response is to obtain greater insurance. By engaging in nuclear behavior *covertly*, then the ally is seeking an independent deterrent capability so as to one day block the coercion efforts by the adversary. By engaging in nuclear behavior *overtly*, then the ally might have this objective or it might not. By rejecting demands to clarify its nuclear intentions and adopt proper safeguards on its nuclear facilities, they are
using the threat of nuclear proliferation as a bargaining chip so as to extract new security assurance from their patron.

To explain why states should cease their nuclear behavior (i.e. nuclear reversal), I claim that we must understand the issue of termination as a function of some bargaining process between the ally and their patron. At stake here is the terms of the security offered to the ally. The strategic interaction turns on two issues. First, the major power needs to demonstrate the credibility of its commitment. Second, the ally needs to make commitments that – if it were to reverse on its nuclear activities – it would not engage in nuclear behavior again. What is the major power to do in such already unfavorable circumstances?

The patron cannot credibly threaten military force against the ally, but it has two potential sources of leverage that it could use to compel a nuclear reversal. That is, the patron’s ability to encourage the weaker ally to back away from nuclear weapons is a function of the extent to which the weaker ally relies on the stronger ally for both its security and economic needs. Security dependence is reflected in the membership scope of the alliance. In a bilateral setting, the weaker ally has no (obvious) substitute for the patron’s assurances. Furthermore, the major power has greater leeway in its conduct towards the weaker ally. These traits are absent in a multilateral setting. Allies can cobble together a countervailing coalition against the patron, and so they have greater leeway in their conduct towards the patron. Economic dependence is reflected in the reliance of the ally on the patron for its trade and foreign aid. The interaction of these two factors shape the ability of the patron to coerce a quick and favorable resolution to the ally’s nuclear behavior. Put together, intra-alliance dynamics account for why states both begin and end their engagement in nuclear behavior.

In advancing my argument, I improve upon existing understandings of the issues at hand. First, nuclear acquisition on the part of an ally largely undermines the major power’s command of the region in which the proliferator is located. Having a nuclear capability
levels the playing field between states by offering a countervailing measure against attempts at coercion that more powerful states can successfully make otherwise. Nuclear proliferation sharply revises balances of power between allies and enhances foreign policy autonomy in a way that makes the major power less able to manage its junior partners and alliance structures. As a consequence, the major power has particular incentives for challenging an ally’s nuclear behavior. Given the implications that nuclear proliferation has for a major power’s leading status, it is unclear why an ally would spoil its relationship with its patron and risk bearing the brunt of coercive dissuasion tactics by the major power.10 Because many scholars have written on the determinants of nuclear behavior from a monadic perspective, the literature provides little guidance on understanding this subject. We are left with some key questions: Why would allies pursue actions that could conceivably prompt restraint and punishment efforts from the patron? Under what conditions would allies choose military policies that contradict the interests of a dominant alliance member or the larger alliance system itself?

Second, many of the historical examples listed above did not acquire nuclear weapons. In fact, these states not only failed to proliferate, but they largely renounced nuclear weapons altogether. This pattern of ‘denuclearization’ draws attention to another important puzzle: why do states that do engage in nuclear behavior sometimes fully reverse course? Little guidance to this question exists as of yet, and many current theories of nuclear proliferation cannot account for both the start and stop of states’ nuclear behavior. Indeed, the analytical problem raised here is analogous to one that confronts scholars of international conflict:

10I use the terms ‘major power’, ‘patron’, and ‘major power patron’ interchangeably for stylistic purposes to describe those states that have significant power project capabilities. All things equal, only these states are able to fight a conventional war alone against another major power on its own territory (Mearsheimer 2001, 5). During the Cold War, the international system contained two major powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Though the United States became the sole major power with the end of the Cold War, one contemporary debate concerns whether the United States will continue to enjoy this privileged status or China will soon join its rank (see Brooks and Wohlforth 2008). Major power patrons are price-makers in international security: they contribute the most to alliance systems and provide such goods as order and stability in relations among weaker states. By contrast, allies are generally price-takers in international security. They do not share the major power’s ability to wage conventional warfare and thus possess fewer means to block coercion efforts by other states.
namely, that any explanation of war termination should also account for war onset. The phenomenon of nuclear reversal also is problematic for the view that self-help motivates nuclear behavior.

Take, for example, a plausible realist answer to the questions posed here. One realist claim would be that the self-help nature of the anarchic international system encourages states to engage in nuclear behavior. These states cannot rely on others, even their major power patrons, to meet their security needs. Because states cannot dial 911 to receive assistance when their survival is under jeopardy, they turn to nuclear weapons as a primary source of insurance once they have sufficient capabilities to establish their own nuclear program. The incentives for maintaining a nuclear weapons program disappear once their threat environment has lessened in its severity.

This simple realist view suggests that why states engage in nuclear behavior is not a puzzle. However, this perspective would be wrong. Consider the cases of South Korea and Taiwan. Arguably, both were largely poor agrarian economies before being industrially capable to develop an independent nuclear capability. Thus, Taiwan waited several years to develop its capability following China’s detonation of its first nuclear weapon in 1964 and South Korea took time to respond to North Korean efforts at procuring materials for a nuclear weapon. A capability-centered explanation does not address why both states ceased their nuclear activities in the 1970s when the threats they faced remained severe. In fact, a capability-centered explanation over-predicts states’ engagement in nuclear behavior.¹¹ These East Asian examples are not unique. France did not begin developing nuclear weapons until almost ten years after Great Britain. Even West Germany, which hosted large US conventional military deployments and thus was of high interest to US security, engaged in nuclear behavior. Indeed, that some states reversed on their achievements towards developing

¹¹Data drawn from Jo and Gartzke (2007) reveals that the relationship between industrial capacity and nuclear weapons possession is highly correlative and statistically significant. Nevertheless, if one were to exclude the United States and the Soviet Union from the analysis, the positive predictive value is 2.5%. This result demonstrates that the predictive model generates many false positives (Type I error).
nuclear weapons adds to the general insufficiency of the simple realist argument presented above.\textsuperscript{12}

**Motivations**

Additional motivations guide this project. The first motivation is that the diffusion of nuclear technology has major implications for how leading states manage and sustain an international order of their liking. Oddly, this insight has been overlooked until very recently by analysts who explore such related issues as international hierarchy and hegemony.\textsuperscript{13} Current conceptions of hierarchical relations have paid insufficient attention to the role played by subordinate states in alliance contracting and bargaining.\textsuperscript{14} Cold War descriptions of superpower rivalry and hierarchy overlook the ways in which weaker states seek to improve their security, leading some observers like John Lewis Gaddis to conclude that “the post-1945 bipolar structure was a simple one that did not require sophisticated leadership to maintain it.”\textsuperscript{15} This statement could not be further from the truth. Allies troubled their patrons by engaging in undesirable actions when they felt their own security interests to be at stake. Moreover, theories of hierarchy often presume a world where only conventional military power exists. Analyzing the dynamics between major powers and their junior partners over nuclear issues can reveal fresh insights on how international hierarchical relations are asserted and preserved.

A second and related motivation is to further our understanding of internal alliance dynamics. Alliances are organizations created by at least two states that have common security objectives. For alliances to be effective and cohesive member states have to coordinate on

\textsuperscript{12}Solingen (2007) provides an excellent description of the indeterminacy and insufficiency of existing structural realist accounts in explaining key cases of nuclear proliferation. In explaining facts that do not fit well with the original theory, conventional realist accounts become prone to introducing ad hoc hypotheses that depart critically from the theory’s core assumptions (see Elman and Elman 2002).

\textsuperscript{13}See Deudney (2011).

\textsuperscript{14}Lake (2009).

\textsuperscript{15}Gaddis (1986, 108).
their military policies to some extent. Nuclear behavior is one area of military policy that has dramatic, and often negative, ramifications for the integrity and cohesion of the alliance. Uncertainty over the status of a state’s nuclear ambitions generates anxiety among non-nuclear alliance partners that they might find themselves in a regional arms race or be exposed to future attempts at nuclear blackmail. Contentious armament decisions shape the dynamics of alliance partners, yet this phenomenon has not received adequate attention in the existing literature on alliances.\textsuperscript{16}

Moreover, a central insight in the alliance literature is that states form alliances to make credible commitments towards the security of their security partners. Indeed, one recent line of scholarship has described such agreements as contracts between states. In asymmetrical alliances, the security partnership takes the form of a ‘contract’ in which the patron provides certain goods as security and stability in exchange for the ally’s own security assets (e.g., basing rights, alignment). When allies undertake nuclear behavior, however, they are revealing their dissatisfaction with the existing terms of such ‘security contracts’. How states renegotiate these contracts has been the subject of limited research.\textsuperscript{17} I hope to contribute to this growing literature by fruitfully linking discussions of credibility of alliances, nuclear behavior decisions, and security contracting.

A fourth motivation is rooted in the observation that nuclear behavior will continue to be a salient feature of international politics. It is tempting to believe that examining alliance dynamics and contentious nuclear behaviors with a focus on empirical examples drawn primarily from the Cold War has little relevance for today. This view is wrong, however. Francis Gavin notes that there is remarkable continuity in how states confront nuclear proliferation throughout the Cold War and beyond. Revisionist, nuclear-seeking states like North Korea and Iran are not a recent phenomenon. US and Soviet decision-

\textsuperscript{16}Pressman (2008) offers a key example of the existing scholarship, but he describes only the failed US alliance restraint efforts in preventing Israel from acquiring the bomb.

\textsuperscript{17}Examples of this line of inquiry include Cooley (2008) and Cooley and Spruyt (2009).
makers were similarly anxious about China and its nuclear program in the 1960s. Indeed, a salient concern at the time was that Chinese proliferation would kindle wider nuclear proliferation in East Asia – a belief that turned out to have merit. In the present day, one feared consequence of Iranian and North Korean nuclear arsenals is that US allies in the Middle East and East Asia, respectively, would be spurred to develop their own independent nuclear capabilities. Understanding past empirical variation is critical for addressing urgent policy questions that will confront US decision-makers in the very near future.

This study also has two different implications for military policy. A number of key policymakers and military officials argue that significant and rapid developments in military technology constitute a greater trend called the ‘revolution in military affairs’ (RMA). This revolution allegedly improves the capability of militaries to gather and process information, thereby leading them to streamline their organizations, improve precision strike systems, and even depend less on armed personnel. Many criticisms of the RMA emphasize either the practical costs of adopting such weapons systems or the challenges that the US military faced in fighting counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. My study of intra-alliance nuclear behavior raises a more grand strategic concern regarding RMA. If policymakers and military officials wish to exploit the doctrinal and organizational advantages of RMA, and rely less on ground forces abroad, they risk undermining the conventional extended deterrence that allies desire as protection. Yes, such developments as the RMA should strengthen deterrence if they mean a more versatile fight force with more firepower. Unfortunately, allies are prone to overvalue the quantity of conventional deployments and overlook their qualitative improvements. In response to conventional military redeployments made to exploit the RMA, allies might be tempted to seek alternative forms of insurance that could generate new sources of geopolitical instability.

This observation leads us to a final, but very significant motivation for my study: a contemporary debate over the future direction of US foreign policy. Today there are renewed

calls for the United States to retrench and retract its military commitments abroad. Analysts who make this argument claim that this policy of offshore balancing was the default American foreign policy until the Second World War. Their calls come when the United States faces a rising China and a nuclearizing North Korea in a neighborhood populated by nuclear-capable friends and allies. And indeed, these are some of the reasons why these policy prescriptions have met resistance. Much of this debate proceeds without much of an empirical basis, yet, as I will show below, US leaders did attempt these policies of offshore balancing during the Cold War. In fact, the first non-incumbent elected during the Cold War – Eisenhower – premised his foreign policy on relying less on conventional military power and more on nuclear weapons. The New Look in spirit was consistent with offshore balancing. As a result, we are able to determine whether (and under what conditions) offshore balancing can generate regional instability and stoke alliance tensions.

Plan of the Dissertation

This dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter Two describes alliance compensation theory in further detail. It offers a fuller description of the dependent variable and situates my theory in the broader international security literature on alliances and nuclear behavior. I outline the theory’s main assumptions and discuss how nuclear behavior can constitute both insurance-seeking and intra-alliance bargaining.

Chapter Three sets up the three main case studies of my project – South Korea, West Germany, and Japan – by reviewing the history of pertinent changes in US grand strategy in the nuclear age. Specifically, I will show how US presidents since Harry S. Truman designed their alliance commitments and implemented their preferred visions of nuclear deterrence doctrine and strategic posture. I will describe the motivations behind these visions. Of

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20 For a criticism of offshore balancing, see Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wolforth (2012).
interest in this chapter is President Dwight Eisenhower’s adoption of the New Look policy, the stated emphasis of ‘flexible response’ in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and President Richard Nixon’s articulation of the Guam Doctrine.

Chapters Four and Five form a controlled case comparison of West Germany and Japan. Both countries are similar along a number of key dimensions: their roles in the Second World War, their liberal democratic political regimes, their spectacular economic reconstruction and growth in the post-war years, and their hosting of a large-scale US military presence. In spite of these similarities, West Germany began its nuclear behavior in the mid-1950s whereas Japan undertook nuclear behavior about a decade later. I argue that differences in the strategic situations facing these two countries led them to vary in how much attention they heeded to changes in US strategic posture.

Chapter Four shows that, as a land-locked country, West Germany was affected by Eisenhower’s stated objectives of relying more on nuclear weapons at the expense of conventional military deployments such as ground power. Because US strategic posturing in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations retained some of the fundamental features of Eisenhower’s policies, West Germany accordingly had little motivation to fully reverse its nuclear behavior. Keeping the focus on Western Europe, I attach a short Addendum that looks at two successful cases of nuclear proliferation amongst US allies, the United Kingdom and France. Chapter Five demonstrates that Japan was at best indifferent to Eisenhower’s New Look because of its geography. Indeed, Japan remained quiescent until China’s detonation of its first atomic weapon in 1964 – an event that shook the Japanese leadership and forced them to attend more carefully to US security guarantees. As the US military involvement in Vietnam slowly unraveled, Japanese leaders became apprehensive of US alliance support and began to prioritize the development of a centrifuge program. In these chapters, I also show how the US responded to these bouts of nuclear behavior by these two major allies, asserting that alliance institutional form and economic dependency hampered the US counterproliferation efforts directed at them. These countries ultimately reversed their nuclear behavior in spite
of, rather than due to, the United States.

South Korea is the focus of Chapter Six. South Korea is an attractive case for testing competing arguments about nuclear behavior for three reasons. Among other reasons, South Korea is a **critical case** for my theory because the US government initiated plans for major troop withdrawals from the peninsula on several separate occasions. In fact, the US government did not seek the South Korean government’s consent when it openly sought troop withdrawals in 1970 and 1977. Moreover, these plans for troop withdrawals reflected important shifts in US strategic posture. The magnitude of these shifts should have provoked a response from South Korea. Therefore, if my theory has to have empirical validity in any one case, it is that of South Korea. Accordingly, this case is useful for testing the theory’s proposed causal mechanism. I show that South Korea had a bout of nuclear behavior that lasted about five years before its abrupt termination in the mid-1970s. I demonstrate in this chapter that South Korea’s nuclear behavior is comprehensible only if we take into account its alliance with the United States. That is, South Korea first explored and later began a nuclear weapons program in reaction to President Richard Nixon’s troop withdrawals from the Korean peninsula. The South Korean government operated this program secretly. Yet once the US government discovered the program, it was shut down promptly due to US pressure. I explain the conditions emphasized by my theory – the combination of South Korea’s security and economic dependence on the United States – interacted to produce this result. The story does not end there, however. President Jimmy Carter sought to full withdraw all of US forces from South Korea – a move that some observers speculate incited further efforts in nuclear weapons development.

Chapters Seven and Eight widen the empirical variation that my dissertation explains. Chapter Seven undertakes a quantitative analysis of the determinants of nuclear behavior amongst US defensive alliances. Using different modeling specifications I establish a correlation between troop withdrawal – a concrete and easily quantifiable measure of a change in conventional military deployments – and nuclear behavior. I also present some evidence that
these states increase their own defense expenditures in light of these changes. To further establish the external validity of my theory, Chapter Eight shifts the focus away from US-led alliances to Soviet-led alliances. I argue that my theory has implications for understanding why nuclear behavior was a rare phenomenon in the Warsaw Treaty Organization (relative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]) while it was pervasive in the Soviet Union’s alliances in East Asia. This chapter includes shorter case studies on Romania, China, and North Korea. Finally, Chapter Nine summarizes the argument and discusses the broader implications of this study for both international theory and policy.

Wrapping Up

This thesis explains why states that have an alliance with a nuclear-armed major power patron would engage in nuclear behavior, and the conditions under which they fully reverse their activities. Alliance compensation theory accords importance to the role of conventional military deployments to understand nuclear behavior onset, and the structure of alliances and economic dependency to understand nuclear behavior termination. Much of the evidence I bring to bear on this issue is based on archival research conducted at libraries located around the United States and the world: five Presidential libraries and national archives in Japan and the United Kingdom. As I am explaining variation in state behavior, I also highlight compelling alternative arguments (e.g., domestic politics explanations) that purport to shed light on various aspects of the cases examined here. In some cases, these alternative arguments enjoy supporting evidence. In other cases, they do not. Though I prioritize the systematic role that alliance dynamics play in affecting states’ nuclear policies, I strive to show that diverse factors influence these critical decisions where appropriate. As much as I advance a particular independent variable, that is, changes and differences in alliance structures, my primary goal is to explain variation.
Chapter 2

Ne Me Quitte Pas: Nuclear Behavior, Alliance Compensation Theory, and Research Design

Why do some states that enjoy the protection accorded by an alliance with a nuclear-armed major power engage in nuclear behavior? That is, why would these states undertake actions that signify movement towards nuclear weapons acquisition? What accounts for states’ reversals in nuclear behavior? Why do some allies back away and credibly renounce nuclear weapons? What are the conditions under which the patron would be able to compel its ally to make strong non-proliferation commitments? To answer these questions, I propose a theoretical framework called alliance compensation theory. I claim that adverse shifts in the strategic posture of the state’s major power patron make the ally more likely to engage in nuclear behavior. Intra-alliance dynamics also shape patterns of reversal. Whether and how much the ally relies on its patron for both its security and economic needs will shape the patron’s ability to compel a nuclear reversal.

This chapter elaborates on these claims and proceeds as follows. Section 1 examines the
dependent variable – nuclear behavior – and develops definitions for each action that signifies
movement towards (and away from) nuclear weapons acquisition. In this section, I refer to
historical examples to illustrate the empirical variation I wish to explain. Section 2 reviews
the existing literature by assessing both the wider scholarship on nuclear behavior and the
relevant work on intra-alliance dynamics. I show that several important shortcomings exist
in this literature that this project seeks to address. Section 3 explains why states should
begin engaging in nuclear behavior. Section 4 provides an account of the conditions that
affect the patron’s ability to compel a nuclear reversal by its ally. Section 5 discusses two
sets of alternative explanations that deserve consideration. Section 6 describes the multi-
methodological research design as well as the qualitative evidence I have collected and used.
Section 7 concludes.

2.1 Disaggregating Nuclear Behavior

Nuclear weapons provoke intense unease and concern amongst allies and adversaries alike.
Patrons especially stand to lose their ability to project influence if nuclear weapons spread
throughout the international system.\(^1\) Accordingly, we must widen the scope of our analysis
to examine the gamut of behaviors capable of inciting these reactions. The dependent
variable is the nuclear behavior of states that already enjoy the patronage of a nuclear-armed
major power. I use the term ‘nuclear behavior’ to refer to a variety of different actions that
a state can undertake with respect to nuclear weapons acquisition. These actions range
from ambiguous posturing to the successful acquisition of a nuclear weapon capability.\(^2\) I
also consider the many reversals in nuclear behavior that have occurred historically. In this
section I proceed to consider each of these actions. I use historical examples to illuminate
their definitions.\(^3\) These positive values on the dependent variable are useful for deepening

\(^1\)Kroenig (2010).
\(^2\)My conceptualization of the stops involved in nuclear behavior draws on a similar discussion found in
\(^3\)See Appendix A for a listing of all historical examples of nuclear behavior amongst allies.
our understanding of the actions that elicit major power concern and tracing the evolution of bargaining dynamics between the major power and its ally. Reversal excepted, each of these stages represent a ratcheting up of nuclear behavior.

Ambiguous Posturing

Ambiguous posturing denotes a situation in which decision-makers of a non-nuclear state create uncertainty over their intentions towards the use of sensitive nuclear materials. This uncertainty arises if the state leadership resists international demands to credibly renounce nuclear weapons; commissions feasibility studies to determine the viability of nuclear weapons development; and demonstrates an unwillingness to adopt proper safeguards on existing nuclear facilities. Policy inconsistency can also be the basis of ambiguous posturing if the ally is sending mixed signals to international audiences regarding its stance on nuclear weapons.

The West German leadership exemplified this approach in the 1960s. During this time, its leaders sought a greater role in NATO nuclear strategic planning while resisting calls to make treaty commitments to not acquire nuclear weapons. My conception of ‘ambiguous posturing’ also encompasses a stage of nuclear weapons development that Singh and Way label as ‘exploration’. This step falls short of actually committing material resources towards the production of enriched uranium and other components that are needed to build an atomic weapon.

Even if the non-nuclear state were to have no intention to acquire nuclear weapons, this action still provokes anxiety for its major power patron. First, engaging at this lower level of nuclear behavior still creates uncertainty over its intentions. Adversaries and other allies could adopt the worst-case scenario and infer revisionist motives on the part of the offending

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4To clarify, a state that has already acquired nuclear weapons can adopt a posture that some observers might call ‘ambiguous’. Israel’s concealment of its alleged nuclear arsenal has been described as an ‘ambiguous nuclear posture’. I restrict my use of the term, however, to refer to those instances in which the state is signaling some level of interest in acquiring nuclear weapons without actively deploying resources towards their production.
state. Second, such posturing indicates either discontent with the major power’s patronage or a greater willingness to establish a more independent foreign policy. Creating uncertainty over its nuclear intentions enables the ally to manipulate risk in a way that increases the level of attention that the major power gives them. Of course, incentives exist for a subtler undertaking of exploration so as not to draw harmful attention from adversaries. Taiwan in the 1970s and Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s are two such cases.

Pursuit occurs when a state’s decision-makers actively deploy material resources and expertise towards the production of nuclear weapons. In other words, leaders have decided to start an independent nuclear program. However, pursuit does not necessarily mean that the state effort to build an independent nuclear capability is either inexorable or efficient. States might dedicate insufficient resources towards the production of nuclear weapons not only because resources are limited, but also for strategic reasons. Half-hearted attempts may serve as a signal of what a state is willing to do in order to capture the attention of international observers.\(^5\)

Pursuit, therefore, does not necessarily lead to acquisition. Many states that embarked on nuclear weapons programs before canceling them. Great Britain and France, by contrast, had more successful pursuits of nuclear weapons. Historical instances of this variety were not restricted to members of US-led alliances. In the Eastern bloc, Romania began its surreptitious pursuit of nuclear weapons sometime during the 1980s. Romania ultimately canceled its nuclear program, but another Soviet ally – China – acquired and has since expanded its nuclear weapons capability.

This type of nuclear behavior produces similar concerns for the major power patron as

\(^5\)For a discussion of how overweening state management of the scientific community slows nuclear proliferation, see Hymans (2012). Hymans’ work focuses on how the efficiency of a nuclear weapons program can be a function of non-strategic factors.
those generated by ambiguous posturing. However, these concerns are amplified because
the pursuing state’s leadership is demonstrating its willingness to bear the material costs
associated with pursuit. In other words, committing some level of resources towards the
manufacture of nuclear weapons sends a stronger signal of the ally’s discontent with the major
power’s patronage or willingness to obtain greater foreign policy autonomy. Furthermore,
if the efforts at pursuit are transparent, states found in the potential proliferator’s region
are more likely to feel threatened. Pursuit is often regionally destabilizing, particularly if it
motivates other states to reconsider their own defense policies. In such an event, the major
power patron would not only have to dissuade the pursuing state from engaging in nuclear
weapons production, but also reassure regional allies of its commitment to their security.

**Acquisition**

Acquisition transpires in one of two ways. First, the state’s own nuclear program indigenously
produces warheads. Acquisition completes the process that began with the initial exploration
of creating an independent nuclear capability. Second, the state successfully obtained nuclear
weapons from an external source. This means of procurement is very rare, but the discovery
of the A.Q. Khan network in the mid-2000s alerted Western policy-makers of this possibility.6

The number of states that actually possess nuclear weapons has varied over time. Britain
and France were the first two non-major powers to acquire nuclear weapons. Israel and China
acquired nuclear weapons in the 1960s, though the former has since refrained from clarifying
its status towards nuclear weapons. South Africa also came into possession of a nuclear
arsenal. Since the mid-2000s North Korea is alleged to have several nuclear weapons in its
arsenal.

Acquisition undercuts the major power’s ability to project power. The possession of a
nuclear weapon empowers the ally to block attempts at coercion and blackmail by its patron.

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6It is conceivable that the Pakistani nuclear physicist had supplied countries like Iran and North Korea
with sensitive nuclear materials prior to his arrest.
Moreover, nuclear weapons allow the ally to pursue foreign policy goals in the future that could endanger the patron’s own strategic objectives. The regional repercussions that follow one state’s proliferation in the context of broader alliance structures, however, are arguably more important. For example, a local arms race in the proliferating state’s region is more likely to break out. This concern is a salient feature in US attempts to dissuade Iran from producing nuclear weapons. A nuclear Iran might provoke US security partners in the region like Saudi Arabia to establish their own nuclear programs, thus undermining the ability of the United States to manage security affairs in the Middle East.

I recognize that the acquisition of a nuclear weapon is not alone sufficient to obtain a deterrent capability. Indeed, states require a degree of survivability and a second-strike capability so to prevent a ‘knock-out’ blow from taking place. However, for the purpose of simplicity, I consider states that assemble a military nuclear device to have reached this stage of acquisition.\footnote{I recognize that a state’s nuclear activities does not stop at acquisition. Upon acquiring a nuclear weapon, the proliferating state can choose to either explicitly demonstrate its newfound capability or maintain a policy of concealment. Though choosing to conceal a nuclear arsenal is useful for maintaining strategic ambiguity, demonstrating a newly acquired nuclear capability through nuclear detonation through detonation has its benefits.}

Reversal

It is important to note – contrary to how much of the conventional political science literature treats the issue – that nuclear behavior is not constrained to exhibiting a ratcheting effect. History is rife with instances of states that stop short of nuclear weapons acquisition. Some historical examples have already been highlighted: West Germany in the early Cold War.
as well as South Korea in the 1970s. When states engage in nuclear behavior, they still make choices regarding their activities such that acquisition is hardly an inevitability. Even acquisition itself is not a ‘done deal.’ South Africa is an example of a state that chose to renounce and fully dismantle its nuclear arsenal.

The choice to ‘deproliferate’ signals consent to rely on a major power patron to fulfil its security needs. This signal gains credibility if the offending state handles its deproliferation in such a way that is transparent and makes a renewed effort at proliferation costly in the future. That some states have chosen to renounce their nuclear weapons also demonstrates that the choice to maintain an arsenal is continually reproduced. No compelling theoretical reason exists as to why other existing nuclear powers would never similarly dismantle their weapons programs. The acquisition of nuclear weapons is reversible.

**The Costs of Backsliding**

Nuclear behavior encompasses diverse actions that can provoke varying degrees of anxiety on the part of the major power. These actions include ambiguous posturing as well as the pursuit and the acquisition of sensitive nuclear materials (e.g., nuclear weapons). They represent distinct and progressive movements towards the acquisition of nuclear weapons. In parsing out the dependent variable this way, it becomes apparent that there is much richer variation in the nuclear behavior of states than other analyses often suggest. States do more than simply acquire or not acquire nuclear weapons. Rather, they have to pass through different stages in which backsliding is always possible.

The costs of backsliding, however, depend on the stage of nuclear behavior for both the patron and its ally. Figure 1 depicts the stages of nuclear behavior and their related costs of reversal. Why this variation in costs exists is straightforward: it is relatively easier to renounce nuclear weapons when you have no active weapons program than when you have state agencies and resources dedicated to their upkeep. Clarifying one’s ambiguous status
2.2 What We Know of Nuclear Behavior

The purpose of this section is to critically examine the international security scholarship that speaks to the issues examined in this project. I divide this section into two parts. First, I evaluate how the literature has hitherto analyzed nuclear behavior. Second, I explore
the relevant literature on alliances, focusing on those studies that use alliance dynamics to explain nuclear behavior. I use this latter section to not only discuss the independent variable, but also the causal mechanisms that, I argue, have largely been ignored in the extant literature.

**Nuclear Behavior as the Dependent Variable**

A weakness of the existing literature on nuclear behavior is that studies often truncate the dependent variable. One result of this tendency is that scholars ignore interesting variation in the intermediate steps between the decision not to pursue the nuclear weapon at all and the complete acquisition of an arsenal. Avery Goldstein studies only positive cases of nuclear weapons acquisition efforts. Jacques Hymans and Michael Horowitz examine only final decisions to proliferate or not to proliferate. Dong-Joon Do and Erik Gartzke examine cases in which states have an active nuclear weapons program or not. These scholars are by no means unique. Etel Solingen traces the process by which decisions to acquire and forego nuclear weapons. The limited scope of her dependent variable leaves her unable to properly account for the richer variation we actually observe in nuclear behavior in her case studies. If a desire to be better integrated in the global economy explains South Korea’s renunciation of nuclear weapons in the 1970s, then why did it begin the program in the first place?

The example of South Korea highlight another problem in the extant political science literature on nuclear behavior. Few studies take seriously the pattern of reversals that we observe of states. In a rare study of deproliferation, Harald Mueller and Andreas Schmidt argue that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) encouraged states to abandon their

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8 Goldstein (2000).
9 Hymans (2006); Horowitz (2010).
10 Jo and Gartzke (2007).
nuclear programs. That nuclear reversals have occurred on numerous occasions raises the question of the motivations behind nuclear behavior. Do states seek nuclear weapons to have a deterrent capability indefinitely, or are they produced to meet short-term objectives? Further, when states take steps to build nuclear weapons, do they always intend on actual production? Many statistical analyses do not provide an explanation for why these reversals or seemingly half-hearted attempts to acquire nuclear weapons materialize.

**Alliance Dynamics as the Independent Variable and Causal Mechanism**

Avery Goldstein offers a first major step in examining the role of intra-alliance dynamics in nuclear proliferation decisions. He argues that middle powers like the United Kingdom, France, and China cannot fully depend on the support of their major power patron in the event of nuclear conflict. In France’s view, for example, the United States would sooner allow Paris to be devastated rather than allow its own cities bear the brunt of a Soviet attack. Consequently, to hedge against the perceived incredibility of the patron’s security guarantees while balancing the threat of the opposing major power, the middle power elects to have its own nuclear capability that is sufficient to deter attack.¹⁴

Goldstein’s analysis, however, has several important shortcomings. First, he focuses his attention on only three positive cases of nuclear proliferation, thus ignoring a larger number of non-cases in which the allies of either the US or the Soviet Union did not acquire nuclear weapons. To some extent this shortcoming is an artifact of focusing specifically on acquisition. As indicated above, a number of allies engaged in a variety of nuclear behaviors during the Cold War that stopped short of actually obtaining a nuclear weapon. Second, the independent variables that Goldstein emphasizes are in fact scope conditions for his theory. He attaches importance to anarchy and bipolarity, yet these two properties of the

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¹³ Mueller and Schmidt (2010).
¹⁴ Goldstein (2000).
international system did not vary in the 1950s and 1960s when the aforementioned middle powers made their proliferation decisions. Finally, the behavior of the major power patron remains under-theorized. He does not clarify why the major power patron could not make a more credible promise to protect its allies. Nor is clear as to why the major power would not apply statecraft to curtail efforts by its allies in acquiring nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, much of the nuclear weapons literature has neglected Goldstein’s important insight that alliances and ambiguous patron support generate incentives that allies face in making proliferation decisions.\(^{15}\) When alliances and nuclear umbrellas are taken into account, the hypotheses pertaining to these variables are theoretically poorly developed and crudely studied. Sonali Singh and Christopher Way do find that alliances are negatively associated with exploration, pursuit, and acquisition, though the estimated effects vary in magnitude across the outcomes of interest. Thus, alliances are powerful constraints in exploration and acquisition, yet they have effects on pursuit that are statistically indistinguishable from zero.\(^{16}\) Similarly, Jo and Gartzke use a dummy variable to indicate a state’s alliance with a nuclear power. Their prediction is that having a nuclear umbrella lowers the probability of a state seeking a nuclear arsenal. Their findings are mixed. On the one hand, they note that “the nuclear umbrella provided by nuclear patrons dissuades potential nuclear contenders from acquiring nuclear weapons.” On the other hand, they find that “nuclear protégés are no less likely to initiate nuclear programs.”\(^{17}\) This seeming contradiction raises interesting and important substantive questions about the role of alliance dynamics, yet the authors do not explore this issue. Dan Reiter makes an important and sophisticated contribution to this body of work by showing that troop deployments lower the likelihood of host countries to acquire nuclear weapons.\(^{18}\) Matthew Fuhrmann and Todd Sechser demonstrate that alliances discourage nuclear proliferation, but forward military deployments – intended

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\(^{15}\)To be sure, in a major article, Sagan notes defensive motives as an explanation of nuclear proliferation. See Sagan (1997).

\(^{16}\)Singh and Way (2004, 878).

\(^{17}\)Jo and Gartzke (2007, 174-176).

\(^{18}\)Reiter (2013).
to assure allies further – produce no effect.\textsuperscript{19} Neither of the latter studies take into account how \textit{reductions} in forward deployments of military assets might encourage nuclear behavior.

A new wave of scholarship devoted to nuclear proliferation and extended deterrence has begun to take alliance politics seriously. Nuno Munteiro and Alexander Debs argue that states follow a strategic logic in determining whether to seek nuclear weapons. In their model, weaker states base such decisions on assessments of the credibility of the guarantees that they receive.\textsuperscript{20} This work, and a similar study by Phillip Bleek and Eric Lorder, are extensions of the argument put forward by Goldstein.\textsuperscript{21} Yet none of these studies examine what exactly triggers fears of abandonment. The case study evidence provided offers important historical insights, but the studies do not offer expectations as which sorts of indicators states would use to evaluate credibility. Is it the balance of interests, past actions, changes in force deployments, declaratory policy, or conventional deterrence failure? That is, none of these new studies offer systematic process-tracing evidence to evaluate which indicators states systematically use to infer the reliability of their stronger allies. Aside from basic congruence tests, they do not connect perceptions of alliance reliability with nuclear-related decision-making. Other important (but again very recent) exceptions include two ongoing and very high quality dissertation projects. Mira Rapp-Hooper examines how the nuclear age has spurred changes in the formation and management of alliances. Specifically, she claims that nuclear security guarantees require more institutionally sophisticated defense pacts in order to address, \textit{inter alia}, fears of abandonment on the part of the receiving ally. Eugene Gerzhoy examines the role of the major power’s threat and reassurances to encourage states to cease their nuclear activities. Taken together, these pieces of scholarship constitute important progress for understanding nuclear proliferation and deserve serious attention.

Other recent scholarship has claimed that policies intended to strengthen alliance relations in fact encourage proliferation. Using data on over two thousand bilateral civilian

\textsuperscript{19}Sechser and Fuhrmann (Forthcoming).
\textsuperscript{20}Monteiro and Debs (N.d.).
\textsuperscript{21}Bleek and Lorder (2014).
nuclear cooperation agreements between 1950 and 2000, Matthew Fuhrmann argues that
states sign civilian nuclear agreements with other states when they seek to strengthen either
their allies and alliances or the ‘enemy of their enemies.’\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, Matthew Kroenig claims
that states provide others with sensitive nuclear assistance in order to empower the rivals of
their adversaries. He qualifies this finding by arguing that states do not offer such assistance
when they already can project power over the receiving state.\textsuperscript{23} These policies help spread
nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{24} However, it is plausible that states provide civilian nuclear assistance to
dissuade their alliance partners from pursuing their own independent nuclear capabilities.
By attaching safeguards and conditions to provisions of nuclear assistance, states seek to
gain some control over the nuclear activities of their allies.

By taking alliance dynamics into account we can appreciate the context in which states
make nuclear acquisition decisions. Unfortunately, many studies ignore alliance dynamics
and take an otherwise monadic view of nuclear proliferation. Other studies that focus on
domestic attributes and normative concerns are especially prone to committing this reduc-
tionist error. Hymans argues that some leaders hold certain world-views that make them
likely to develop an independent nuclear capability.\textsuperscript{25} In another work, Horowitz contends
that states that can meet the financial costs and possess the organizational structures that
can absorb costly technologies are most likely to acquire and retain nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{26} As
different as these works may be, they are similar insofar as their main theories are pre-
environmental. The efficacy of mapping world-views onto state policy requires a favorable
international environment. Likewise, having the organizational and financial capital to inte-
grate nuclear weapons might be meaningless if the state cannot defeat efforts by other states
to prevent its attempt at acquisition.

Of course, realist variables like dispute involvement and enduring rivalry certainly provide

\textsuperscript{22} Fuhrmann (2009b).
\textsuperscript{23} Kroenig (2010).
\textsuperscript{24} Fuhrmann (2009a); Kroenig (2009).
\textsuperscript{25} Hymans (2006).
\textsuperscript{26} Horowitz (2010).
strategic motives for nuclear proliferation. However, these variables do not capture the possible reaction of other states to any level of nuclear behavior. Even in the presence of the foregoing conditions a state might not engage in nuclear behavior if its leadership believes it would be the target of a preventive strike, let alone alternative forms of sanctioning that impose high costs. Indeed, the existing literature assumes that the major power is ultimately powerless when it comes to curbing the nuclear ambitions of other states. Yet major powers have much to lose from the spread of nuclear weapons such that they actively engage in counterproliferation policies. Studies of nuclear proliferation, therefore, should take more seriously the bargaining dynamic that ensues between allies and major power states to better explain variation in states’ behavior with respect to nuclear weapons programs.

To conclude, three particular weaknesses characterize the current literature relevant to the topic of this project. First, studies of nuclear behavior unnecessarily limit the scope of their dependent variables. By largely focusing exclusively on proliferation and non-proliferation, they ignore more subtle patterns of behavior that we observe between those outcomes. Second, there is very limited work that properly takes into account intra-alliance dynamics and nuclear proliferation. This body of scholarship has yielded inconclusive theories that unsatisfactorily explain why we observe allies that enjoy the patronage of a major power engage in different nuclear behaviors. Regarding the scholarship that does take seriously the role of abandonment fears in nuclear statecraft, little sense is given as to what indicators do decision-makers typically use to infer major power reliability. Third, a more general problem of the literature is to divorce nuclear decisions from the strategic context in which they are made. The significance of nuclear behavior is that such activities provoke insecurity amongst neighboring states and challenge a major power’s ability to control a region. Existing arguments that focus on domestic-level variables are especially prone to overlook these important strategic consequences. There remains further work to be done in examining the interactions between allies that engage in these activities and the major power patrons that

\[27\text{On enduring rivalries in international relations, see Goertz and Diehl (1992), Goertz and Diehl (1993), and Thompson (2002).}\]
have incentives to curb them.

2.3 Alliance Compensation Theory: Onset

In this section and the next I develop alliance compensation theory with two goals in mind. In this section, which focuses on onset, I identify the conditions under which allies are more likely to start engaging in nuclear behaviors when they already have the patronage of a major power. I begin with the assumption that states are security-seeking. States sometimes ally with major powers because of the protection allotted to them from common adversaries. However, these protections vary in their perceived reliability. In light of this issue, I discuss how states evaluate and respond to the credibility of alliance commitments, which ultimately reveals the conditions under which allies initiate nuclear behavior.

The next section focuses on termination. There I describe the bargaining dynamics that ensue between the major power and the ally once the latter decides to initiate in nuclear behavior. I first explore in greater depth the ally’s objectives associated with their nuclear decisions. Then drawing on the previous section, I analyze how information asymmetry and credible commitment problems affect the bargaining process. The patron has two sources of potential leverage against the ally: the extent to which the ally depends on the patron for both its security and economy needs. These parameters of the alliance relationship modulate the security of the classic bargaining problems mentioned just now.

Security-Seeking and Major Power Patronage

No overarching sovereign authority exists to adjudicate the affairs of states and enforce contracts between them. Scholars differ about the implications of anarchy for state behavior. Rather than wade into this debate, I assume that states are generally security-seeking and thus prefer policies that encourage stability rather than undermine it. Only under certain
conditions, generated by the security dilemma, do states adopt aggressive policies. Otherwise, states are biased towards the status quo and eschew efforts aimed at expansion, whether through territorial aggrandizement or the active coercion of other states into compliance. The introduction of nuclear weapons in the international system has reinforced the status quo bias of states. After all, these weapons favor defensive postures because they enable states to possess a retaliatory capability that sharply raises the costs of an attack by an adversary.

States often require protection in order to prevent the encroachment and use of coercion tactics by an adversary. Typically, states that face an external threat are compelled to choose over whether to arm (internal balancing) or form alliances (external balancing). States often select a mixed bundle of these goods. Non-major power states, in particular, lack the material bases of power that can ensure the preservation of their values. Accordingly, during the early years of the Cold War, the sheer imbalance in military capabilities within the international system led many states to align with their preferred major power. Though they may not have received security guarantees, either implicit or explicit, even states that were participants of the Non-Aligned Movement sought to court major power support. Some security dependencies, such as the US-led alliance system in East Asia, survived the end of the Cold War. Many US allies, especially those in Western Europe, elected to enjoy

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28 In particular, these conditions include the offense-defense balance and whether states can usefully distinguish between offensive or defensive postures. See Taliaferro (2000/01, 130).

29 See Taliaferro (2000/01, 139), Jervis (1989, Chapter 1), and Lieber (2000, 100). For an extended discussion on how the presence of nuclear weapons discourages intentional war within the international system, see Adams (2004, 54-58). For a rejoinder to the view that nuclear weapons have salutary effects on the international system, see Mueller (1988).


31 A useful analogy can be drawn from microeconomics. Major power states are price-makers in international security because they have a strong industrial base and large domestic aggregate demand. The result is that major powers not only coerce, but also single-handedly block the coercion efforts of other states. Non-major power states are, by contrast, price-takers. Their relatively weak industrial base and small domestic aggregate demand renders them vulnerable to the coercion practiced by other states, particularly major power states.

32 Newly decolonized states especially were eager to play the United States and the Soviet Union against each other to extract economic and military support. For various discussions on this point, see Dunning (2004) and Westad (2005). These states also made alignment decisions to balance against both international and domestic threats. See David (1991).
‘peace dividends’ while the United States maintained (and expanded) its global military presence. Indeed, the protections offered by the United States have retained their appeal for those states (such as South Korea and Japan) that continue to face regional threats.³³

In the nuclear age, nuclear protection has become a common feature of major power patronage. Under nuclear deterrence both nuclear-armed adversaries recognize each other’s capacity to escalate a nuclear exchange to the point where the costs of attack sharply outweigh its benefits.³⁴ The unacceptability of these costs enables deterrence to work. Yet the Cold War was broader in scope than a simple rivalry between two states. It denoted political conflict and military tension between two competing alliance systems that the major powers managed. The fate of each major power’s dominance was, thus, closely tied to the fate of their allies. In light of this strategic situation, the major powers pursued the policy of extended deterrence. This form of deterrence consists of threats to retaliate against the ally’s adversary in order to prevent a military attack on that very ally. As Paul Huth writes, extended deterrence denotes a situation in which “the policymakers of one state (‘defender’) threaten the use of force against another state (‘potential attacker’) in an attempt to prevent that state from using military force against an ally – or territory controlled by an ally (‘protégé’) – of the defender.”³⁵

This policy benefits both the major power and the ally. For the major power, upon achieving deterrence with the primary adversary, the monetary costs associated with extended deterrence are small. At minimum, extended deterrence can comprise a verbal commitment to defend an ally from an adversary. Indeed, for extended deterrence to be effective, it should be communicated early and publicly so as to inform the adversary in advance of

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³³In fact, cases exist in which allies fostered new security ties with the United States following the end of the Cold War. Many former members of the Warsaw Pact joined NATO and sought close relations with the US. Even Vietnam, a nominally communist state, has sought to normalize relations with the United States in the face of a rising China.

³⁴That is not to say that crises should not occur in the nuclear age. Crisis bargaining consists of demonstrations and probing of resolve that might end peacefully for reasons that even rational deterrence theory would predict. For more on rational deterrence theory, see Achen and Snidal (1989).

any possible provocations. As Timothy Crawford notes, waiting too long might present a window of opportunity to the adversary but issuing a deterrent threat in the middle of the crisis could be seen as escalatory and destabilizing.\textsuperscript{36} Second, the nuclear security guarantee – formalized in a public defense pact – strengthens the diplomatic partnership if its recipient were to provide the patron with assets (e.g., basing or use rights, political support) in return.\textsuperscript{37} As a result of this transaction, the ally has what appears to be a much lesser need to develop its own nuclear capability. It can free ride on the nuclear services of the patron while allocating its own resources towards domestic programs.\textsuperscript{38} Of course, what these analyses often miss is that assets such as basing rights may be necessary to provide robust extended deterrence. Geography – that is, whether the ally is distant from the patron and whether it is land-locked – shapes which military capabilities would matter for supporting extended deterrence.

There is a catch, however. The major power must demonstrate and maintain the credibility of extended deterrence to two different audiences. First, the major power must persuade the adversary that it will defend its ally despite the costs of doing so. Second, the major power must assure the ally’s leadership that support would be forthcoming in a nuclear crisis. Due to resource constraints and geopolitical priorities, the patron faces challenges in satisfying these requirements.

**Extended Deterrence, Policy Convergence, and Conventional Military Deployments**

The challenges associated with guaranteeing security via extended deterrence imply that the credibility of major power support can vary across space and time. I argue that states refer to an important indicator – the strategic posture of their major power patron – when

\textsuperscript{36}Crawford (2003, 10-11).
\textsuperscript{37}Lake (2009); Morrow (1991).
\textsuperscript{38}See Goldstein (1995).
evaluating their patron’s credibility. The term ‘strategic posture’ refers to how the major power’s decision-makers respond to the external threat environment. It denotes a purposive set of decisions regarding foreign policy alignment, declaratory policy, weapons procurement, military doctrine, and forward deployment. Strategic postures reflect how major powers decide to project (military) power beyond their borders. During the nineteenth century, Great Britain had to determine which maritime areas its Royal Navy would protect, which alliances to form and maintain, how the next war would be fought, and which colonies would host military personnel. US decision-makers faced similar concerns throughout the Cold War regarding which waterways necessitate a naval presence, which alliances should the United States have, and where and how many troops would be stationed on allied territory.

Though my definition is broad, what matters for my purposes here is that a major power’s strategic posture provides information on its willingness and ability to protect its ally. Willingness captures the convergence of political values between the major power and the ally. Overlapping security interests and shared strategic objectives serve as one basis for bolstering the credibility of nuclear policy. The credibility of the nuclear umbrella is reinforced if the fate of both the patron and the ally are closely bound. The fear that the major power would simply abandon its ally rather than incur the punitive costs of a nuclear exchange is attenuated, if not eliminated. States can measure interest by tracking those very expressions of interests that states articulate – foreign policy doctrine, for example. Yet the foreign policy interests of allies can change, and even diverge from each other, after the alliance is created.

States do not want to rely solely on rhetoric or expressions of interest alone. They want

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39Murdock (2009) describe how declaratory policy, force structure, and the perceived interests and balance of stakes affect extended deterrence.

40Ratner (2009); Voeten (2004). See also Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka, and Zachary Cooper, “Bizarre Love Triangles: Explaining Political and Military Commitments Between Disagreeing Friends,” Working paper. I assume that the major power is a ‘first-mover’ insofar as it seeks foreign policy objectives at variance with those of its ally. We must first observe the patron’s actions, and then see if proliferation occurs. Otherwise, we risk ex post reasoning in which we observe proliferation and then look for policy divergence.
to determine whether their patron is tying its hands so as to come to its rescue in a future crisis involving an adversary.\textsuperscript{41} That is, they evaluate whether the patron is binding itself in future decision-making so as to fulfill the promises it makes in the present?

Towards this end, a powerful strategy that the major power can adopt to demonstrate its willingness to support its protégé is to deploy a sizable contingent of conventional military forces on the latter’s territory. This solution addresses many of the shortcomings of extended deterrence. Defending friendly territory in this manner raises the adversary’s costs of attack, thereby sending a powerful signal of the major power’s commitment to protecting its ally. After all, the major power is willing to risk its own troops and expend war material on the ally’s behalf.\textsuperscript{42} The costs of maintaining troop deployments abroad, even if they are intended to protect allied territory rather than fight wars, are expensive to sustain. They require substantial fiscal resources to quarter and train troops, maintain and replace military hardware such as vehicles and weaponry, and even pay suppliers of required food and other services. They can also generate net outflows of capital and upset the balance of payments between states. Although American military bases have expanded in number since the end of the Cold War, one estimate pegs the cost of maintaining overseas bases and troop deployments (excluding those in Afghanistan and Iraq) at about $102 billion dollars per annum in 2009.\textsuperscript{43} To put this figure into perspective, this amount is almost as large as the next largest military spender’s total expenditures in the same year.

Strategic posture also conveys the major power’s ability to protect the ally. Significant conventional military deployments constitute a strong signal of the major power’s commit-

\textsuperscript{41}On hand-tying in international politics, see Fearon (1997).
\textsuperscript{42}Alternative military assets such as forward missile deployments are, by extension, less useful in signaling commitment. The political costs of losing missiles without a fight should be substantially lower than losing individuals with families back home. Forward missile deployments do not reduce the likelihood of nuclear proliferation. See Sechser and Fuhrmann (Forthcoming). To be sure, casualty aversion can vary significant amongst voting publics, yet it is presumably much higher than missile loss aversion. On casualty aversion, see Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler (2009); Jentleson (1992); Jentleson and Britton (1998).
\textsuperscript{43}Statistic quoted in Hugh Gusterson, “Empire of Bases,” Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, March 10, 2009. Available online: http://www.thebulletin.org/. To be sure, offset arrangements negotiated during the Cold War have reduced these costs for the United States, shifting the burden to hosting allies.
ment to the security of the ally by virtue of their costs. However, in the words of Bernard Brodie, “strategy wears a dollar sign.” The very expenses associated with having military bases abroad offer the major power’s leadership a target for cutting costs in times of severe economic constraints. Public attitudes hostile to high military expenditures or an active global presence can pressure leaders into allocating resources towards the domestic front so as to enjoy some semblance of ‘splendid isolation’. Alternatively, leaders in the major power might anticipate entanglements abroad that they prefer to avoid so not to be dragged into future conflicts. The temptation to reduce conventional force deployment abroad, retrench militarily, and offshore balance under these conditions is especially attractive in light of the relative cheapness of nuclear weapons. US President Dwight Eisenhower recognized this benefit of forward-deployed nuclear forces in his advocacy of the ‘New Look’ policy. By investing more in a large but relatively inexpensive nuclear arsenal, Eisenhower hoped to keep US military spending under control, forcing allies to bear more of the conventional defense burden.

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44 Brodie (1959, 358).
45 Forcing the costs onto the ally is another option. Presumably, this course of action is better for both sides than unilateral withdrawal. However, getting the ally to pay for protection is controversial and potentially problematic for the alliance. First, members of the ally’s tax base might resent this new financial burden. Second, the ally’s leadership might view the redistribution of costs as an omen for future reductions in military commitment. Yet another alternative is for the patron to simply buy off the ally (that is, offer financial compensation). Implementing such a strategy has its problems. Theoretically, the ally has incentives to drive up its demands for financial assistance to make it almost as costly for the patron as pre-existing levels of military support. Moreover, converting the newly received economic wealth into military power takes time. This lag presents a risk of window of opportunity for the adversary to exploit. In the long-term, the ally might be more secure from the increases in its material capabilities. In the short-term, the ally would be even more vulnerable to the adversary. Practically, for the United States at least, making additional financial contributions would have been problematic and at variance with its policy to reduce dollar outflows during the first half of the Cold War. As we will see in Chapters Three and Four, a major preoccupation of US foreign policy was for US allies to offset the costs associated with US military expenditures abroad. On this issue, see Gavin (2004).

46 To be sure, willingness and ability are not independent of each other. Variations in the willingness and ability of a major power to offer strong security commitments are, therefore, correlated to some extent. For example, it is possible that involvement in a protracted and costly conflict abroad induces both a need for military retrenchment and a contraction of foreign policy commitments.

Perceptions of Extended Deterrence as a Driver of Nuclear Behavior

By focusing on strategic posture, allies evaluate the major power’s ability and willingness to provide support in a nuclear crisis to draw general conclusions about security guarantees. To simplify, each of these dimensions can be distinguished dichotomously as either weak or strong. Table 1 crosses the values so to highlight the level of risk for the ally to engage in nuclear behavior associated with each configuration of willingness and ability. When the major power demonstrates a strong ability and willingness to back its security commitments, then the ally has little reason for engaging in nuclear behavior. The risk is, therefore, low. When those attributes of a security guarantee are both judged to be weak, then the ally is at much higher risk to seek nuclear weapons as insurance. If only one of ability or willingness is judged weak, the risk for nuclear behavior is greater than when the ally evaluates the major power’s security commitment as strong but less severe than when the ally perceives the security commitment to be completely unreliable.

How can a strategic posture simultaneously signal divergent levels of major power willingness and ability? That is, under what conditions are allies at a medium risk of engaging in nuclear behavior? A major power’s strategic posture can imply divergent levels of willingness and ability if it has heterogenous effects on states. For example, suppose that the major power has four allies in one particular region. Due to some exogenous factor, the leadership of the major power wishes to cut its military commitments from that region. If the exogenous factor is rooted in unfavorable economic changes, then the major power’s ability to support its security guarantees diminishes. If the exogenous factor is rooted in new and divergent geopolitical objectives, then the major power’s willingness to uphold such guarantees weakens.

Further suppose that, consistent with its aims for retrenchment, the major power reduces its troop presence from three of its four regional allies. My theory postulates that the three
states that lost the foreign conventional military deployments are at the highest risk of nuclear behavior because they feel the direct impact of this shift in the strategic posture. Yet the consequences are more ambiguous for the fourth state. On the one hand, the major power demonstrates commitment to the ally by maintaining on its territory the same conventional military presence despite these overall changes in its regional force structure. The major power spares its ally from these adverse changes. On the other hand, the ally might still infer that the major power is generally less committed to regional security and thus might undertake further reductions in its military presence in the future. This observation has an important implication for my analysis. The risk of nuclear behavior is higher than it would be in the absence of such an adverse strategic shift. Nevertheless, the same risk is lower than what it would be if that shift in strategic posture were to have had a uniform impact on all states in the regional system.

To summarize, I begin with the assumption that allies are primarily security-seekers. I argue that the perceived political unreliability (i.e. foreign policy divergence) or the perceived economic unreliability (i.e. anticipated conventional military withdrawals) increase the likelihood of the ally that nuclear behavior will be initiated. With a sharp divergence of foreign policy goals the ally might not want to entrust its security to the major power, thus offering added motivation for internal balancing through nuclear means.

Table 2.1: Perceptions Regarding Major Power Security Commitments and Ally Riskiness for Nuclear Behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Power Willingness</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Power Ability</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>High Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Medium Risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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To reinforce the point, figure 1 graphically presents the argument made thus far. Though this chart takes the form of a game tree, it does not reflect a formal model. Rather, it clarifies the sequence of actions undertaken by the major power patron and its ally. In the first stage, the patron conveys some signal regarding the level of protection provided to its ally. This signal consists of information on either the patron’s ability or willingness (or both) to extend that level of protection. As I argue above, this signal takes the form of the strategic posture undertaken by the patron. It gains in strength when the patron is willing to deploy a share of its conventional military forces on the ally’s territory. The ally uses this information to determine the strength of the security guarantee receives and whether to engage in self-insuring measures.
Are Conventional Military Deployments the Right Indicator to Use?

Readers might ask at this point why I should privilege the role of conventional military deployments as a hand-tying mechanism. This question has particular force when one considers how, as indicated below, they bear little direct relevance on extended nuclear deterrence. Other technical factors affect nuclear deterrence: the forward deployment of tactical nuclear weapons and declaratory policy that describes whether and how retaliatory force would be used in the event of deterrence failure. Yet the problem is more fundamental than what this simple observation suggests. From the standpoint of some existing theories of international politics, it is unclear why allies should not presume that their alliances are fundamentally flawed in a way that places their survival in perpetual jeopardy. I problematize such views. But to make the positive claim that conventional military deployments matter, I claim that they constitute more salient forms of information than other plausible (or even more policy-relevant) alternatives. To arrive at this conclusion, some casual observations are worth noting:

Endemic Uncertainty: Because no over-arching sovereign exists in international politics, states cannot rely on the kindness of strangers for their own security. As John Mearsheimer remarked, states cannot dial 911 in the event of an emergency and expect to receive assistance. This uncertainty over alliance reliability and intentions is endemic to international relations. Even hosting large numbers of its major power patron’s troops does not fully guarantee its participation in an armed crisis involving the ally. After all, the major power may still feel that the costs of assistance are prohibitively high. Accordingly, if states really

48Some might claim that a rational theory can be agnostic about the decision-making process so long as it can predict outcomes. Thus, it does not matter what inspires fears of abandonment if the main explanatory variable – the existence of such fears – produces the expected outcome. See Achen and Snidal (1989). However, the problem with this view is that any undesirable action undertaken by the patron can post facto be interpreted as inciting a fear of abandonment. Moreover, the argument is more useful to policy makers if it identifies manipulable actions or behaviors that they can control. For a qualified rejoinder to Achen and Snidal’s defense of rational deterrence theory, see Jervis (1989).

value their security, as defensive realists allege, they should resort to nuclear proliferation sooner and more often than they do.\textsuperscript{50}

**Troop Redeployments Lack New Informational Content:** Troop redeployments do not occur randomly and without warning. In the case of the United States, they are usually preceded by several doctrinal changes that, in turn, are a function of political and/or economic changes. The Guam Doctrine, for example, was rooted in a change of partisan control of government, popular opposition to the Vietnam War, and a desire to cut defense expenditures in view of an emerging domestic economic crisis. Even if the ally still has trust in its major power patron despite international anarchy, it should infer from these other antecedent indicators that the major power’s commitment might not be credible. The ally should not be so conservative (in the Bayesian sense) by insufficiently heeding such pieces of information. Nor should it ‘wait-and-see’ whether their patron will safeguard their existential interests.

**Troop Deployments are Technically Meaningless:** Operational planning, survivable delivery systems, and forward (i.e. tactical) nuclear missile deployments provide the technical underpinnings of a extended nuclear deterrence. Troop deployments do not. On a purely technical basis, they strengthen the nuclear umbrella as much as a café crowded with US exchange students and expatriates. The role of troops is rather to supply a conventional military deterrent that could serve as a ‘trip-wire.’ As a result, allies should not use troop redeployments to infer the strength of the nuclear umbrella they receive from their patrons.\textsuperscript{51}

**Past Actions and Patron Reputation Should Matter More:** Past actions, not troop redeployments, ought to inform decision-makers about their patron’s reliability. When troop redeployments, or in other words, attempts to infer the strength of the nuclear umbrella from past actions, should be viewed with skepticism.

\textsuperscript{50}Though Mearsheimer is an offensive realist, his insight still applies for the defensive realist view of international relations.

\textsuperscript{51}For more on military personnel presence as a ‘trip-wire’, see Schelling (1966). On ‘hostage-taking’ as a general credibility mechanism, see Williamson (1983).
withdrawals are partial, allied decision-makers should instead refer to the recent history of their patron’s deterrent efforts against the adversary. If the patron has a positive record of resisting and preventing challenges by the adversary, then the ally should infer that its security guarantees are reliable. If the patron has a poor or mixed record, then the ally should doubt the reliability of its security guarantees and develop fears of abandonment largely on this basis. Put differently, the ally should evaluate the patron’s reputation for deterring the adversary so as to infer credibility.\footnote{Press (2005) refutes the ‘past actions’ thesis in the context of crisis bargaining between adversaries. For a contrary analysis, see Yarhi-Milo and Weisiger (Forthcoming).}

So why should conventional military deployments matter? Strictly speaking, it is not self-evident that troop redeployments should affect the likelihood of states to engage in nuclear behavior, much less be used as indicators of alliance reliability. The foregoing observations suggest that an important psychological element inheres in the process depicted in figure 1.

Notwithstanding the issues raised above, decision-makers of an ally might still find conventional military deployments as a meaningful indicator for gauging major power reliability. First, they serve as indicators for the strength of the patron’s conventional deterrent. The retraction of conventional military power from the ally’s territory weakens that deterrent and thus makes the ally more vulnerable. If true, then the ally is presuming that wars will ultimately be decided by conventional means, even in the nuclear age. This belief is obviously justifiable that wars continue to be waged after 1945. Second, all the other indicators (e.g., doctrine and their underlying sources) I mentioned are too noisy or complex for decision-makers to understanding. Military doctrines can be convoluted and thus difficult to interpret. Moreover, they might not even be transparent because states have reasons to obfuscate how they intend to fight the next war. These problems are compounded in the nuclear age. Leaving aside the complexity governing the operational planning of nuclear weapons use, the debates amongst US strategic thinkers in the 1950s and 1960s indicate that nuclear deterrence theory can be esoteric, open to disagreement, rife with logical incon-
sistencies, and inaccessible to those unfamiliar with the jargon. Leaders of affected states might dismiss or insufficiently heed articulated changes to doctrine and strategic posture because they are too abstract.

Third, as much as conventional military deployments might not affect the nuclear umbrella per se, they do provide a tangible representation of it. Troop deployments offer vivid pieces of information whereas nuclear umbrellas lack a physical form and, therefore, exist only in the minds of decision-makers. One finding in the cognitive psychology literature is that individuals tend to place disproportionately more evidentiary weight on information that is emotionally salient and vivid.\textsuperscript{53} According to Nisbett and Ross, vividness is “the emotional interest of information, the concreteness and imaginability of information, and the sensory, spatial, and temporal proximity of information.”\textsuperscript{54} Many aspects of nuclear operational planning and doctrine are emotionally disinterested, abstract, and, therefore, lack vividness. Accordingly, decision-makers are less likely to use such pieces of information. Conventional military deployments, by contrast, involve not only military personnel, but also physical structures such as garrisons and other physical infrastructure. One of the most important foreign military bases that the United States operates is located in the center of Seoul, South Korea. Accordingly, military bases become focal points when their operators’ foreign policies are contested because they offer physical manifestations of the major power’s presence in their country.\textsuperscript{55}

I should note here that different types of conventional military deployments exist, each with their own implications for the efficacy of deterring an adversary. Conventional military power can be constituted by land power, sea power, and air power. Land power involves ground troops, tanks, and artillery. Sea power involves a naval capacity that includes battleships. Air power involves fighter aircraft (to acquire air supremacy) and bomber aircraft.

\textsuperscript{53}See, e.g., Tversky and Kahneman (1973), Borgida and Nisbett (1977), Anderson (1983), and McDermott (2004, 64).
\textsuperscript{54}Nisbett and Ross (1980, 62). For applications of this concept in international security scholarship, see Kaufmann (1994) and Yarhi-Milo (2013).
\textsuperscript{55}For scholarship on the politicization of military bases, see Calder (2007) and Cooley (2008).
Some military weapon systems such as aircraft carriers involve a mixture of these forms of military power. Which form of conventional military deployment is most effective for deterring an adversary depends on the strategic context facing the ally. If the ally were a landlocked state such as the Czech Republic, then it would attend most to changes in the provision of land power by its patron. If the ally were an archipelago state such as Great Britain, then it would attend most to changes in the provision of air and sea power.

In the next section I elaborate why the ally would respond to these unfavorable developments by engaging in nuclear behavior. Following this discussion, I will examine how the major power will respond.

**Internal Balancing and Bargaining**

Nuclear behavior can achieve two separate, but non-mutually exclusive objectives. Seeking nuclear weapons can be a form of internal balancing to insure against the effects of major power abandonment. This activity, or adopting an ambiguous posture regarding its nuclear intentions, can also be a means for the ally to recapture the major power patron’s attention and bargain for a new alliance contract.

**Nuclear Behavior and Insurance**

Nuclear behavior may be a rational response to a critical decline in perceived credibility. States that *covertly* engage in nuclear behavior, they are striving to develop an independent nuclear deterrent capability. They plan on one day revealing this capability so as to deter external aggression and coercion. Goldstein notes that the ally is not required to develop such an extensive and technologically advanced arsenal as those possessed by the US and the Soviet Union. Rather, it needs to have a sufficient number of weapons that are capable of second-strike delivery to deter the adversary from launching a direct attack. Indeed, the philosophy guiding the ally’s approach to deterrence is different from that of their patrons.
Major powers rely on the threat of controlled escalation in which they proceed through limited but gradually more intense exchanges to communicate their resolve in inflicting damage. Engaging in controlled escalation requires advanced command and control systems as well as the ability to absorb nuclear damage. These requirements are especially demanding for smaller states that are less able to meet them.  

Consequently, such states use a ‘poison pill’ strategy in which their deterrence policy rests on the threat of uncontrolled escalation. The high likelihood of both parties losing control of a nuclear exchange characterizes this form of confrontation. For such an exchange to occur there needs to be an element of risk that neither side could attenuate. A state’s technological capacity for managing its nuclear weapons poses such a risk if it is involuntarily underdeveloped and thus prone to accidents and other organizational failures. These concerns gain significance when it comes to allies. Their national command structures are likely to be small and more concentrated than is the case for major powers. In the event of a nuclear exchange, they face a much higher probability of being thrown into disarray during the conflict’s initial stages. Nuclear retaliation, therefore, becomes less inhibited and results in the infliction of massive damage on the adversary. Backwards inducing from this possibility leads the adversary to refrain from making a direct military attack on the ally.

A nuclear weapons program might seem to some readers as an extreme course of action to take in the face of incredible security commitments. My theory does not preclude a conventional military build-up as a response to an adverse shift in the major power’s strategic posture. However, it is important to keep in mind that when facing a nuclear-armed adversary, nuclear weapons offer the ally a relatively inexpensive means of redressing the balance of power in its favor. Relying exclusively on a conventional military build-up is problematic.

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56 For a general discussion on these issues, see Goldstein (2000). As Sagan (1995) indicates, the technical demands of ‘controlled escalation’ are high even major powers to meet. By extension, the costs should be much higher for less capable states.

57 Powell (1987, 719).

58 Goldstein (2000, 47-51).

59 A nuclear-armed adversary can take multiple forms: a nuclear-armed major power adversary or an adversary that has the patronage of a nuclear-armed major power. For a discussion of the relationship
atic if the state wants to deter nuclear coercion or be able to retaliate following a nuclear strike. Moreover, the ally cannot look to the adversary for protection because of the latter’s historical animosity or aggressive intent. It can seek to mitigate the threat with rapprochement, but such an approach would not adequately address the underlying security concerns generated by the weakening of its security guarantee. As a result, the ally is unlikely to seek rapprochement as a first resort.

**Nuclear Behavior as Contract Revising**

Acquiring a nuclear arsenal might be a form of insurance, but states have to pass through various stages of nuclear development first. Indeed, there is a paradox underlining nuclear weapons acquisition. As much as having a nuclear arsenal might engender international stability, the process by which states finally acquire nuclear weapons generates instability (Sagan and Waltz 1995). Adopting an ambiguous nuclear posture or pursuing a nuclear weapons program provokes alarm amongst neighboring states, regardless of whether they are allies. Those states might be unsettled by the uncertainty of the potential proliferator’s uncertain intentions. They might also fear of being vulnerable to nuclear blackmail in the future. Moreover, though the ally might act to hedge against major power abandonment in its effort to obtain greater foreign policy autonomy, it also risks punishment from the major power for threatening to undermine the integrity of the alliance.

States that *overtly* engage in nuclear behavior are in effect bargaining over the terms of the major power’s security guarantees. Bargaining is commonplace in international politics because many resources and other goods (such as security) that states aspire to possess are scarce. How these goods should be allocated are often subject to dispute.\(^60\) If security partnerships, in the form of basing rights and alliances, can usefully be likened to contracts, nuclear behavior consists of revising the terms of the original ‘security contract’ regarding

\(^60\) Reiter (2003, 27).
how and to what extent the major power patron should provide security. To be sure, bargaining of this variety takes place even when the nuclear weapons program is undisguised. Bargaining also occurs when the ally is deflecting calls to renounce the acquisition of nuclear weapons or implement adequate safeguards on its existing nuclear facilities.

Still, even a covert program eventually needs to be revealed so to have any strategic value. Revealing a nuclear capability is not geopolitically neutral. Not only would it antagonize adversaries, but it would alarm and upset allies. In such a scenario, the nuclear capability becomes a fait accompli that augments the bargaining power of the ally relative to that of its patron. In other words, there is an intent to bargain that underlies covert nuclear behavior. Yet another aspect of a covert program exists that bears on the issue of bargaining: even if the program were to be discovered and even terminated, it creates a precedent that casts a shadow over the ally’s future interactions with the major power patron. Past instances of nuclear behavior demonstrate the ally’s willingness to engage in nuclear behavior if its patron were to undertake unfavorable policies. In sum, covert nuclear behavior may take place without active bargaining between the ally and the patron. Nevertheless, the relationship between the patron and the ally can alter with the disclosure of these activities.

This discussion leads me to propose the following hypothesis:

**Main Hypothesis:** If the major power’s level of conventional military deployment on the ally’s territory decreases, then the ally will be more likely to engage in nuclear behavior.

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Cooley (2008); Cooley and Spruyt (2009); Lake (2009).
2.4 Alliance Compensation Theory: Termination

Termination as a Bargaining Outcome

States that overtly engage in nuclear behavior are in effect bargaining over the terms of the major power’s security guarantees. Bargaining is commonplace in international politics because many resources and other goods (such as security) that states aspire to possess are scarce. If security partnerships, in the form of basing rights and alliances, resemble contracts, nuclear behavior consists of revising the terms of the original ‘security contract’ regarding how and to what extent the major power patron should provide security. To be sure, bargaining of this variety takes place either when the nuclear weapons program is overt or when the ally is deflecting calls to adopt an unambiguous non-nuclear posture. Still, even a covert program needs to be revealed eventually to have any strategic value. Furthermore, the unintended discovery of such a program can produce its own bargaining dynamic: that the ally endeavored in a nuclear weapons program creates a precedent that casts a shadow over the ally’s future interactions with the major power patron.

Nuclear behavior can provoke bargaining because major powers see it as a direct challenge to their interests. Matthew Kroenig writes that:

“[l]eaders in power-projecting states fear that nuclear proliferation might deter them from using military intervention to pursue their interests, reduce the effectiveness of their coercive diplomacy, trigger regional instability, undermine their alliance structures, dissipate their strategic attention, and set off further nuclear proliferation within their sphere of influence.”

Major powers see nuclear proliferation as a threat to their leadership. John Mearsheimer writes that major powers seek regional or even global hegemony. For major powers, nuclear

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63 Cooley (2008); Cooley and Spruyt (2009); Lake (2009).
64 Kroenig (2010, 3).
proliferation undermines these objectives.\textsuperscript{65} Indeed, nuclear behavior constitutes a specific form of deterrence failure on the part of the patron. The patron failed to prevent its ally from seeking nuclear weapons, thereby creating the added problem of undercutting assurance and deterrence efforts towards an adversary.\textsuperscript{66} Thus, when allies engage in such disquieting behaviors, the major power has to coerce some settlement that addresses the ally’s overriding concerns and prevents the spread of nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{67}

Even if power disparities characterize the relationship between the major power and its ally, bargaining for a successful counterproliferation outcome has its challenges. Two mechanisms – asymmetric information and commitment problems – also prevent states from reaching an agreement. Informational problems generally occur because states have private information regarding their military capabilities, their resolve in obtaining foreign policy goals, or their payoffs in prevailing in an international dispute. In the anarchic international system, states also have incentives to misrepresent private information. These concerns emerge with nuclear behavior because states might prefer to be discreet about their activities due to their sensitive nature. Provoking alarm among their regional neighbors could serve the ally’s interests so as to startle the patron into granting concessions. However, the manipulation of risk that such behavior entails is dangerous because it invites harmful sanctions and aggressive action by other states. Information problems might also arise because states might mislead their patrons into granting concessions that ironically increase the risk of nuclear proliferation.\textsuperscript{68} Commitment problems, too, become manifest when allies

\textsuperscript{65}Mearsheimer (2001).
\textsuperscript{66}Coe and Vaynman (2013) write that the United States and the Soviet Union colluded to control nuclear proliferation within their respective spheres of influence. Christensen (2011) writes that internally divided alliances make it harder to engage in coercive diplomacy with adversaries.
\textsuperscript{67}The situation facing the patron here is analogous to the distinction between general and immediate deterrence. The goal of general deterrence is to prevent the adversary from initiating a crisis whereas the goal of immediate deterrence is to keep the crisis from escalating into war. For more on general and immediate deterrence, see Morgan (1983).
\textsuperscript{68}Matthew Fuhrmann argues that states might offer their allies with civilian nuclear assistance in order to signal their commitment to their security partnership. Fuhrmann (2009\textsuperscript{a,b}). Though the sending state might not desire nuclear proliferation, it inadvertently raises the risks by transmitting such sensitive technologies. See also Kroenig (2010).
engage in nuclear behavior. I have already discussed how commitment problems themselves create incentives for states to initiate nuclear behavior. The perceived unwillingness of the major power patron to defend the ally needs to be satisfactorily addressed so to assuage the ally’s concerns. One simple strategy is for the major power to rectify whatever it was that indicated its lack of reliability to the ally in the first place. Towards this end the major power could, for example, retain or increase its conventional military presence on the ally’s territory.

Regardless as to whether it accedes to the major power’s demands, the ally also needs to resolve commitment problems created by its own behavior. It has to demonstrate that if it were to back down it would not renege and thus resume its nuclear activities in the future. The major power, after all, does not want to bargain with the same ally over the extent and form of the security it provides repeatedly. As a result, the major power would demand a costly action by the ally that would impair its ability to reinitiate nuclear behavior in the future. To make its nuclear reversal credible, costly actions include the open disavowal of a nuclear program, the complete destruction of physical materials integral to the production of nuclear weapons, and accession to multilateral agreements that proscribe and monitor nuclear behavior. I consider the meaning and costliness of each of these actions in turn.

To begin, the open disavowal of a nuclear program is costly because the ally is making a public admission of its nuclear behavior. In so doing it accepts certain damages to its reputation because a nuclear weapons program indicate dishonesty (if maintained covertly), ill-intent, and a propensity for risk-taking behavior. The complete destruction of physical materials integral to the production of nuclear weapons is another costly action that makes a state’s nuclear reversal credible. Nuclear weapons are difficult to manufacture even if a state only possesses peaceful nuclear technology. States require heavy water, uranium-235,

\[^{69}\text{To be sure, an admission might be a pre-condition for security cooperation so as to eventually regain the trust of other states. However, an admission communicated publicly to other governments cannot be construed as ‘cheap talk’. Nuclear recidivism would reveal a level of insincerity and irresponsibility that would trigger a more aggressive reaction by those states already threatened by the offending state’s behavior.}\]
and plutonium-239 – resources that have historically been difficult to obtain in the nuclear era – to produce nuclear weapons. By ridding themselves of such materials the state can more credibly assert that the resumption of nuclear weapons would be difficult.

Finally, accession to multilateral agreements that proscribe nuclear behavior is costly because it includes similar effects as open disavowal. As Zachary Elkins and his co-authors argue, working through international institutions raises international audience costs that leaders would incur should they reneg. That is, multilateral commitments enhance credibility by “[raising] the ex post costs of noncompliance above those that might be incurred in the absence of the treaty.” These legal commitments reduce uncertainty over their intentions with respect to nuclear technology if states have to comply with independent monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. If the institution generates information and has effective enforcement mechanisms, signing and ratifying an agreement (i.e. the NPT) constrains the state’s future freedom of action.

Making the ally credibly commit can pose a challenge for the patron. Threatening to attack its facilities is not an option. The major power thus has to resort to diplomacy and statecraft in order to dissuade the ally from engaging in nuclear behavior and bring it into compliance with anti-nuclear injunctions.

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72This last observation points to one more impediment that marks the bargaining process. A credible settlement that fully reverses the offending state’s nuclear behavior has long-term consequences. James D. Fearon observes that “a long shadow of the future ... can ... give states an incentive to bargain harder, delaying agreement in hopes of getting a better deal.’ Emphasis in original. See Fearon (1998, 270). A state engaging in nuclear behavior might first seek meaningful concessions if it were to renounce the acquisition of nuclear weapons indefinitely. After all, it cannot be certain whether its security environment would be more favorable or more hostile in the future. Thus, before agreeing to a credible nuclear reversal, the ally might wish to gain strong assurances in return.
73For more on when states use military force against potential nuclear proliferators, see Fuhrmann and Kreps (2010).
Determinants of Major Power Counterproliferation Efficacy

At least two sources of leverage are potentially available to the major power in its efforts to compel a reversal in the offending ally’s nuclear behavior. The first refers to the extent of the ally’s dependence on the patron for its security needs. This factor – security dependence – is reflected in whether the alliance is bilateral or multilateral. The second refers to the extent of the ally’s dependence on the patron for its economic needs. This factor – economic dependence – is reflected in the ally’s reliance on the patron’s trade and foreign aid. I argue that the interaction of these two variables influence the efficacy of the counterproliferation effort.

Before describing each of these factors in turn, I put forward two metrics for evaluating the efficacy of a counterproliferation effort. These two metrics refer to speed and definitiveness. Speed refers to the duration of the counterproliferation effort. The major power would prefer to resolve a state’s nuclear behavior as quickly as possible. Having it continue for too long risks undermining alliance structures, stirring diplomatic discord, encouraging local arms races, and generating regional instability.

Definitiveness refers to the number of impediments/restrictions put in place to slow future attempts at acquisition. A definitive settlement includes the complete dismantlement of not only the non-peaceful nuclear program, but also a denial of centrifuge technology. South Korea, to this date, cannot reprocess spent nuclear fuel whereas (West) Germany can.

The speed of the counterproliferation effort reflects the distance that the final settlement for nuclear reversal has from the major power’s ideal point. A quick and effective counterproliferation effort is what the major power would prefer. A longer process adds to the dissatisfaction of the major power by compounding the bargaining problems highlighted above and requiring it to offer more concessions than it would otherwise like to make. Below I describe how security and economic dependence interact to affect counterproliferation.
Security Dependence

Security dependence is measured by the scope of the alliance between the offending state and the patron. I should clarify that, though they can encompass diverse features, alliances can appear in four basic forms that vary on their formality and membership scope. These four basic types are: formal bilateral, formal multilateral, informal bilateral, and informal multilateral. For the purposes of my study here, I focus only on the first two categories. After all, informality already suggests an absent (or, at least, a very weak) political commitment. Moreover, status of force agreements that come with forward military deployments are generally made with countries that already have some formal alliance in the first place.

Major powers are more capable of exercising leverage in a bilateral alliance than in a multilateral alliance, *ceteris paribus*. Several reasons for this difference exists. First, the weaker ally in a bilateral alliance does not have any (obvious) substitute source of security assurances. A member of a multilateral alliance can look to its fellow allies for diplomatic and military support when faced with an increasingly unreliable patron. Second, in a multilateral alliance, the major power faces pressure to take into consideration the preferences and interests of third-party allies when crafting its counterproliferation strategy. For example, the major power might wish to establish a custodial nuclear-sharing arrangement, adjust how military consultations are made, and re-calibrate operational planning to reassure the ally. The major power, however, cannot focus these efforts exclusively on the offending ally without appearing discriminatory towards the others. Those allies might be bereaved at the perceived special treatment and, therefore, consider nuclear behavior as a legitimate instrument to gain such exclusive favors. This dynamic might appear in bilateral settings. After all, bilateral allies might compare their institutional ties with those of other bilateral allies. The attenuating factor here is that the major power can still address the concerns of the begrudging ally separately.

Second, in a bilateral alliance, the major power enjoys greater policy autonomy and fewer
restraints in applying coercive pressure. Indeed, one of the motivations behind the choice between forming a multilateral alliance and bilateral alliance is whether the major power is willing to sacrifice its policy autonomy. Contrasting the multilateral Western alliance with the bilateral arrangements that undergird the US-centered ‘hub-and-spoke’ system in East Asia, John Ikenberry writes:

“... the United States was both more dominant in East Asia and wanted less out of the region. This meant that the United States found it less necessary to give up policy autonomy in exchange for institutional cooperation in Asia. In Europe, the United States had an elaborate agenda of uniting European states, creating an institutional bulwark against communism, and supporting centrist democratic governments. These ambitious goals could not be realized simply by exercising brute power. To get what it wanted it had to bargain with the Europeans and this meant agreeing to institutionally restrain and commit its power. In East Asia, the building of order around bilateral pacts with Japan, Korea and other states was a more desirable strategy because multilateralism would have entailed more restraints on policy autonomy.”[^74]

A consequence of the strategic decision underlying alliance formation is that the major power has greater freedom of action in restraining and punishing its allies should they choose unfavorable policies.

This observation has an implication for how allies in such arrangements might undertake nuclear behavior. If they are more vulnerable to major power punishment, then they should at least practice nuclear behavior differently. That is, if they were to run a greater risk of punishment, then bilateral allies have added incentive to pursue a nuclear program covertly so to reduce exposure. Yet too covert of a program undermines the value of nuclear behavior in terms of being an effective deterrent against an adversary or a bargaining chip against the

Economic Dependence

The major power has another important source of leverage if its ally is economically dependent. It can use economic statecraft. The application of this tool encompasses the actual or threatened use a variety of tools such as embargoes, boycotts, withdrawal of ‘most-favored-treatment’, tariff increases, freezing assets, aid suspension, and import and export controls.\textsuperscript{75} States that lack diverse or large economies are particularly sensitive to major power pressure. They depend on the major power for economic or military assistance as well as its market for selling exports. Cutting off aid flows or imposing export controls could harm the ally’s economy and even undermine the incumbent government’s chances for domestic political survival if members of the ally’s population bear these economic costs.\textsuperscript{76} To avoid incurring these costs the ally might cease its nuclear activity.\textsuperscript{77} Aside from having the technological capacity to even create their own nuclear arsenals, allies that wish to ratchet up their nuclear behavior need to, therefore, satisfy an important requirement. They have to be able to respond effectively to the major power’s demands to curb their activities and not succumb to its pressure. Economic power offers allies the means to inoculate themselves from major power punishment and coercion tactics.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{75}Baldwin (1985, 39-41). See also Kirshner (1997).
\textsuperscript{77}Many states likely backwards induce the harmful effects of a major power’s application of negative sanctions, thus leading them to eschew nuclear behavior altogether. Some states, however, place an overriding importance to their security to such an extent that they are willing to risk the costs of negative sanctions. These states face such severe external threats that they feel particularly obliged to pursue an insurance policy in the face of a seemingly unreliable security commitment offered by a major power. Indeed, a perceived decline in the credibility of extended deterrence may even lead some leaders of allies to correspondingly believe that the major power will be unable to apply significant pressure on them to reverse on their nuclear behavior.
\textsuperscript{78}A number of quantitative studies show that economic power and military power are highly correlated with nuclear proliferation (Horowitz 2010; Jo and Gartzke 2007; Singh and Way 2004). These same studies, however, include the US and the Soviet Union, which might skew the results.
equal) can nevertheless make strategic gains by pursuing lower levels of nuclear behavior. A common assumption in the international security scholarship is that nuclear behavior only generates insurance when proliferating states develop a deterrence capability. I argue that such a view is short-sighted. Such behavior might be intended to attract the major power’s attention and extract assurances over its security guarantee. Knowing that the major power would prefer it to lack a nuclear weapons arsenal, the ally can exploit its patron’s fears that it will break rank, pursue a nuclear weapons program, and cultivate an independent foreign policy. Thus, when the patron’s leadership is openly considering scaling back conventional force deployments, the ally could use nuclear behavior so as to remind the major power’s leadership of the need to reassure allies of its defense commitments. States that engage in nuclear behavior for such ends will only do so until they receive a desirable and credible amount of assurances. Of course, such a bargaining strategy is not without risk—a proliferating state might fail in obtaining these objectives if they suffer unacceptable harm by the coercing patron.

Combining the Two Variables

The effect on any one of these variables on a major power’s ability to coerce a counterproliferation outcome depends on the value of the other variable. An ally that security dependent is not going to be amenable to major power pressure if it is sufficiently strong economically to block coercion attempts. Conversely, a multilateral arrangement might still be pliable if a large economic disparity exists between the major power and all other allies. Table 3 crosses the dichotomous values of these two variables and lists the predictions regarding the major power’s ability to reverse its ally’s nuclear behavior. To simplify, allies can have either low or high levels of economic dependence on their major power patron. The interactions produce four expected outcomes.

When the ally depends on the patron for its security but not for its economic needs, I ex-
pect that the major power’s counterproliferation effort towards its ally would face important challenges. The lack of economic dependence implies that the ally is in a relatively strong position to deter coercive tactics because of the size of its economy, industrial base, and ability to raise capital independently. In the presence of a strong, mutually beneficial commercial relationship between the two states, the patron might even be averse to practicing coercion on such an ally because it could generate harmful effects on its own economy. This independence negates the policy autonomy that the alliance’s bilateralism should otherwise grant to the major power patron. The patron might diplomatically encourage the ally to reverse its nuclear behavior, but it is not able to do much more. It is not in a position to force a definitive settlement and deprive the ally of certain technologies.

A situation in which the ally is both highly dependent in its security and economic needs is where the major power will be most effective in coercing a settlement. The ally’s dependence renders it vulnerable to the patron’s economic statecraft. As a result of the alliance’s institutional form, the major power also enjoys greater flexibility and foreign policy autonomy in punishing the ally without appearing discriminatory. Accordingly, upon learning of the ally’s nuclear behavior, the major power should be able to mount a quick and definitive counterproliferation settlement.

By contrast, the major power faces the most unfavorable situation when a member of its multilateral alliance is not dependent. The ally has sufficient market power that empowers it to check and deter the coercive tactics that the major power might undertake against its interests. The major power also risks appearing discriminatory if it were to foist upon

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79 The gravity model of trade claims that the best predictors of bilateral trade flows between countries are economic size and geographical distance. A likely reason for an ally’s economic independence is its economic size, which is reflected in having a sufficiently large domestic aggregate demand.
the offending ally some settlement designed to curb its possible nuclear ambitions. Even if it were to deliberately avoid appearing discriminatory, the major power would face major obstacles in designing an institutional solution that satisfactorily addresses the interests of other allies. If the major power were to ultimately succeed in mounting a counterproliferation effort against a target state, the process would be slow and not be definitive.\textsuperscript{80}

In multilateral arrangements where the ally is vulnerable to the economic coercion of the patron, I expect that the counterproliferation effort would proceed similarly to, but slower than, a situation in which the alliance is bilateral. The pace of this process is a function of the major power determining a broad solution that both encompasses and satisfies the alliance membership.

2.5 Alternative Explanations

Two compelling alternative explanations are worth highlighting. One alternative explanation focuses on the adversarial threat as a key driver of nuclear behavior. Another emphasizes the role of domestic preferences instead.

Balance-of-Threat Theory

One compelling argument is that threats posed by the adversary alone are sufficient to explain nuclear behavior. To be sure, my theory assumes that an adversarial threat exists. Fears of abandonment would have no salience in the absence of a threat. Yet some might argue that adversarial threat – irrespective of the patron’s own actions – drive nuclear behavior. When the adversary poses a threat, the ally has incentives to ratchet up its nuclear behavior. When the adversary lowers its threat – or if the threat fades away entirely – the ally reduces its level of nuclear behavior. This claim is similar to Walt’s assertion that states respond

\textsuperscript{80}In this situation, because the solution is far from evident, the leadership of the major power might have to cycle through various counterproliferation strategies.
to threats rather than capabilities in making alignment decisions.\textsuperscript{81} Thus, as Richard Betts argues, states that have a strong desire for nuclear weapons would spare no effort in getting them.\textsuperscript{82}

Both my main argument and this alternative argument are essentially ‘realist.’ Each argument alleges that states engage in nuclear behavior in response to external stimuli. Moreover, they assume unitary statehood and fixed and conflictual preferences, at least on the part of the ally.\textsuperscript{83} My theory is distinct, however, because I assume that states would prefer to depend on their alliances and that adversarial threat is at most a necessary but not a sufficient factor for their nuclear behavior. By contrast, the balance-of-threat explanation described here assumes that states assume that their alliances are unreliable. They react more to the conduct of their adversary than their stronger allies. In other words, despite being both realist, my explanation puts forward different predictions for when non-major power states are more likely to engage in ‘self-help’ – an activity that is overstated by existing approaches to realism.

Both offensive and defensive realist theories tend to exaggerate states’ proclivity to engage in self-help behavior with respect to nuclear proliferation. For example, Kenneth Waltz sees nuclear proliferation as benefiting international stability.\textsuperscript{84} Indeed, if states wanted to maximize their security by having an effective deterrent, they should develop and maintain their own nuclear arsenals. Empirically, however, relatively few states have aspired to possess such weapon systems. Indeed, as mentioned above, the process of nuclear weapons acquisition can in fact undermine stability and upset relations with other states. Thus, defensive realism has trouble explaining both the limited number of nuclear-armed states and the the instability that is typical of states’ nuclear behavior.\textsuperscript{85} Offensive realism can explain each

\textsuperscript{81}See Walt (1987).
\textsuperscript{82}Betts (2000).
\textsuperscript{83}For a discussion of the core assumptions of realist theory, see Legro and Moravcsik (1999).
\textsuperscript{84}Sagan and Waltz (1995).
\textsuperscript{85}Of course, multiple interpretations of defensive realism exist. See Rose (1998) and Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro (2009).
pattern by emphasizing the role of great power politics in preventing nuclear proliferation, but it offers little explanation of why states might risk superpower punishment in the first place.

**Hypothesis 1.** The nuclear behavior of an ally becomes more (less) likely when the adversarial threat increases (decreases), independently of the patron’s actions.

It is theoretically possible that the variables put forward here and those advanced by my theory co-vary. That is, a state might view an external threat as more severe when it finds itself in a situation of possible major power abandonment. Conversely, the ally might be more dismissive of the threat if it is adequately assured of the protections provided by the major power. To disentangle this possible overlap, it is important to verify how leaders construe their threat environments before shifts in strategic posture take place. To validate my theory, leaders should see the severity of external threat as a function of the reliability of the alliance support they receive. Alternatively, their evaluations of the external threat should remain unchanged during the course of the major power’s shift in its strategic posture. If perceptions of external threat produce nuclear behavior prior to any shift in strategic posture, then my theory would offer an invalid explanation for that case.

**Domestic Politics Explanations**

Domestic politics explanations offer a more contrasting source of alternative hypotheses. These explanations claim that international state behavior is a function of internal stimuli.

Domestic politics explanations take two forms. The first form emphasizes the preferences of the ruling political coalition. Specifically, as Etel Solingen argues, decisions to acquire nuclear weapons after the NPT entered into force correlated with governing coalitions’ preferences over their state’s role in the global economy.\(^8^6\) Liberal internationalist

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\(^{86}\)Solingen (2007). It is not clear why she distinguishes between the pre-NPT world and the NPT world.
coalitions that seek greater integration of the global economy eschew the nuclear option, recognizing that nuclear behavior would risk reducing them to pariah status. Nationalist coalitions are, by their nature, inward-looking and prefer to adopt self-sufficient policies that detach them from the global economy. Economic self-sufficiency and nationalism maps onto their willingness to embrace nuclear weapon programs. Indeed, nationalist leaders might seek these weapons as a tactic to rally their populations, stir nationalist rhetoric, and divert attention away from domestic problems.

**Hypothesis 2.** *Allies ruled by economically liberal coalitions are significantly less likely to engage in nuclear behavior.*

**Hypothesis 3.** *Allies ruled by economically nationalist coalitions are more likely to engage in nuclear behavior.*

Another form of a domestic politics explanation emphasizes the role of social norms and their amenability towards nuclear behavior. If a state’s domestic society exhibits powerful anti-militarist norms, then its leaders risk domestic unpopularity for undertaking nuclear behavior. Anti-militarist norms might be politically manifest in social movements (e.g., large-scale protests), public opinion polls, and even independent media coverage on issues relating to nuclear policy, alliance politics, and the defense industry.

**Hypothesis 4.** *Societies that exhibit anti-militarist norms are less likely to engage in nuclear behavior.*

These explanations are generally silent on how the political and economic interests of governing coalitions affect bargaining with major power patrons. Nevertheless, these theories provide a coherent account of the preferences of the actors as well as the incentive structures they face. As a result, it is possible to explore how such actors would bargain with a major power patron.

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87 These dynamics are most prevalent in transitioning political regimes. See Snyder (2000).
88 For scholarship that makes this claim, see Katzenstein (1996) and Berger (1998).
89 To be sure, anti-militarist norms are far more likely to be salient in liberal democracies than in autocracies.
Because states governed by economically liberal coalitions are not expected to engage in nuclear behavior, we can turn our attention immediately to states ruled by economic nationalists. These states generally exhibit non-democratic features. The choice to forego engagement with the global economy often reflects a set of political values that center on national self-sufficiency and tight economic policies that severely constrain the commercial activities of the state’s population. To justify these restrictions, leaders often appeal to ideologies that use the ‘nation’ as a key organizing principle for political life. These ideologies provide such leaders as a basis of legitimacy because they highlight the form that political loyalty and identity members of society should possess.\textsuperscript{90} Moreover, nationalism offers leaders a heuristic device that clarifies the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable political behavior by denouncing undesired attitudes and activities as harmful to the ‘nation’ and, by extension, the incumbent regime.

Because nationalism often relies on sharp distinctions between the ‘in-group’ and the ‘out-group’, it is more prone to include xenophobic tendencies. Leaders can use nationalist rhetoric in this way to cast blame on alleged foreign depredations for their country’s misfortunes and rationalize otherwise unpopular security policies.\textsuperscript{91} Accordingly, when actually confronted with external pressure, the leadership would publicize its defiance in the international dispute to further bolster their legitimacy.\textsuperscript{92}

This observation regarding autocratic regimes has unique implications for how nuclear bargaining should unfold. If the leadership of the ally uses nationalist rhetoric to rationalize its nuclear behavior, then it might make it harder for the major power to get the ally to back down. Stacie Goddard argues that how actors legitimate their strategies affects the divisibility of the issue indivisibility under dispute. By issue indivisibility she refers to a ‘constructed phenomenon’ in which no division of the good is acceptable to at least one side of

\textsuperscript{90}Greenfeld (1993, 3).
\textsuperscript{91}Such rhetoric underpinned Mao Tse-tung’s grand strategic initiatives in the early Cold War Period. See Christensen (1996).
\textsuperscript{92}Pape (1997, 33).
the conflict. In studying territorial disputes in Ireland, Goddard shows that leaders choose rhetorical strategies designed to legitimate their claims. These strategies sometimes have unintended consequences as they rally coalitions of different interests together in support of the cause that might in the future prove decisive in sustaining political authority. Thus, leaders become dependent on maintaining these coalitions to survive politically, regardless of whether these legitimation strategies prove to be suboptimal and prevent peaceful settlement.

Autocratic allies that rely on nationalism and choose to engage in nuclear behavior thus may be harder for major powers to thwart in nuclear bargaining. This possibility still exists even if the major power is an ally because the ally leadership can still portray the struggle as ‘David against Goliath’. Leaders of such governing coalitions are reluctant to back down because doing so compromises their stated agenda for advancing national sovereignty and, by extension, undermines their basis of legitimacy. Claims over the level of security provided by the major power and the proliferation status of the ally become incompatible and eliminate the bargaining range altogether. The mechanism preventing a bargain between the ally and the major power is neither asymmetric information or a commitment problem, but rather issue indivisibility. This observation suggests the final hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5.** The ability of an ally to ratchet up its nuclear behavior is positively related to its level of authoritarianism.

One final issue deserves mention. Some scholars claim that states seek nuclear weapons to build international prestige. By international prestige, I refer to a coveted status that members of the international community confer on a state on the basis of its accomplishments or attributes. Barry O’Neill and Jacques Hymans have advanced hypotheses that explicitly link prestige concerns and nuclear weapons. More pointedly, Richard N. Rosecrance goes as far to say that “prestige may be the signal operative motivation for the acquisition of nuclear capability.” The problem with this type of explanation is that it is too difficult

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95 Rosecrance (1966, 35).
to disentangle nationalist motivations from prestige motivations. After all, acquiring international prestige boosts a leaders’ credentials in raising the stature of the state’s national community. Because of these theoretical and methodological issues, I consider any statements regarding the need to acquire international prestige to imply nationalist motives for weapons development.

2.6 Methodology, Case Selection, and Evidence

This book relies on historical case studies and statistical analysis for evidence. The choice of using multiple methodologies is deliberate: each of them has contrasting strengths and weaknesses. Case studies have the advantage of examining closely the causal process so as to evaluate the connection between the independent and dependent variables. Exploring the inputs of each decision-making process – to the extent possible – enables us to determine whether these connections are real or spurious. Yet the emphasis on breadth that inheres in historical work can come at the expense of depth. In view of the concern that the cases under review might be anomalous, I draw on statistical evidence. The quantitative analysis serves to uncover systematic trends and determine whether they accord with my main theory and/or the alternative arguments describe above. The statistical evidence, however, does not produce additional insights into causal processes. The following discussion explains my case selection and details the type of process-tracing evidence I have collected and use to test competing hypotheses.

Case Selection

Three intensive case studies form the core of this book. I describe these case studies as intensive because they draw on a wealth of process-tracing evidence intended to test rival hypotheses and investigate the decision-making involved. The cases are West Germany
I juxtapose the cases of West Germany and Japan (Chapters Four and Five) so as to execute a *controlled comparative case study* research design. I chose these two cases because they exhibit similarities on a number of important dimensions, allowing me to control for a range of possible influences on state behavior. First, both West Germany and Japan were former aggressors in the Second World War that capitulated under the terms of ‘unconditional surrender.’ Second, several scholars claim that strong norms of anti-militarism emerged in both West German and Japanese societies during the Cold War. Third, despite their egregious role in the Second World War, each state soon emerged in the post-war period as wealthy liberal democracies that provided extensive social benefits to their citizens. Fourth, both states received firm alliance commitments from the US and thus hosted large numbers of US military personnel. Fifth, the US military presence in each country was originally part of an occupying force. Nevertheless, the purpose of this military presence quickly evolved to provide a ‘tripwire’ against Soviet aggression because West Germany and Japan were geographically proximate to the transnational communist threat. Despite these similarities, one major difference, as identified by my theory, lies in their sensitivity to changes in US strategic doctrine between the 1950s and 1970s. If my theory were correct, these changes should have had significant but varying implications for how West Germany and Japan perceived the credibility of US nuclear umbrellas.

The selection of South Korea follows a different logic. South Korea is an attractive case for testing competing arguments about nuclear behavior for four reasons. First, South Korea is a *critical* case for my theory because the US government initiated plans for major

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97 Still, it is worth pointing out that South Korea and West Germany bear some important similarities that they do not share with Japan. Both South Korea and West Germany were divided as a result of the Cold War. As front-line states, they also had formal defense pacts with the US and hosted large numbers of US troops.
troop withdrawals from the peninsula on several separate occasions. In fact, the US government did not seek the South Korean government’s consent when it openly sought troop withdrawals in 1970 and 1977. Moreover, these plans for troop withdrawals reflected important shifts in US strategic posture. The magnitude of these shifts should have provoked a response from South Korea. Therefore, if my theory has to have empirical validity in any one case, it is that of South Korea. Accordingly, this case is useful for testing the theory’s proposed causal mechanism. Second, the South Korean case exhibits high values on those independent variables that existing scholarship describe as important for encouraging states to have nuclear weapons programs. Starting in the early 1960s, South Korea enjoyed high economic growth rates that expanded its industrial base and permitted the modernization of its military. These trends endowed South Korea with greater resources that would be instrumental in running a nuclear weapons program. Further, South Korea faced a highly threatening international environment during the 1960s and the 1970s. Indeed, North Korea posed a persistent conventional military threat to South Korea. This threat arguably increased when North Korea was caught operating a secret nuclear weapons program following the end of the Cold War. Finally, a repressive authoritarian regime also ruled the country until South Korea democratized in the late 1980s. Third, the case of South Korea exhibits important within-case variation in both the key independent variable (e.g., US strategic posture) and the dependent variable. To exploit this variation and adjudicate between contrasting hypotheses, I use process-tracing evidence to account for changes in the dependent variable. According to Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sydney Verba, process-tracing in the presence of within-case variation is useful for determining the (relative) causal impact of independent variables.\footnote{King, Keohane, and Verba (1994, 208-228).}

As mentioned, I also use statistical evidence to determine the argument’s external validity. This analysis explores the relationship between withdrawals of military personnel and the likelihood of affected states to engage in nuclear behavior. An important limitation
of this analysis is that reliable data on troop deployments only exist for the US. So as to further determine the external validity of my theory, I have narrow case studies to understand patterns of nuclear behavior among Soviet alliances. These narrow case studies bear resemblances plausibility probes. According to Harry Eckstein, plausibility probes serve as a ‘first pass’ for the researcher to evaluate the possible validity of a theory before incurring the costs of a large-scale case study. The functional purpose of these narrow case studies is not determine the empirical validity of a theory, but rather its applicability to a separate class of cases. For these cases, I use a mixture of primary sources (available from the Cold War International History Project) and secondary sources.

**Qualitative Evidence**

To adjudicate between these rival hypotheses, I draw on process-tracing evidence that I gathered from multiple repositories around the world, the *Foreign Relations of the United States* documentary record, and the secondary historical literature. The primary sources encompass such documents as Memoranda of Conversations that recapitulate conversations between US decision-makers themselves, or between them and their ally decision-makers. Other documents include Department of State or Defense telegrams, memoranda, and cables; National Security Council reports and internal memoranda; National Intelligence Estimates; and White House briefing reports prepared for US decision-makers. With these documents, I can gain insight into what sort of indicators or what forms of reasoning that allied decision-makers used. Recognizing that these documents are biased – that is, allied decision-makers were selective or otherwise strategic in the information they revealed in their interactions with the United States – I draw on interviews with regional and subjects experts as well as verify consistency between US primary documents and foreign secondary sources.

Alliance compensation theory requires evidence that demonstrates that shifts in the major

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100 I will describe the quantitative data used for the statistical analysis in Chapter Eight.
power’s strategic posture induce the ally to engage in nuclear behavior. Direct ‘smoking gun’ evidence is difficult to obtain when researching such sensitive issues of national security. Nevertheless, in the absence of such evidence, passing several empirical tests can help build confidence in the theory. These tests center on questions that need to be asked of the data and answered in the affirmative.

With regards to studying the onset of nuclear behavior, these questions are the following. First, is there a correlation between major troop level changes (real or anticipated) and the onset of nuclear behavior? Second, do documents show that the ally’s leadership was concerned about the strategic implications of major power withdrawal? Third, do these concerns appear to bear on decisions to ratchet up nuclear behavior? Fourth, did major power decision-makers link the major power’s military presence with the ally’s nuclear behavior during counter-proliferation negotiations?

These tests have varying degrees of difficulty in terms of how the evidence would validate the theory. The first question asks whether congruence exists between the theorized cause and outcome (a necessary but insufficient condition).

Consistent with the second question, other pieces of necessary evidence would highlight the ally’s apprehensions about conventional military withdrawals from its territory. The third question is more demanding because of the sensitive nature of the subject. One piece of evidence that would be decisive for validating my theory would be a document in which the ally’s leaders explicitly refer to major power troop withdrawals when deciding to initiate nuclear weapons development. To reiterate, such ‘smoking gun’ evidence is hard to obtain. Therefore, it is important to determine whether the ally’s government engaged in other activities that troubled the major power as a result of an adverse change in the strategic posture of the patron (particularly when manifest in unilateral troop withdrawals). Such actions might be correlative of growing distrust in the major power and, therefore, are rooted in the same causal mechanism that

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101 George and Bennett (2004, 24) describes congruence testing as a method in which “the researcher tests whether the predicted value of the dependent variable, in view of the values of the case’s independent variables, is congruent with the actual outcome of the case.”

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my theory puts forward. Evidence that affirms the fourth question is neither necessary nor sufficient for the theory. It is possible for major power decision-makers to remain ignorant of cause-and-effect relations. Nevertheless, such evidence pulls in the direction of the theory because they may be drawing on private insights into the ally’s decision-making.

Alliance compensation theory also describes how certain conditions enable the patron to compel a nuclear reversal on the part of an offending ally. Accordingly, the cause-and-effect logic between the proposed factors – security and economic dependence – and termination of nuclear behavior is less firm. I rely more on a congruence test to determine the empirical validity of this aspect of my theory. In doing so I might disappoint some readers, yet this modesty reflects the complexity of nuclear reversal. Unfortunately, no ‘magic bullet’ exists that policy-makers can apply to stop a state from acquiring nuclear weapons. If so, decision-makers would have learned how to deal with such cases as Iraq, Iran, and North Korea a long time ago. Moreover, it is difficult to independently disentangle the effects of threats and reassurances to compel a nuclear reversal. Decision-makers tend to use them simultaneously, and it thus becomes unclear which in isolation produced the desired effect.

This caveat aside, process-tracing evidence remains useful for understanding patterns of nuclear reversal and bargaining. To validate my theory, such evidence should demonstrate how security and economic dependence *framed* the counterproliferation effort. The process-tracing evidence should show, for example, that decision-makers took advantage of the alliance’s bilateralism by threatening to radically redefine the security arrangement should an economically weak ally continue to engage in nuclear behavior. The evidence must show that the ally’s leadership was sensitive to actual or threatened applications of economic statecraft and bowed to such pressure by canceling suspicious nuclear programs or adopting stronger international safeguards. Documents need to demonstrate a clear linkage between the ally’s sensitivity to economic pressure brought to bear by the major power and the cessation of its nuclear behavior. With a stronger state, decision-makers should be hamstrung by their difficulties in applying economic statecraft against the target. In a multilateral
alliance, we should expect that decision-makers express greater uncertainty over how to curb the potential proliferator’s nuclear behavior. After all, they cannot redefine the security partnership without taking into account the broader interests of the alliance. Nor can they easily adopt discriminatory practices – especially those intended to compel a single ally to act in a certain way – without stirring dissension or resistance from the broader alliance membership. Process-tracing evidence can reveal whether broader alliance considerations shaped decision-makers’ policies towards the offending state.

What pieces of evidence would support alternative explanations and disconfirm my own? Indeed, one might even presume that by drawing extensively on US primary sources I stack the deck in favor of my alliance-based argument. Again, in light of this concern, I triangulate between primary sources and the secondary historical literature, drawing as much as possible on scholarship produced by foreign scholars. Accordingly, such historical scholarship can provide a stronger sense of the role played by adversarial threat as a driver of nuclear behavior, irrespective of the foreign policy conduct of the patron.

With respect to domestic politics explanations, several tests should be met. First, to sufficiently validate the first hypothesis, documents should show that leaders, particularly those of states dependent on foreign trade, are explicitly basing their decisions to pursue or reject nuclear behavior on considerations for the domestic economy. In other words, leaders should display an awareness of the economic consequences of engaging in nuclear behavior by noting the harmful effects of economic sanctions and isolation. Second, leaders that do engage in nuclear behavior should consistently communicate nationalist rhetoric prior to considering the nuclear program itself. That said, the difficulties of pinpointing the exact timing of a state’s initial exploration into nuclear weapons development are significant given the secrecy typically associated with such programs. However, it is important to address this issue as best as possible because leaders might use nationalism as post facto rationalization for the program. Still, an explanation that emphasizes models of political survival requires such evidence as a necessary condition. Third, during the course of a nuclear weapons program,
the presence of nationalist rhetoric should make it difficult to persuade the offending leader to terminate the program. Such rhetoric locks-in leaders because their own political survival increasingly hinges on their credibility as a national leader. This observation points to another necessary piece of evidence for the foregoing theory to have support: documents must demonstrate that the leader is not only resisting major power pressure, but appealing to nationalist rhetoric to cement their bargaining position.

Summary

Why do states that enjoy a nuclear umbrella strive towards, and sometimes step back from, acquiring nuclear weapons? I put forward a new theoretical framework called alliance compensation theory. Weaker allies judge the credibility of their nuclear umbrellas by referring to the nuclear-armed patron’s conventional military deployments and foreign policy doctrines, that is, their strategic posture. When such indicators suggest abandonment, as in the instance of a unilateral withdrawal of troops from the ally’s territory, then the affected ally fears abandonment and becomes more likely to engage in nuclear behavior. When nuclear behavior is covert, the ally is striving to develop an independent deterrent capability. When nuclear behavior is overt, however, the ally may or may not have this objective. At the very least, it is leveraging uncertainty over its nuclear intentions so as to extract new security assurances from the patron. In explaining why offending states sometimes fully reverse their nuclear behavior, I emphasize the interaction of two factors in explaining these outcomes: the extent to which the ally depends on the patron for both its security and economic needs. The main counterarguments to my thesis focus on adversarial threats and domestic politics. To evaluate the relative empirical validity of these hypotheses, I rely on a multi-methodological research design that includes historical and statistical analysis. In the next chapter, I setup the three main cases (West Germany, Japan, and South Korea) by providing an overview of how US presidents managed their alliance commitments around the world.
Chapter 3

Say You Will: US Strategic Posture in the Cold War, 1945-1976

Alliance compensation theory claims that an ally becomes more likely to engage in nuclear behavior in response to adverse changes in its patron’s strategic posture. In the chapters that follow this one, I test this claim in my three intensive cases on West Germany, Japan, and South Korea. Before I analyze patterns of nuclear behavior among these three major US allies, it is necessary to describe more fully US strategic posture, and its changes, in the nuclear age. This chapter thus focuses on my main independent variable that I use to explain nuclear behavior initiation. The subsequent case studies discuss how changes in the US strategic posture affected the security interests of the aforementioned states.

I highlight three distinct phases in the evolution of US strategic posture after the Korean War. I begin with the Korean War because perceptions of the threat posed by international communism converged amongst US politicians. The result of this convergence was that President Harry S. Truman was finally able to obtain bipartisan support for waging the Cold War. That is, he oversaw the dramatic expansion of military commitments around the world. Truman’s legacy was to leave subsequent US decision-makers with the problem of
maintaining an extensive conventional military presence in Western Europe and East Asia amidst shrinking (relative) economic power and competing geopolitical objectives. Eisenhower grappled with these issues and put forward the (1) New Look. These issues remained unresolved when Kennedy, and later Johnson, became President. One articulated solution advanced by both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations was the strategy of (2) flexible response. Johnson continued many of his predecessor’s policies with one significant difference: a ratcheting up of the US military effort in Vietnam. This conflict proved disastrous and intractable for the US, and so discouraged Johnson from seeking re-election. Upon succeeding Johnson as president, Nixon articulated a new foreign policy approach called the (3) Guam Doctrine. For the remainder of Nixon’s presidency, and indeed for much of the 1970s, failure in Vietnam and economic troubles at home continued to affect US military and alliance commitments abroad.

I will examine the New Look, flexible response, and the Guam Doctrine in turn. Though I differentiate between these three proposed changes to US strategic posture, I argue that continuity – rather than change – best describes their practical implementation. These proposed changes each signaled that the US preferred to rely more on its nuclear deterrent while its allies bear more of the conventional defense burden. All presidents wanted the US to shift towards a strategy of offshore balancing – in other words, that the US scale down its troop presence abroad in peacetime but remain ready for redeployment in the event of a militarized crisis that involves an ally. Yet US presidents varied in their success in executing this preferred strategy. For example, Eisenhower, whom many see as being unique amongst presidents for his ability to manage (and even curb) the US military, was hamstrung by alliance concerns in his efforts to put New Look into practice. I will investigate how these approaches to managing US alliance commitments abroad influenced the behavior of West Germany, Japan, and South Korea in Chapters Four through Six.

This chapter is divided in the following manner. To situate the three proposed changes, Section 1 offers a brief description of US alliance commitments, nuclear doctrine, and foreign
policy at the beginning of the Cold War during the Truman administration. Section 2 discusses Eisenhower’s apprehensions regarding Truman’s massive defense buildup and the New Look policy that these concerns provoked. Section 3 then outlines the strategic changes that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations articulated and sought to implement. Section 4 addresses the US management of alliance commitments its during Nixon’s presidency. I append a brief note on the US strategic posture after Nixon. Section 5 concludes.

3.1 US Strategic Posture upon the Korean War

Long an offshore balancer, geopolitical circumstances compelled the US to provide regional security outside the Western hemisphere after the Second World War. Whereas the United States had retreated to its own neighborhood when the First World War ended, the expansionist threat posed by the Soviet Union now raised the perceived costs associated with such a course of action. The devastation wrought in Europe and advances in weapons technology combined to negate the sense of insularity that the United States had long enjoyed. With industrial centers vulnerable to conquest by the Soviet Union, the US could no longer afford to be disinterested in the security of others lest transnational communism would expand its global reach. The threat posed by the Soviet Union grew more urgent once it acquired its own nuclear capability in 1949.

Countering the Soviet threat required the US to mobilize extensive resources in order to strengthen its allies, establish both a conventional and nuclear deterrent, and prepare its population for possible war. US decision-makers realized, however, that any successful policy of containment would be expensive to maintain and require extensive state intervention in the US economy. Yet the political willingness for satisfying these commitments was largely

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1 Mearsheimer (2001) and Layne (2006) both argue that the United States was an offshore balancer for much of its history before the end of the Second World War.

2 Numerous explanations for the origins of the Cold War are available in the historical and political science literatures. See, inter alia, Gaddis (1997); Kydd (2005); Leffler (1993); Trachtenberg (1999); Yergin (1990).

3 Sherry (1977, 200).
absent. The US Congress passed two tax cuts in the late 1940s, even overriding a Presidential veto in 1948, and denied President Harry S. Truman’s request for tax increases to help pay for military expenditures.\(^4\) Attempts by the executive branch to legislate universal military training were also unsuccessful.\(^5\) Indeed, early US Cold War foreign policy was subject to intense partisan debate over the extent to which the US should provide military and financial assistance to Western European and East Asian states.\(^6\)

North Korea’s invasion of South Korea in June 1950 removed these constraints by clarifying for many the seriousness of the threat posed by the Soviet Union. In particular, the Korean War gave the Truman administration ample justification to dramatically increase defense expenditures.\(^7\) Moreover, the Truman administration now had the political capital to strengthen its alliance commitments.\(^8\) Up until 1950, the institutional form of NATO was weak. It consisted largely of written pledges of members to come to an ally’s aid in the event of an attack as per Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Formal policy coordination bodies were largely absent and the alliance lacked a central headquarters and a secretariat to manage its operations.\(^9\) The Korean War provided new impetus for the expansion of alliance commitments in Western Europe. Thus, the US deployed greater numbers of troops in Western Europe and pushed for greater policy coordination in NATO. Concomitant with these changes were institutional upgrades to the alliance such as a centralized administrative body located in Paris.

The incipient nature of US security commitments before the Korean War was also a function of the uncertainty over how to deal with the primary but now vanquished aggressors of the Second World War. The defeat of Nazi Germany in May 1945 and Imperial Japan in

\(^5\) Ibid., 158-178.
\(^7\) Jervis (1980, 579-581) writes that the “most important consequence of the war was the vast increase in the US defense budget.”
\(^8\) On the propitious timing of the Korean War, Secretary of State Dean Acheson noted that “Korea came along and saved us.” Acheson quoted in LaFeber (1976, 100).
August 1945 marked the beginning of allied occupation in each of these two countries. In Germany, the allied coalition had agreed at the Yalta Conference to divide the conquered territory into US, British, French, and Soviet zones of occupation. By contrast, the United States exercised exclusive administrative control over Japan.\textsuperscript{10} These allied zones of occupation could not persist forever; eventually, despite their role in the Second World War, these occupied societies had to reacquire some form of political sovereignty. Nevertheless, because tensions mounted between the United States and the Soviet Union, geopolitical realities circumscribed the extent to which these defeated states were able to determine their domestic and foreign policies. In 1949, the Western powers consolidated the non-Soviet Zones into West Germany whereas the Soviet Union established a communist satellite state that came to be called East Germany. Japan became independent again in 1952.

US (and other Western) decision-makers very quickly faced an urgent dilemma when reconstituting the political sovereignty of these defeated societies. It was becoming increasingly apparent that West Germany could not remain weak in the face of a strong and persistent Soviet threat. Yet it was unclear how a strong and independent West Germany could be liberal democratic, amenable to US strategic interests, or, in the most optimistic scenario, both.\textsuperscript{11} To resolve this dilemma, US decision-makers adopted several measures. First, the Western powers would maintain an extensive troop presence in West Germany, thereby limiting the West German government’s foreign policy options while posing a conventional deterrent to the Soviet Union. Second, West Germany would become a member of NATO and rearm under its auspices. Coupled with the extensive troop presence, the purpose of this set of alliance commitments was, in the words of Lord Ismay, to “keep the Soviets out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” Third, the US obliged the new West German government to make formal commitments not to acquire certain weapons in exchange for greater restoration of its politically sovereign rights. As the Final Act of the London Con-

\textsuperscript{10}For a study of Japanese society in the immediate post-war period, see Dower (1999).
\textsuperscript{11}See McKoy (2012, 63-95) for an excellent discussion of the Allied pacification strategies towards West Germany and Japan.
ference stipulated, West Germany pledged “not to manufacture in its territory any atomic weapons, chemical weapons, or biological weapons.” The agreement also noted how NATO would closely monitor West Germany’s armament activities. Thus, although West Germany was independent, it was on a short leash. Marc Trachtenberg describes the situation facing West Germany best: “Germany was to be tied to the West, and in important ways was made part of the West, but her freedom of action was to be curtailed, and she was not to have the same sovereign rights as the other western powers.”

A similar fear confronted US decision-makers with respect to Japan. They did not want to see Japan emerge as an aggressive military power again. Nevertheless, Japan could not remain completely defenseless, especially after communist forces took political control of the Chinese mainland in 1949. US and Japanese decision-makers did find a useful compromise. The Japanese adopted a constitution that renounced war and the acquisition of military forces. This constitution did not entail a defenseless Japan, however. Upon independence, Japan also entered into a bilateral security agreement with the United States when the Security Treaty entered into force. Similarly to West Germany’s participation in NATO, this treaty with Japan served US interests because it would perform the dual task of maintaining a bulwark against communist aggression while also keeping Japanese militarism in check. Moreover, it contained several provisions that delineated American basing rights on Japanese territory. For example, Article 1 of the Security Treaty stipulated that the Japanese government provided the United States with the “right” to “dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about Japan” to satisfy their mutual security needs.

As indicated above, the Korean War made the costs of making such alliance commitments politically acceptable. These commitments required significant increases in the size of the US military. Thus, between June 1950 and December 1952, all branches of the US military

14Temerson (1991, 3).
saw an expansion of their forces. The number of US Army divisions doubled from ten to twenty. The US Navy saw an eighty percent increase in its ships whereas the US Marine Corps added a third division. The US Air Force more than doubled the number of wings. The total manpower increased from 1.45 million to 3.5 million.\footnote{Figures reported in Friedberg (2000, 125).} Consistent with this military build-up, US troop deployments overseas expanded considerably. In 1950 over 120,000 US military personnel were stationed in Western Europe. This number grew to almost 400,000 by 1954. Needless to say, the Korean War also precipitated major increases in troop deployments in East Asia, as the number jumped from 147,000 in 1950 to over half a million in 1953.\footnote{Data on American military personnel deployed overseas collected by the Heritage Foundation, available at: http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/cda04-11.cfm.}

Though threat perceptions made this build-up palatable, if not desirable, the fact remains that it was expensive to maintain. The Truman administration earmarked $13 billion dollars for defense spending in 1950, yet estimations of the defense budget would increase the number severalfold over the next few years. Aaron Friedberg reports that the Truman administration surmised that the “total annual bill for national security programs would stand at around $60 billion” by about 1955.\footnote{Friedberg (2000, 125).} When the fiscally conservative Dwight Eisenhower and the Republican Party won the Presidency in 1952, it was unclear how such high levels of defense spending would continue.

\section*{3.2 The Eisenhower Administration and the New Look}

Ideas and beliefs over political economy were a major influence on Eisenhower’s foreign policy. Similarly to his predecessor, Eisenhower attached great importance to maintaining balanced budgets, keeping price levels stable, and avoiding deficits.\footnote{Ibid., 94.} Nevertheless, even with respect to national defense, Eisenhower was especially committed to controlling government
spending given his strong personal opposition to “statism.” Because of the drastic uptick in military expenditures during the Truman administration, Eisenhower quickly faced a stark choice upon becoming president. He could have either compromised his beliefs and raise taxes to maintain the US military posture or cut spending and thereby risk endangering US national security. In recognition of this undesirable conundrum, Eisenhower advanced a new approach to US foreign policy: the New Look.

First outlined in a policy document dated October 30, 1953, the New Look contained at least two key features. First, though maintaining that the Soviet Union represented a significant threat to US national security and interests, the New Look shifted emphasis away from conventional military forces. Instead, the United States would rely on “the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power.” Accordingly, a US response to Soviet aggression would comprise the overwhelming use of its atomic capability—a strategy described as “massive retaliation.” Second, the United States would assist its allies in becoming more capable for their own defense. Though it called for reductions in US military assistance to Western European countries, the New Look contended that “it is essential that the Western European states, including West Germany, build and maintain maximum feasible defensive strength.”

The goal of the New Look was to provide an adequate deterrent to the Soviet Union while maintaining the integrity of the US economy. Reliance on nuclear weapons rather than conventional means had a strategic rationale. After all, Western decision-makers also recognized that they would not be able to match Soviet conventional forces in Europe. The British observed later in the 1960s that “any attempt by NATO to bases its strategy for the

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19Saulnier (1991, 2).
20Quotations pulled from Basic National Security Policy, October 30, 1953, FRUS 1952-1954 2: 578-598. The phrase “massive retaliation” was first used by Dulles in a foreign policy address to the Council of Foreign Relations. See John Foster Dulles, “The Evolution of Foreign Policy,” Before the Council of Foreign Relations, New York, NY, Department of State, Press Release No. 81 (January 12, 1954). Some claim that Eisenhower was not aware of Dulles’ choice of words (e.g., ‘Massive Retaliation’) in his remarks to the Council of Foreign Relations. Jean Edward Smith, a leading biographer of Eisenhower, is skeptical that the president would have no input on a major foreign policy statement. See Smith (2012). For more on the New Look, see Snyder (1962), Gaddis (1982, 127-163), Dockrill (1996), and Freedman (2003, 76-82).
defense by conventional means is impossible, unless the Western nations drastically lower their living standards.”

To match Soviet conventional military power on the continent required military expenditures that the United States would rather not pay. NSC-162/2, the principal document that describes the New Look, makes this point plainly in outlining the basic problems confronting US national security. Its opening section notes the “need to meet the Soviet threat to the US” without “seriously weakening the U.S. economy or undermining our fundamental values and institutions.” The document later stresses the stability and growth of the US economy as the *sine qua non* of allied perseverance over the Soviet Union. In particular, fiscal policy required careful attention. The document states:

“Excessive government spending leads to inflationary deficits or to repressive taxation, or to both. Persistent inflation is a barrier to long-term growth because it undermines confidence in the currency, reduces savings, and makes restrictive economic controls necessary. Repressive taxation weakens the incentives for efficiency, effort, and investment on which economic growth depends ... There is no precise level or duration of government expenditures which can be determined in advance, at which an economic system will be seriously damaged from inflationary borrowing on the one hand or from repressive taxation on the other. The higher the level of expenditures, the greater is the need for sound policies and the greater are the dangers of miscalculations and mischance. These dangers are now substantial.”

Implicit in this discussion is the view that spending $60 billion on defense, as estimated by the Truman administration, was financially ruinous. With the implementation of the

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21 See Schrafstetter and Twigge (2004, 206). Beatrice Heuser argues that the United States and the United Kingdom understood this strategic disadvantage in the early 1950s. Indeed, she presents evidence that many of the ideas contained in the New Look bear important resemblances to earlier British documents on nuclear strategy. See Heuser (1997, 28, 35).


New Look, Eisenhower hoped to reduce this figure to about $33 billion. Cutting the size
the armed forces was necessary to fulfill such an objective.

Yet the shift in the strategic posture that the Eisenhower administration undertook was
not simply a function of Eisenhower’s fiscal conservatism. The economic problems facing
Eisenhower were structural: changes in the global economy were making the status quo
regarding US overseas deployments increasingly difficult to uphold. Specifically, the United
States was beginning to incur a balance-of-payments deficit that threatened to complicate
its ability to pay for its military expenditures abroad. Balance-of-payments refers to the
net payments made for a state’s imports and exports of good, services, and financial capital.
A balance-of-payment deficit means that the current account is negative, reflecting how the
state is a net debtor in the global economy. Though market mechanisms should automatically
correct any imbalances, one tool that governments can use to address a balance-of-payments
deficit is to depreciate the national currency. By lowering the value of the national currency,
the country’s exports increase as its imports decline. This option was not yet available to
US decision-makers during the 1950s. At the time, governments fixed their exchange rates
in keeping with the Bretton Woods system – an international economic regime that emerged
following the Second World War. Under a fixed exchange rate system, states can make
changes within their domestic economies in order to rebalance payments and thereby satisfy
their obligations to exchange their currencies at fixed rates. For deficit countries, the required
adjustments have to exert a deflationary effect on internal prices so as to increase exports.
For many Western governments in the 1950s and 1960s, these adjustments were politically
unattractive because they meant compromising social spending and high standards of living.

Compounding this situation was how the global economy relied on a two-tiered system
in which states could use the US dollar (and the British pound sterling) in lieu of gold in

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24This figure appears in an NSC document presumably drafted in 1953. See Condensed Statement of
25Watson (1986, 60).
26I rely on Gavin (2004, 17-32) for much of the following discussion.
international transactions. The reason for this system was straightforward. Global economic growth requires the expansion of international liquidity, but relying on gold exclusively, as is the case under a gold standard, is problematic due to the limited supplies of this valuable metal. Though a two-tiered system was an appropriate solution to this problem, it had an important weakness. If the country whose currency can be used in lieu of gold runs extensive balance of power deficits, then it risks high enough inflation that could lead other states to switch to gold. An important consequence of the attendant lack of liquidity is downward pressure on the world economy.\footnote{In assessing the balance-of-payments problem facing the United States in the early 1960s, economist Robert Triffin noted this paradox. See Triffin (1960).}

Starting in 1950, the United States ran a large balance-of-payments deficit as its financial capital outflows exceeded its inflows. Paying for its global presence contributed greatly to this deficit. By spending money on its military bases abroad, for example, the United States was increasing other countries’ supplies of foreign exchange and accumulating greater debt. Though the United States was favorably predisposed to supplying international liquidity, the balance-of-payments deficit began to exert deflationary pressure on the US economy in the mid-1950s.\footnote{According to Leffler (1993, 17), a problem facing US decision-makers in the immediate post-war era was the ‘dollar gap’ facing potential allies. On helping allies “get back on their feet”, see Letter From the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Secretary of State, October 29, 1957, FRUS 1955-57, 9: 328. On the increasing awareness of the problems posed by the balance-of-payment deficit, see Memorandum From the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Prochnow) to the Secretary of State, October 29, 1956, FRUS 1955-57 9: 308-310; Letter From the Special Assistant in the Office of the Secretary of State (Greene) to the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge), October 24, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 9: 326-328.} Furthermore, US allies were using their expanding foreign exchange reserves to purchase gold. Not only did these purchases of gold narrow the supply of international liquidity, they also increased the vulnerability of the US dollar and, by extension, enhanced the political power of surplus countries.\footnote{Gavin (2004, 24).} These issues would persist, confronting US decision-makers that would succeed the Eisenhower administration. Eisenhower’s personal beliefs notwithstanding, structural constraints were shaping US foreign policy in a way that, for a decade after, encouraged the formulation of such approaches as the New Look.

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\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{27}In assessing the balance-of-payments problem facing the United States in the early 1960s, economist Robert Triffin noted this paradox. See Triffin (1960).} 
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{28}According to Leffler (1993, 17), a problem facing US decision-makers in the immediate post-war era was the ‘dollar gap’ facing potential allies. On helping allies “get back on their feet”, see Letter From the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Secretary of State, October 29, 1957, FRUS 1955-57, 9: 328. On the increasing awareness of the problems posed by the balance-of-payment deficit, see Memorandum From the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Prochnow) to the Secretary of State, October 29, 1956, FRUS 1955-57 9: 308-310; Letter From the Special Assistant in the Office of the Secretary of State (Greene) to the Representative at the United Nations (Lodge), October 24, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 9: 326-328.} 
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{29}Gavin (2004, 24).}
Summary

Eisenhower inherited massive defense outlays and an expanded US military presence around the world from his predecessor. In his view, the sheer extent of these commitments was unsustainable. To remedy this problem, he put forward the New Look. This foreign policy sought to rely on US nuclear deterrent capabilities in lieu of its conventional military power. The benefit of this approach would be to cut defense expenditures. The New Look can accordingly be understood as a proposal to change the US strategic posture – one premised on US allies bearing more of the conventional shield while the US would provide the nuclear sword. Implementing the New Look would entail reductions to US ground forces since they were the most extensively deployed abroad of all forms of US conventional military power.

3.3 The Kennedy-Johnson Administrations and Flexible Response

It is tempting to believe that discontinuity between Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy exists, yet such a belief would be wrong. One factor that explains this erroneous belief is the rhetoric of Kennedy himself. During his successful bid for the US presidency, Kennedy campaigned on boosting economic growth and strengthening defense. Eisenhower, he charged, focused too much on controlling the budget. An important consequence of this inappropriately stringent fiscal policy was a neglect of military power. Specifically, Eisenhower allowed the alleged ‘missile gap’ to grow unfavorably between the United States and the Soviet Union.30 The Republican president also gave little attention to conventional forces. Kennedy declared that his presidency would rectify these mistakes of his predecessor. “[A]rbitrary budget ceilings” will now no longer compromise US national security.31

30 For an evaluation of these claims, see Preble (2003).
Table 3: National Defense Outlays, 1960-1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Defense Outlays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>48,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>49,601</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>52,345</td>
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<td>53,400</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>54,757</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>50,620</td>
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<td>1966</td>
<td>58,111</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>71,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>81,926</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Numbers drawn from “Outlays by Superfunction and Function: 1940–2018,” Office of Management and Budget, Historical Tables (retrieved July 3, 2013). Available online: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals. Flexible response required an expansion of conventional military power. This necessity is reflected in budgetary outlays for national defense under the Kennedy administration. The size of these outlays almost returned to their pre-Kennedy levels. Subsequent increases in defense spending were due to the US military effort in Vietnam.

One manifestation of this alleged change in approach was the strategy of flexible response. This defensive strategy comprised three stages. In the first stage, the US would respond to a conventional Soviet attack (should one occur) with conventional forces. In the event that NATO forces would lose on the battlefield, the US would deliberately escalate the conflict into a second stage by introducing tactical nuclear weapons. The third stage resembles mutually assured destruction in which both sides exchange nuclear weapons. Flexible response would not have been possible had important technological factors been absent. Recent technological advances meant military forces were now able to mobilize on the battlefield with greater efficacy and speed than ever before. The introduction of nuclear artillery led military planners to believe that a limited nuclear conflict was possible. Further, the Soviet development of an intercontinental ballistic missile capability undermined the deterrent threat that the doctrine of Massive Retaliation aspired to represent. The credibility of a nuclear response to a conflict initiated at lower levels of violence became increasingly problematic. As a necessary revision to existing nuclear strategy, flexible response made use of these changes in technology.32

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32For more on flexible response, see Kaufmann (1964, 1-101) and Duffield (1991).
Yet it was unclear to what extent the Kennedy administration would be able to meet the practical demands of flexible response. The policy was too expensive to properly undertake. Spending on conventional weapons did increase during the Kennedy years. As Aaron Friedberg notes, the military took advantage of Kennedy’s stated intent to expand military expenditures by submitting “vastly expanded funding requests.”

Table 3 indicates that Kennedy oversaw a ten percent increase in national defense outlays. Still, despite his earlier criticisms of Eisenhower’s austere fiscal policy, Kennedy soon found himself facing both old and new financial constraints. He felt pressure to initially balance the annual budget by controlling spending and later stimulating aggregate demand with tax cuts before finally addressing the costs associated with expanding social programs. Thus, at the time prior to his assassination, Kennedy was in fact calling for fewer defense outlays. The Johnson administration heeded his worries. By 1965, the increase in outlays to support flexible response had all but disappeared – with defense spending returning to its pre-expansion levels only to rise again to support the military effort in Vietnam.

More critically, flexible response appeared to be premised on unrealistic assumptions. Providing adequate civilian protection against nuclear attack was prohibitively costly and probably infeasible. Within two years the administration had to scuttle ambitious plans for an extensive network of underground shelters. Indeed, administration officials became convinced that managing nuclear escalation was impossible. Francis Gavin offers evidence that Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and other decision-makers no longer believed in the substance of flexible response. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, this nuclear doctrine became a fiction that the administration maintained to ease tensions within the Western alliance.

The other constraint facing the Kennedy administration was the deepening balance-of-

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33Friedberg (2000, 142).
34See ibid., 143-148.
37Ibid.
payments crisis. Having emerged in the 1950s, the balance-of-payments deficit grew larger during the Kennedy years. Early in his presidency, Kennedy established a committee tasked with devising a policy to manage the problem. The resulting policy consisted of three measures. First, the United States asked that those states that acquired surplus dollars as a consequence of US military spending abroad would desist from buying US gold. Instead, these states would use these surplus dollars to acquire new military equipment, thereby ‘offsetting’ both US financial costs and their contributions to the deficit. Second, the United States would explore various initiatives aimed at reforming the global monetary system. Third, the United States sought tariff reductions from Western European states.\footnote{Gavin (2004, 63). The United States and its allies eventually negotiated significant tariff reductions in Geneva between 1960 and 1962 during the so-called Dillon Round.} This policy did not represent the full extent to which the United States would address the deficit. The Treasury Department also dedicated itself to an additional measure. Under the direction of Secretary Douglas Dillon, the Treasury Department examined which government outlays overseas could be cut. Specifically, Dillon advocated cuts to military expenses overseas. McNamara agreed, pledging even to cut these costs by a third.\footnote{Ibid., 68.} A key benefit of these reductions was to improve balance-of-payments savings.

Accordingly, contradicting the flexible response’s supposed emphasis on conventional military power, the United States demonstrated a strong desire to carry out troop withdrawals from Western Europe. Had the United States been seriously committed to this strategic doctrine, it would have at least maintained the six divisions stationed in Western Europe without any suggestion of their redeployment. Instead, debates ensued amongst US decision-makers and various bureaucratic officials over the appropriate number of US troops in Western Europe and whether any changes would have to be made.\footnote{Memorandum from Secretary of the Treasury Dillon to President Kennedy, October 9, 1962, FRUS 1961-63 9: 35-42; Memorandum for the Record, February 27, 1963, FRUS 1961-63 9; Memorandum from Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Kennedy, June 4, 1963, FRUS 1961-63 9: 64-66.} Decision-makers had even explicitly linked balance-of-payment considerations with the US conventional military
presence in meetings with their West European counterparts.\textsuperscript{41}

Still, the Kennedy administration paid lip-service to this alleged doctrinal revision.\textsuperscript{42} As Gavin writes, the reason for maintaining the fiction of flexible response was to ease intra-alliance tensions in Western Europe, especially those centered on the ‘German question’ – that is, how to rearm and secure West Germany without threatening its neighbors. If US decision-makers openly acknowledged the problems associated with implementing flexible response, then the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee would be severely compromised. A consequence of this loss in credibility would be a greater demand on the part of allies (e.g., West Germany) to procure nuclear weapons on their own. In other words, they understood that a link existed between nuclear strategy and the risks of nuclear proliferation by allies. Moreover, the US would undermine its efforts in persuading its Western European allies to improve their conventional forces. If the United States declared that its conventional military presence was unnecessary for deterring Soviet aggression, the thinking went, Western European allies would see even less reason to acquire non-nuclear forces so as to be in accordance with US security preferences.\textsuperscript{43}

The one area in which the Kennedy administration’s policy was consistent with flexible response was in seeking centralized decision-making over tactical nuclear arrangements. Centralized decision-making was necessary for ensuring that armed escalation would proceed appropriately in response to Soviet levels of aggression rather than ratchet up inadvertently. Nevertheless, the desire for centralization in this domain also conformed to the general US

\textsuperscript{41}Schlesinger (1965, 601); Rostow (1972, 136); Memorandum of Conversation, June 24, 1963, FRUS 1961-63, 9: 170-174. Kennedy made this connection with members of the National Security Council (NSC) as well: “[i]f we cannot keep up our export surplus, we shall not have the dollar exchange with which to meet our overseas military commitments. ... We must either do a good job of selling abroad or pull pack.” Quoted in Costigliola (1984, 229).

\textsuperscript{42}Consistent with Francis Gavin’s scholarship, an implication of my findings here is that the predominant view that flexible response represented a sharp discontinuity between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations is wrong. For exemplars of this historiographical view, see Gaddis (1982) and Kaplan (1983). It is more accurate to state that the economic pressures that had emerged during the Eisenhower’s tenure accumulated to a point of near crisis during the Kennedy administration. As I demonstrate in this chapter, such trends ensured some important continuity in US foreign policy, especially with respect to a reliance on nuclear weapons and a desire to reduce conventional military deployments abroad.

\textsuperscript{43}Gavin (2001).
desire to monopolize western nuclear decision-making authority and intolerance for other countries’ nuclear weapons programs.\textsuperscript{44} Illustrative of this view is the ‘no-cities’ speech given in Ann Arbor, Michigan in which Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara charged that “limited nuclear capabilities, operating independently, are dangerous, expensive, prone to obsolescence and lacking in credibility as a deterrent.”\textsuperscript{45}

Seeking control over nuclear-sharing arrangements was manifest in one key policy: the Multilateral Force (MLF). The MLF was a formal nuclear-sharing arrangement that the Eisenhower administration had put forward in December 1960. Such arrangements had appeal amongst members of the US government for several reasons. First, it would enhance US credibility by serving to further institutionalize the US strategic presence in Western Europe. Second, it would address growing concerns that Western European governments had an unfairly minimal role in nuclear decision-making in NATO. Third, it would leverage and sustain the superiority of the US nuclear arsenal. An emerging preoccupation of US decision-makers at this time was the development, actual and potential, of national nuclear forces in Western Europe. They believed that such programs would undermine alliance cohesion and ultimately lead to the disintegration of NATO.\textsuperscript{46} As an exemplar nuclear-sharing arrangement, the MLF would comprise a multinational fleet of ships and submarines manned by NATO crews and armed with multiple nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. Participating countries would jointly own the fleet and must give their unanimous consent before any of its missiles get fired. The basic goal of this institutional innovation was that it would enhance European participation in alliance nuclear-decision making in light of technological

\textsuperscript{44}In contrast to my claim, Gavin (2001, 856) argues that US policy contained another element that operationally contradicted flexible response. By displaying some willingness to support existing nuclear weapons programs, through the provision of such missile systems as Polaris to the United Kingdom and France, the United States was being inconsistent with the principle of centralizing authority to manage nuclear escalation. Yet such offers of support were far more exceptional than normal. Indeed, as I will show, many contemporary ally decision-makers interpreted US diplomacy on this issue as reflecting a US interest to monopolize tactical nuclear weapons within the western alliance.

\textsuperscript{45}University of Michigan Commencement Address by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 9, 1962.

\textsuperscript{46}Baum (1983, 86-88).
developments such as the emergence of medium range ballistic missiles.47

Despite its origins in the Eisenhower administration, the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations took up the MLF as the centerpiece for their defense policy in Western Europe. Kennedy indicated the importance of the seaborne nuclear force in a speech delivered before the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa on May 17, 1961.48 Yet it was not until 1963 with the resolution of the Berlin Crisis and the Nassau Agreement that the United States began a major effort to rally NATO members to support this initiative. The conclusion of a nuclear weapons system agreement with the United Kingdom, in particular, gave impetus to the United states to address alliance unity and preserve its nuclear privileges.49 The same motivations continued to underpin the Kennedy administration’s interest in seeing the MLF succeed despite the delay: permitting a robust European nuclear role in NATO, avert European nuclear proliferation, and address fears of discrimination amongst alliance members (e.g., West Germany).50 Most importantly, US decision-makers linked the fate of the MLF with the nuclear status of West Germany. Kennedy informed Macmillan that “if [the MLF] fails, the Germans are bound to move in much more dangerous directions. In the long run even toward some partly clandestine arrangement with the French, or if this should not work, toward an independent nuclear effort in Germany – not now but in time.”51 Despite

47 In order not to risk diffusing these weapon systems, the US decision-makers were resistant to basing MRBMs in Europe despite calls from the Supreme Allied Commander Europe’s (SACEUR). To preserve deterrence but still permit some form of European participation, MLF presented a favorable solution. Of course, the United States had already begun to put in place informal nuclear-sharing arrangements in Western Europe in the form of the ‘dual-key system’. Under this arrangement, the US managed the nuclear warheads whereas European allies had control over the missiles on which they would be mounted. When both states agree to launch the nuclear weapon, the United States would turn over control of the warhead to its ally. Nevertheless, aside from failing to assuage concerns over the US commitment to this system, the arrangement was also becoming technologically outdated. The nuclear weapons used in the ‘dual-key system’ were tactical and thus appeared unable to meet the threat posed by the expanding Soviet arsenal of medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs). See Solomon (1999, 6-9).

48 For a text of this speech, see Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961, 382-387.

49 The agreement in question is the Nassau Agreement. See the addendum following chapter 4 for more on this UK-US nuclear relations.


51 Quote from Telegram from Kennedy to Macmillan, May 29, 1963, folder: “Multilateral Force Subjects,
Kennedy’s stated fears over the effects of MLF’s failures, it was during the Johnson administration that the Department of State most vigorously promoted the initiative to Western European allies.52

US decision-makers were unsure as to whether the strategy of flexible response was applicable in East Asia. Whereas in Western Europe, the thinking went, the US should restrain its use of tactical nuclear weapons, the dual threat posed by a nuclear-armed Soviet Union and a non-nuclear-armed China implied that escalation should be more rapid. The nuclear threshold was presumably lower in an armed confrontation that were to involve only China. This conclusion piqued the interest of McNamara. He saw in it another opportunity to cut defense expenditures. 53 However, these considerations were not implemented. One reason was not to appear discriminatory:

“An important potential consequence of a clear public posture of primary reliance upon nuclear weapons in Korea when we are arguing for a different strategy in Europe would be the apparent racist character of our strategy. It would appear, despite any efforts we might make publicly to differentiate the strategic situation, that we valued the lives of white men more than the lives of Asians. The new increasingly strong effort by Peiping to appeal to Africans and Asians on a racist basis would find useful in such a US posture.”54

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52 Conventional wisdom holds that Johnson was too focused on Vietnam that he delegated policy-making and planning to the Department of State when it came to matters involving Western Europe and the Middle East. Johnson paid much attention to developments in Southeast Asia, but – as Thomas A. Schwartz shows – this point cannot be taken too far. See Schwartz (2003).

53 Jones (2010, 412-13).

Practical considerations also undermined arguments favoring a different strategy for East Asia. The United States would have difficulty legitimating its use of bases located in Japan if extended deterrence was solely nuclear. Recasting US extended deterrence in this way in East Asia would have alienated a broad share of Japan’s increasingly anti-nuclear and anti-militarist population. Moreover, the assumption that the Soviet Union would remain neutral in a nuclear exchange involving another communist state was dubious, no matter how relations between the two allies were deteriorating.\(^{55}\) As a consequence, flexible response was to be the US strategy in East Asia. Yet this debate provides evidence that US decision-makers would have liked to rely on the exclusive use of nuclear weapons if it were not for the need to show East Asia allies – as in Western Europe – that their interests were being taken seriously.

The challenges and policies described above continued into the Johnson administration. Shortly after coming to office, Lyndon B. Johnson met with West German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard in Texas to discuss military offset arrangements and balance-of-payments problems. An internal document that provided Johnson with talking points for this meeting nicely captures the continuity across the early Cold War presidencies:

> “The US faces heavy pressure to reduce the overseas cost of its armed forces (e.g., Eisenhower proposal of drop-back to 1 division in Germany), and full offset is an absolute necessity if 6 division force is to be kept intact in Germany.”\(^{56}\)

In another memorandum prepared ahead of Erhard’s visit, Dillon asserted that “our own balance of payments weakness is the most serious present threat to the maintenance of our military and political leadership in the free world.”\(^{57}\) Such themes – balance-of-payments problems and the difficulty of maintaining existing military commitments – dominated John-

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\(^{55}\) Ibid., 422-423.


\(^{57}\) Memorandum for the President, December 13, 1963, folder: “Germany 12/63 [1 of 3]”, National Security File, Country File, Box 190, LBJL.
son’s foreign policy towards Western Europe.\textsuperscript{58} These concerns induced Johnson, like Eisenhower and Kennedy before him, to seek military offsets from US allies.

The Johnson administration abided by its predecessor’s strategic and doctrinal thinking on such matters as nuclear weapons. After all, many of Kennedy’s decision-makers (e.g., McNamara, Rusk, and Dillon) retained their cabinet posts under Johnson. As a result of this bureaucratic continuity, foreign policy officials still adhered to the rhetoric of flexible response. In the Department of Defense, McNamara still sought to streamline the US military and threaten reductions in US commitments in Western Europe. The Department of State remained wedded to the MLF as the future basis upon which a US-led European deterrent force would be organized. Finally, by participating in negotiations for a nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the administration shared Kennedy’s goal of preventing further nuclear proliferation.

Johnson differed from Kennedy in nuclear matters, however, by taking on a more active role in advancing global nuclear non-proliferation objectives. A reason for why this anti-proliferation effort intensified was China. To be sure, Chinese efforts at acquiring the bomb dated back to Eisenhower’s presidency. The Chinese decision to pursue a nuclear program can be traced to a crisis with the United States over the status of the offshore islands of Quemoy (Jinmen) and Matsu (Matzu) in the Taiwan Strait. Continuing confrontations with the US over Taiwan and growing skepticism over Soviet support provided additional impetus for the program.\textsuperscript{59} Within a few years the Chinese leadership established the Beijing Nuclear Weapons Research Institute and devoted resources towards the production of a production reactor.\textsuperscript{60} Many states were apprehensive of China’s nuclear ambitions. The Soviet Union quickly withdrew its support for the program and even undertook measures to stymie China’s


\textsuperscript{59}Goldstein (2000).

\textsuperscript{60}Burr and Richelson (2000/2001, 57-58).
progress in developing a nuclear capability.\textsuperscript{61} US policy-makers were also nervous. They feared that nuclear weapons would serve to not only embolden an already aggressive and revisionist state, but also trigger wider nuclear proliferation, particularly amongst US allies.\textsuperscript{62} At one point, the Kennedy administration even explored the option of using military force to disrupt China’s nuclear program. The Johnson administration still mooted his strategy even after China detonated its first bomb in October 1964.\textsuperscript{63}

For Johnson (and, to a milder extent, his predecessor), tackling these issues – finessing the US military in Western Europe and restricting the spread of nuclear weapons – had a common thread: Vietnam. Aside from containing communism in Southeast Asia, Vietnam mattered to Johnson due to larger alliance concerns. Defending Vietnam was critical for demonstrating US resolve in supporting weaker allies against foreign depredations, especially in areas that might be seen as non-vital to US security. This theory of international politics, which Fredrik Logevall describes as the ‘doctrine of credibility,’ might have been flawed and unfortunate for having influenced both Kennedy’s and Johnson’s decision-making. Yet, whatever its merits, the belief that commitments were interdependent was salient during their administrations.\textsuperscript{64} Accordingly, it was in the months after China’s nuclear detonation that the Johnson administration began to seriously contemplate Americanizing the war. Pulling away from Vietnam during this time might have sent the signal to China – and other aspiring nuclear proliferators – that de-escalation or withdrawal was a consequence of its newfound nuclear capability.\textsuperscript{65} In July 1965, Johnson chose to escalate the US military

\textsuperscript{61}Gobarev (1999, 17-31).
\textsuperscript{62}Memorandum from Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 26, 1961, FRUS 1961-63 22: 84-85.
\textsuperscript{63}Burr and Richelson (2000/2001).
\textsuperscript{64}Jonathan Mercer challenges the idea that commitments are interdependent on both theoretical and empirical grounds by examining decision-makers’ perceptions in early twentieth century crisis diplomacy. See Mercer (1996).
\textsuperscript{65}Logevall makes this claim. See Logevall (1999) as well as Kaiser (2000). For other work that explores the Americanization of the Vietnam War, see Khong (1992), Kaiser (2000), and Blight, Lang, and Welch (2009). Major historiographical disagreement exists as to whether Kennedy, had he lived, would have increased US military involvement in Vietnam. For the purposes of my argument here, it suffices to say that Johnson was far more preoccupied with Southeast Asia than his predecessor. Much of the historical scholarship on Johnson’s foreign policy tends to concentrate on his handling of the Vietnam War while producing an unfavorable assessment of his diplomacy elsewhere. See, e.g., Fromkin (1995).
presence in the Vietnam War. The number of US military advisors and soldiers grew from 16,000 in 1963 to over half a million in early 1968. National defense outlays also showed dramatic growth. The US government was spending about 82 billion on defense by 1968 – an increase of about 50% percent from defense spending in 1965. The locus of military attention accordingly shifted away from Western Europe towards Southeast Asia.

Within several years, it became evident that US victory in the Vietnam War would involve prohibitively high cost in terms of both personnel and money. Domestic opposition to the US involvement in the war intensified, particularly amongst young adults who feared that they would be selected in the national draft and shipped overseas. Protests rocked university campuses and cities across the country. Police actions against a large anti-war demonstration even marred the Democratic National Convention in August 1968. But by this time, Johnson had already decided that he was not going to seek re-election when an anti-war candidate finished seven points behind him in the New Hampshire Democratic Primary. In the same speech, made on March 31, 1968, he announced that he would unilaterally suspend aerial bombings over North Vietnam so to pursue peace talks. In the US presidential election that year, both Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey and Republican candidate Nixon pledged to end the Vietnam War. A powerful bipartisan consensus emerged that the United States needed to extricate itself from Southeast Asia. It was yet unclear how US decision-makers would proceed to withdraw in a way that did not suggest that the United States was in full retreat.

**Summary**

Claims that flexible response produced a sea change in US strategic direction are misplaced.

A major conventional build-up did take place during Kennedy’s administration. However, within a few years the pressures that motivated the New Look kicked in again, thus stymieing

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66 For a highly readable journalistic account of how student protests and racial politics enabled Nixon’s electoral victory, see Perlstein (2008).
any sustained effort at meeting the logistical demands of flexible response. The emerging balance of payments crisis and other fiscal pressures led US decision-makers to search for ways to reduce military expenditures abroad. These pressures even reopened debates about US conventional military commitments abroad. Flexible response required that the US augment its conventional military forces and integrate the use of tactical nuclear weapons for the battlefield. Yet, in the final analysis, the United States only paid lip-service to these operational principles, hoping still for its allies to bear the conventional shield while the United States would be responsible for wielding the nuclear sword.

3.4 The Nixon Administration and the Guam Doctrine

The Vietnam War was Nixon’s biggest priority during his presidency. That conflict was the star around which all other issues revolved, including relations with the Soviet Union and China. Détente (i.e. the easing of tensions) with the Soviet Union enabled Nixon to concentrate on developing a political solution to Vietnam. Nixon’s signature foreign policy achievement – *rapprochement* with China – also had Vietnam in mind. As Nixon expressed in his memoirs:

“I had long believed that an indispensable element of any successful peace initiative in Vietnam was to enlist, if possible, the help of the Soviets and the Chinese. Though rapprochement with China and détente with the Soviet Union were ends in themselves, I also considered them possible means to hasten the end of the war. At worst, Hanoi was bound to feel less confident if Washington was dealing with Moscow and Beijing. At best, if the two major Communist powers decided that they had bigger fish to fry, Hanoi would be pressured into negotiating a settlement we could accept.”

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To be sure, *rapprochement* with China had other benefits. The ‘socialist camp’ was less unified than ever, with the Sino-Soviet split developing to the point of open border clashes between the two erstwhile allies in 1969. Even Central-Eastern European members of the Soviet bloc were divided ideologically and diplomatically over the Soviet Union’s policies towards China. Reaching out to China permitted the US greater flexibility in its relations with the Soviet Union.

Positive diplomatic relations with both the Soviet Union and China would take time to develop, and so more immediate and direct solutions in the Vietnam War were necessary. After all, by the end of the 1960s, when Nixon became President, the military situation facing the United States appeared futile. The attritional warfare produced high casualties for both sides of the conflict. Partly because the military relied on conscription to support the campaign, members of the US public became increasingly critical of their country’s involvement in the war. Taking advantage of these sentiments, a signature aspect of Nixon’s successful Presidential election campaign in 1968 was his pledge to end the Vietnam War. Nevertheless, the war could not end at all costs. Nixon believed that American withdrawal from Vietnam could only be achieved if there were a workable arrangement that guaranteed South Vietnam’s security.\(^\text{68}\) Amidst faltering negotiations with the North Vietnamese and domestic demands for pulling out of Vietnam, Nixon initiated a strategy of phased troop withdrawals and increased reliance on Vietnamese troops.\(^\text{69}\)

This policy, known either as ‘Vietnamization’ or the Guam Doctrine, was the cornerstone of a general theme of Nixon’s first term of office. In a speech delivered at Guam on July 25, 1969, Nixon announced that although the United States will maintain its treaty commitments and continue to provide nuclear umbrellas, the United States would ask its allies to contribute

\(^\text{68}\) Memorandum of Conversation, January 19, 1969, FRUS 1969-76, 6: 2-3; Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, March 10, 1969 FRUS 1969-76, 6: 100.

\(^\text{69}\) National Security Study Memorandum 36, April 10, 1969, FRUS 1969-1976, 6: 195-196; Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam, November 3, 1969. To be sure, Nixon also escalated hostilities by approving a secret bombing campaign against Khmer Rouge targets in Cambodia shortly after becoming President. By consequence, one criticism of Nixon’s policy towards Vietnam was that it suffered from a ‘credibility gap.’
more to satisfy their own security needs. Specifically, Nixon stated, “we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.” Transferring military responsibilities to South Vietnamese forces was one aspect of this policy, but the Nixon administration also sought to implement similar changes of policy in East Asia. Indeed, the Guam Doctrine was an explicit articulation of the principle that allies bear more of the conventional defense burden while the United States should (and can) rely more on its nuclear deterrent capabilities.

As if détente and the Guam Doctrine did not adequately signify the retraction of US conventional military commitments, the strains on the US economy intensified. Spending on the Vietnam War and social programs (e.g, the Great Society programs) drove up inflation and domestic unemployment was increasing. The Bretton Woods system teetered as gold outflows from the US economy persisted. The system finally collapsed in August 1971 when Nixon signed an executive order that unilaterally made the dollar no longer directly convertible to gold outside of the open market. As this order demonstrated, the negative balance of payments crisis and growing public debt had finally overwhelmed the US ability to manage the international monetary regime. The most significant consequence of the Nixon Shock – as Nixon’s decision came to be called – was that many fixed currencies became free-floating in world markets, thereby eliminating a key pillar of the Bretton Woods system and rendering obsolete (at the time) the International Monetary Fund. Another consequence was that it appeared to many that the United States was unable to manage the global economy anymore. That Nixon issued his executive order without consulting either his own government officials or allied decision-makers also signified that US leaders had no qualms with upsetting international arrangements for its own benefit.71

71 Gowa (1983) convincingly shows that electoral concerns motivated Nixon’s decision to upend the Bretton Woods system. See also Gavin (2004).
In view of these developments, Nixon’s handling of relations with Europe was largely *ad hoc*.\(^\text{72}\) His (and his National Security Adviser Henry A. Kissinger’s) lack of sustained interest in economic issues was partly to blame. If any logic guided their approach to Europe, then it was détente with the Soviet Union and the mutual respect it entailed for the status quo in Europe. Consistent with détente Nixon undertook a number of arms control initiatives with the Soviet Union. In November 1969, the United States under his leadership began arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. The product of these negotiations was the Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement, the purpose of which was to restrain the development of offensive weapons and manage the security dilemma. Thus, the agreement stipulated that both major powers freeze the quantity at existing levels of strategic ballistic missile launchers. The United States and the Soviet Union also agreed that they could only add submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers once they phased out older ICMBs and SLBMs. These negotiations also paved the way for the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which restricted the defensive weapons systems that would counter incoming missile-delivered nuclear weapons. He also signed the Biological Weapons Convention that banned the use and production of biological weapons.

This conduct suggests that Nixon’s approach towards nuclear weapons and nuclear doctrine reflected the accumulated progress made by US presidents during the Cold War on these issues. To recapitulate, we have seen how Eisenhower felt that nuclear weapons offered a relatively inexpensive means to deter a conventionally superior Soviet military. Decision-makers in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations shared similar views, but thanks to technological advances they recognized the potential use of nuclear weapons on the battlefield while becoming more aware of the dangers of nuclear proliferation. All three presidents had relatively positive views regarding the ability of arms control agreements to manage

\(^{72}\)As if to rescue trans-Atlantic relations from being adrift, the Nixon administration launched the ‘Year of Europe’ in early 1973 so as to address political, economic, and social issues, particularly in the face of mounting isolationist sentiment in the United States. See Kohl (1975, 15-19).
stability in the international system.\textsuperscript{73} Signing so many arms control agreements suggests that US decision-makers finally recognized and heeded the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. This view is wrong. Despite Nixon’s apparent support for arms control initiatives, he was in fact dismissive of these treaties. Gavin reports Nixon saying “I don’t give a damn about SALT; I just couldn’t care less about it.” Nixon construed the Biological Weapons Convention as “the silly biological warfare thing, which doesn’t mean anything.”\textsuperscript{74} According to Gavin, these private statements are evidence of Nixon’s own \textit{realpolitik} view of world politics whereby international institutions were trivial.

Nixon handily won the 1972 presidential election by capturing 60\% percent of the popular vote and 97\% of electoral college votes. Yet his own personal paranoia and insecurity undermined his political success. Burglars connected to the Central Intelligence Agency and the Committee to Reelect the President were apprehended at Watergate, the Democratic headquarters in Washington, D.C. An investigation into this incident ultimately revealed that Nixon and members of his staff were complicit in the break-in, embroiling the administration in scandal for much of his second term. Nixon resigned in August 1974, resulting in Vice President Gerald Ford – a politician with virtually no foreign policy experience – being sworn in as president.

Ford’s presidency grappled with the loss of prestige that afflicted both the United States and the White House. The search for an appealing solution in Vietnam had failed, leading Ford to reside over the final US withdrawal from Vietnam (Operation Frequent Wind) as the North Vietnamese finally conquered the South. With the fall of Saigon and the conquest of neighboring Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge, Ford used the opportunity to rescue a Cambodian-seized US merchant ship (the \textit{Mayaguez} incident) so as to deter future acts of

\textsuperscript{73}Eisenhower endorsed the (one-sided) Open Skies plan and began negotiations with the Soviet Union for a test ban treaty at the end of his presidency. One problem of the Eisenhower administration’s approach towards arms control was that it believed that technical solution, rather than a political one, would have resolved proliferation concerns. See Suri (1997).

\textsuperscript{74}Quotations drawn from Gavin’s larger discussion of Nixon’s view of nuclear weapons. See Gavin (2012, 104-119).
aggression by communist countries in East Asia. In part because of a weak US economy and his controversial decision to pardon Nixon, Ford lost the 1976 presidential election to Democrat Jimmy Carter.

Summary

Managing great power relations was the central feature of Nixon’s foreign policy. He openly sought improved relations with two adversaries, the Soviet Union and China. Even if the US felt no longer threatened by these two communist powers, allies might fear that Nixon was making agreements with them at their expense. Certainly, on close inspection, Nixon’s record with international agreements is replete with opportunism and even frivolity. He effectively ended the Bretton Woods system to the surprise of other members of the international community. He signed several arms control treaties of which he was strongly dismissive. Yet allies might not have been privy to Nixon’s disparaging remarks regarding these treaties, so that they could have taken these agreements as a sign that the United States was intending to be more restrained in its containment of communism. These outward displays of foreign policy conduct aside, Nixon was ultimately preoccupied with ending the Vietnam War and reducing the US share of the conventional defense burden. The Guam Doctrine made this strategy explicit. Although previous presidents spoke of burden-sharing, Nixon’s phased troop withdrawals from Vietnam and a faltering US economy lent credence to this doctrine.

Simply put, before Nixon, relying primarily on a nuclear deterrent, retracting conventional military power abroad, and a policy of offshore balancing were important goals that US presidents sought to obtain in light of their foreign policy visions and concerns for the US economy. But there was still room for US presidents to compromise on these objectives. For Nixon, however, retrenchment became an urgent task.
Post-Script

Of course, neither alliance politics nor US foreign policy ended with the Nixon administration, and three more presidents led the United States for the remainder of the Cold War. As much as the empirical case studies have cumulatively less overlap with the Ford, Carter, and Reagan presidencies, it is worth raising some stylized facts. As indicated, Carter became President in 1976. Inflation, negative economic growth, and an energy crisis continued to wrack the US economy. So as to distinguish himself from the alleged moral bankruptcy of his predecessors, advanced a foreign policy centered on human rights advocacy. The result of which was reduced support to autocratic allies, yet relations with the Soviet Union still centered on détente despite disagreements with the policy amongst leading foreign policy decision-makers in his administrations (e.g., Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski). By the end of his presidency, however, Carter took a progressively hard-line against the Soviet Union when its invasion of Afghanistan signaled an end to détente. The result of this change was the US boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow and a new military build-up. Carter lost his re-election bid to Ronald Reagan in 1980, not least because of the poor economy and his bungled efforts to resolve a hostage crisis at the US embassy in revolutionary Tehran.

Having campaigned on the promise to restore US prestige in the world, Reagan expressed heated anti-communist rhetoric and proposed major defense expenditures. He even increased US troop presence on some allies’ territories so as to ‘rollback’ the evil empire that was the Soviet Union. Reagan’s second term in office featured a softened tone towards the Soviet Union, warm diplomatic relations with its leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and a new arms control treaty called the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. This agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union banned all nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 300-3400 miles. Reagan’s diplomatic rapport with Gorbachev contributed to the end of the Cold War.
3.5 Wrapping Up

This chapter explores how four different presidents – Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon – calibrated, if at all, the strategic posture of the United States in light of Truman’s decision to expand military commitments during the Korean War. It examines the constraints these decision-makers faced, and how those constraints shaped choices regarding declaratory nuclear policy and US conventional military deployments abroad. These choices were manifest in the articulation (and implementation) of New Look, flexible response, and the Guam Doctrine. This chapter also reviews some key foreign polices that characterized the foregoing presidencies. In so doing, I show that US decision-makers wanted to rely more on the US nuclear deterrent and offload the conventional defense burden onto allies. This desire to ‘offshore balance’ was a continuing theme throughout the first half of the Cold War.

By reviewing the history of US strategic posture from the Eisenhower’s administration through the Nixon administration, this chapter sets up the empirical chapters that follow. The case studies show how the variation in those countries’ record of nuclear behavior was a function of changes, whether they were proposed or actual, to the US strategic posture.
Chapter 4

Impossible Germany: Accounting for West German Nuclear Behavior, 1954-1970

We begin with West Germany, one of the most important allies of the United States and the focal point of major power tensions during the first half of the Cold War. At first glance, it appears that my theory is inappropriate for understanding West Germany’s foreign policy behavior. The West German government, in exchange for reacquiring political sovereignty, renounced nuclear weapons development in 1954 at the London and Paris Conferences. If these international legal constraints were not enough, then contrition for Germany’s role in the Second World War and the anti-militarist norms that emerged in its society should serve as domestic disincentives for any form of nuclear behavior. Indeed, given the extensive military presence that the United States maintains in Germany to this day, some international relations scholars assert that this country has had limited foreign policy autonomy, especially during the Cold War.¹ These factors together suggest that West Germany should be a least-likely case for my theory.

¹See Mearsheimer (2001, 382).
Yet alliance compensation theory explains West Germany well, for its leadership did strive towards nuclear weapons acquisition and resisted international demands to clarify its nuclear intentions for about a decade. To begin, West Germany started engaging in nuclear behavior in 1956 when it entered into a trilateral partnership with France and Italy so as to develop a European nuclear weapons arsenal. Prompting this action was the specter of US withdrawal of troops from West Germany and the rest of Europe. Interestingly, early statements by members of the Eisenhower administration that endorsed the New Look did not sufficiently disturb West German officials into seeking a trilateral nuclear weapons capability. Rather, what triggered intense fears of abandonment among West German leaders were (unsubstantiated) newspaper reports of imminent cuts to the US military and its manpower. Until then the United States had seemed reluctant to carry out the cuts to US conventional military that the New Look implied. Nevertheless, West Germany’s pursuit of nuclear weapons did not last long because Charles de Gaulle – upon becoming French president in 1957 – canceled the project. However, West Germany deliberately maintained an ambiguous nuclear posture until the late 1960s, rejecting calls to sign an emerging international agreement that prohibited the spread of nuclear weapons.

As member of the multilateral NATO and the main source of US woes in its international balance-of-payments deficit, West Germany was able to refuse US demands to credibly renounce nuclear weapons. It only did so after receiving a number of key concessions from both the Soviet Union and the United States during negotiations for the NPT. And even then West Germany still did not sign the treaty until such an action accorded with its own independent foreign policy goals towards Eastern Europe. In other words, West Germany finally ceased its nuclear behavior not in response to US inducements to do so, but rather so as to lend credibility to Chancellor Willy Brandt’s policy of Ostpolitik.

This chapter elaborates on this argument as follows. Section 1 outlines the predictions of my theory and alternative hypotheses for the case of West Germany. I use this section as an opportunity to provide an overview of West Germany’s strategic context and domestic
politics. Section 2 begins the empirical analysis by explaining how the New Look affected West German security interests. It examines the responses the New Look generated among West German decision-makers. I show that nuclear behavior was one such response. Section 3 continues the analysis by demonstrating that flexible response did not allay West German fears of US abandonment. Accordingly, West German leaders remained ambiguous in their country’s stance towards nuclear weapons. Section 4 process traces how West German decision-makers finally agreed to credibly renounce nuclear weapons. Section 5 assesses the relative empirical validity of the competing hypotheses for explaining the pattern of West German nuclear behavior. I also compare my analysis of West German nuclear posturing to similar studies by international relations scholars. Section 6 concludes.

4.1 Empirical Predictions

My argument and alternative explanations (i.e. the balance-of-threat and domestic politics explanations) emphasize either the strategic or the domestic context. I describe each of these contexts so as to specify the predictions these explanations would have for the case of West Germany.

The Strategic Context

As indicated in Chapter Three, West Germany emerged from as the product of allied decisions taken between 1946 and 1949 to amalgamate the British, French, and US zones of occupation. West Germany was largely land-locked with its eastern borders abutting two communist states (East Germany and Czechoslovakia) and, after 1955, neutral Austria. Its position in Western and Central Europe thus left it exposed to the Soviet Union. During the 1950s, the Soviet Union lacked a significant air and naval capability. The Soviet Union

\(^2\)Like Germany, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States occupied Austria. In exchange for regaining political sovereignty, Austria pledged to remain neutral throughout the Cold War.
was instead a land power with much of its armed forces concentrated in Central-Eastern Europe. These forces were superior to the conventional military power aggregated by NATO members. The Soviet Union did not develop an intercontinental ballistic missile capability until the late 1950s. West Germany on its own faced a severely unfavorable conventional balance of power with the Soviet Union that an allied troop presence could significantly (but not fully) redress.

Two different hypotheses are worth highlighting. One alternative explanation – the balance-of-threat thesis – emphasizes the role of Soviet threat, irrespective of US behavior, as a sufficient cause and driver of West German nuclear behavior. My theory, however, claims that the Soviet threat would only be a necessary condition for West German nuclear behavior. Whether stoked by real or anticipated changes in US strategic posture, fears of abandonment should encourage affected allies to move towards nuclear weapons.

As a strategy put forward by the Eisenhower administration, the New Look was significant for West German security interests. Indeed, this strategic posture emphasized substituting unconventional weapons (i.e. nuclear weapons) for conventional military deployments. Because of its contiguity with the Soviet bloc and the type of military threat posed by the Soviet Union, West Germany relied on a land-based conventional military deterrent for its security. Trading a conventional deterrent for a nuclear deterrent, however, might be acceptable if the nuclear deterrent were believable. However, as Soviet nuclear capabilities improved over the course of the 1950s, West Germany risked providing the battleground upon which the major powers waged nuclear war should there have been a dramatic instance of deterrence failure. Accordingly, West Germany had a critical interest in the US providing a nuclear deterrent that was at once credible and sensitive to West German concerns. Accordingly, I hypothesize that West Germany would engage in nuclear behavior because the New Look would have rendered it more exposed to Soviet depredations.

The incentives for continuing to engage in nuclear behavior remained even after the New
Look was abandoned in favor of flexible response. Though the Kennedy and Johnson administrations intended flexible response to overcome the credibility problems inherent in Massive Retaliation, their implementation of this new strategy was problematic. Indeed, the specter of US withdrawal from Europe and the desire to have European allies bear more of the conventional defense burden remained present. US commitment to Europe lacked credibility. Furthermore, the structure of NATO and its favorable balance-of-payments situation economically empowered West Germany vis-à-vis the United States. France was available as a potential substitute partner for the United States. Large US defense expenditures and West German purchases of US gold produced a large bilateral balance-of-payments deficit that US decision-makers were desperate to remedy. These factors should not only shape but also hamper US efforts to compel West Germany to renounce nuclear weapons acquisition.

The Domestic Political Context

Domestic politics explanations can take two forms. A basic one attaches significance to prevailing societal norms and attitudes. Norms can enable or constrain decision-making by clarifying which actions are politically acceptable and legitimate, and which are not. Thus, if anti-militarist and anti-nuclear attitudes are widely held amongst voters, (democratically elected) decision-makers are more likely to reject the option of undertaking nuclear behavior. Such leaders do not wish to engage in such politically unpopular actions and risk the domestic cost that they might incur as a result. Conversely, where such norms are absent, decision-makers face fewer constraints in engaging in nuclear behavior. The work of Thomas Berger and Peter Katzenstein emphasizes the emergence of anti-militarist norms in West German society during the 1950s. These norms should curb any engagement in nuclear behavior by the West German government.

A complex domestic politics explanation focuses on the preferences of ruling elites and

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their coalitions to explain their foreign policy behavior. Thomas Berger describes three distinct political groupings in West German politics: the Atlanticists, the West Europeanists (sometimes called the Gaullists instead), and the Central Europeanists. The Atlanticists were mixed in their support of the formation and rearmament of the Bundeswehr, supportive of the US, and skeptical over the prospects of German reunification. They valued NATO over other European collective security arrangements, seeing the alliance as the best provider of a nuclear deterrent. They also endorsed European integration. The West Europeanists, too, supported an alliance with the West and rearmament. Still, they were more suspicious as to whether the United States would observe its commitments. They believed that European collective security arrangements would better serve West German strategic interests over the long-term and thus preferred the European Defense Community (EDC) and the Western European Union to NATO. For West Europeanists, the source of nuclear deterrence should be European rather than American. Indeed, they sought to deepen European integration. Finally, the Central Europeanists viewed the US negatively, rejected nuclear deterrence altogether, embraced geopolitical neutralization, espoused socialist principles, and opposed European integration.4

Applying the three categories to ascribe pre-strategic preferences to individual leaders and their parties faces an important challenge.5 Specifically, it is difficult to ex ante predict how preferences would be aggregated in a given geopolitical situation. Inferring these preferences from observed outcomes risks tautology. That the political parties (and even the executive governments) contained major political cleavages accentuates this problem. Consider the main political parties that characterized West German domestic politics in the 1950s and 1960s. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU), steeped in socially conservative values informed by interconfessionalism, contained both Atlanticist and West Europeanist factions. Beyond intra-party factions, the formation of coalition governments adds another

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5Moravesik (1997) notes the confusion between preferences and strategies that often pervades the international relations literature.
Table 4.1: The category “Other” lists those individuals whose decision-making significance for the case studies was a function of either historical circumstance or personality. For the period covered in this chapter, Arthur W. Radford was Chair of the Joint Chief of Staff (1953-57). C. Douglas Dillon was the Secretary of Treasury (1961-65). Henry Kissinger was National Security Advisor (1969-75). Franz Josef Strauss was Minister of Atomic Affairs (1955-57) and Minister of Finance (1966-69). Willy Brandt was Mayor of West Berlin (1957-66). Egon Bahr was West German Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Office (1969-1972) and very close associate of Willy Brandt. Some individuals occupying important offices exerted relatively little influence on policy (e.g., Richardson as Nixon’s Secretary of State). The Federal Ministry of Defense in West Germany did not exist until 1955.
complication. After all, the CDU had formed such coalitions with its Bavarian counterpart, the Christian Socialist Union (CSU). This party espoused similar values as the CDU, but was more nationally and socially conservative. As much as the ideological overlap between the CDU and the CSU made them natural coalition partners, their main political leaders – Adenauer in the CDU and Franz-Josef Strauss of the CSU – still had important disagreements over West German foreign policy. With such cleavages, coalition politics, and intra-party factionalism in mind, it is difficult to reliably specify hypotheses regarding preference aggregation and foreign policy decision-making.

Moreover, geopolitical developments could empower certain ideas and attitudes while discrediting others. Indeed, part of the explanation for why the CDU/CSU were dominant in West Germany, respectively, is that the Cold War made socialism politically undesirable both at home and amongst anti-communist allies. Political parties that appeared to support the Soviet Union were alleged threats to internal order and, by extension, national security. Accordingly, after suffering successive electoral defeats, the historically Marxist party Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1959 adopted the Godesberg Program which renounced Marxism so to broaden its appeal amongst members of the middle and professional classes. The SDP even moved towards a pro-Western policy that showed support for the United States.\footnote{Moravcsik (1998, 90-103) also notes this convergence in values amongst the major West German political parties. Still, as his analysis showed, disagreements over economic policy persisted.} These historical observations demonstrate that individuals are purposive. Though influenced by the discursive practices in which they are embedded, leaders may still adjust and manipulate ideas to suit an agenda that they are advancing. Thus, leaders might move fluidly between political categories such as those advanced by Berger, making it difficult to code individual leaders as belonging to strictly one. Adenauer was one such leader. Though Berger codes him and Strauss as West Europeanists, Adenauer was more Atlanticist of the two.\footnote{Berger (1998, 58).} Accordingly, Strauss should move West German foreign policy more towards an independent (European) nuclear capability when he has a greater share of decision-making.
authority vis-à-vis Atlanticist Chancellors like Adenauer and his successor Ludwig Erhard.

Summary

Table 1 lists the main decision-makers on the US and West German sides for the period under review. Table 2 summarizes the competing hypotheses and their implications for the case of West Germany. The next section turns to uncovering the sources of West German nuclear behavior.

4.2 Explaining the Onset of West German Nuclear Behavior

This section asserts that West Germany began moving towards nuclear weapons acquisition in the late 1950s. To probe the causal connection of my proposed independent variable with the dependent variable, I strive to determine the extent to which the New Look influenced West Germany’s decision to engage in nuclear behavior. Examining this question, however, requires asking of the case evidence several questions of varying degrees of difficulty. First, does congruence between the independent variable and the dependent variable exist? Second, did West German leaders express anxiety over the New Look (and its perceived implementation)? Third, did West Germany undertake other policies or positions consistent with fears of abandonment?

First Pursuit, Then Ambiguous Posturing

West Germany finally broke the law in 1957. Despite legal injunctions against having nuclear weapons as per the Paris and London Conferences in 1954, West Germany undertook nuclear behavior. That is, it partnered with Italy and France to develop a nuclear weapons arsenal.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Theoretical Mechanism</th>
<th>Observable Implications</th>
<th>Case Predictions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alliance Compensation Theory: Onset</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation of credibility of major power security commitments with reference to conventional military deployments</td>
<td>Adverse troop redeployments suggest abandonment and provoke affected allies into engaging in nuclear behavior</td>
<td>West Germany worried over New Look and thus engages in nuclear behavior; flexible response renews incentives for nuclear behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alliance Compensation Theory: Termination</strong></td>
<td>Major power pressure and bargaining</td>
<td>Interaction of economic and security dependence shape counterproliferation effectiveness and ally responsiveness to major power pressure</td>
<td>West Germany resistant to US demands to renounce nuclear weapons such that final settlement favors West Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance-of-Threat Theory</strong></td>
<td>Threat perceptions</td>
<td>Presence of direct military threat provides incentives for nuclear behavior</td>
<td>Record of West German nuclear behavior should co-vary with perceptions of Soviet threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (1)</strong></td>
<td>Preferences over political economy and foreign policy; coalition politics</td>
<td>Level of internationalization of economic strategy shapes incentives for nuclear behavior; Economically conservatives engage in nuclear behavior so long as they stay in power; nuclear reversal follows change in ruling coalition</td>
<td>CDU/CSU politicians, particularly those drawn from economically liberal/Atlanticist factions, would not undertake nuclear behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (2)</strong></td>
<td>Norms and widely shared attitudes</td>
<td>Levels of militarism in society shapes decision-makers’ likelihood to engage in nuclear behavior</td>
<td>West German public becomes increasingly antimilitarist, so disincentives to engage in nuclear behavior increase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Summary of theoretical explanations, observable implications, and predictions for West Germany’s nuclear behavior.
By the time this trilateral initiative came into being, Chancellor Karl Adenauer was already laying the groundwork for a nuclear program during the second half of 1956. He sought to pass legislation in the Bundestag to remove domestic legal strictures against having a nuclear weapons program. In October 1956, Adenauer promoted his Minister of Atomic Affairs, Franz Josef Strauss, to become the Minister of Defense, indicating his own personal understanding regarding the connection between nuclear policy and West German defense.⁸

West Germany was not entirely discrete in its conduct. At a press conference in February 1957 the Chancellor referred “to the possibility of organizing a Franco-German co-production of nuclear weapons on French territory.”⁹ By December 1957 West Germany quietly began its collaborative project with France and Italy.¹⁰ Shortly after this project started, Adenauer also made private and coded requests to the United States for “the most modern and effective weapons” while denying to the Soviets any interest in such weapons.¹¹ In January 1958 Adenauer successfully oversaw legislation pass in the Bundestag to permit the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

West Germany’s pursuit of the bomb was very brief and so it had to downgrade its nuclear behavior. Upon returning to power French President Charles de Gaulle unilaterally terminated the trilateral nuclear agreement in June 1958.¹² The secrecy of this aborted program aside, West Germany’s stance towards nuclear weapons remained ambiguous – a perception shared by decision-makers from the Soviet Union, the Soviet bloc, and even the United States. As we will see, this uncertainty prompted US decision-makers to consider

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⁸For more on this promotion, see the discussion below regarding domestic politics explanations for West German nuclear behavior.


¹⁰Ibid., 112-113. See also Conze (1990)and Heuser (1997) for discussions on this collaborative project.

¹¹Quoted in Fursenko and Naftali (2006, 186-87). To be clear, the terminology that statesmen used to refer to nuclear weapons and other modern weapons systems during this time was very imprecise. The Colomb-Béchar Protocol, signed between West Germany and France in 1957, made reference to “armes nouvelles,” sparking disagreement amongst some historians as to the exact substance of this secret mutual rearmament agreement. See Barbier (1990, 91) and Conze (1990).

¹²Conze (1990, 127-128). For an overview of the secret nuclear program, see Schwarz (1997, 311-324). Hans-Peter Schwarz attributes the cause of West Germany’s participation in this program to doubts over the US commitments.
various strategies on how to manage the proliferation risk of a rearming West Germany. The uncertainty also spurred Poland to launch an effort to establish a nuclear weapons free zone in Central-Eastern Europe (called the Rapacki Plan). The possibility of a nuclear-armed West Germany threatened these countries and the Soviet Union such that they used negotiations for a non-proliferation treaty as an opportunity for inhibiting West Germany.

**West German Anxieties as Motivation**

The New Look proposed that the US rely on its nuclear arsenal so as to provide extended deterrence to its ally. Such a posture would allow US decision-makers to cut expensive military manpower overseas. To what extent did concerns regarding the New Look bear on West Germany’s initial movement towards nuclear weapons acquisition?

Two aspects of the New Look concerned West German decision-makers. One was Massive Retaliation. This apprehension pulled in opposite directions. On the one hand, the retaliatory threat of overwhelming nuclear weapons use was not credible. It was unclear what forms of communist aggression would incite a dramatic nuclear response from the United States. West German leaders were not unique in expressing unease over this doctrine. US academics noted the lack of credibility characterizing this approach.\(^{13}\) French President Charles de Gaulle once quipped whether the United States would come to the rescue of Paris at the expense of New York City.\(^{14}\) On the other hand, concern existed over whether the United States would pursue a reckless foreign policy at the expense of Western European security. Accordingly, West German anxiety was unique insofar as its leaders felt that in the event of Soviet aggression West Germany would be the site of either foreign occupation or nuclear devastation. They also did not want West Germany military to be merely responsible for

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\(^{13}\)Kaufmann (1956) offers arguably the most powerful critique of Massive Retaliation. Matthew Ridgway – celebrated commander of the US 8th Army during the Korean War – also wrote an trenchant critique of Eisenhower’s nuclear doctrine. See Ridgway (1956).

\(^{14}\)Indeed, the unwillingness of the Eisenhower administration to use nuclear weapons to support French interests in Indochina encouraged French Prime Minister Pierre Mendès France to start a nuclear weapons program. See Goldstein (2000).
providing “foot soldiers marching in the middle of (tactical) nuclear units.”\textsuperscript{15} These anxieties were well-grounded. A 1955 NATO military exercise, code-named Carte Blanche, simulated a nuclear conflict over NATO territory and resulted in over five million West German ‘casualties.’ The publication of these results sparked popular furor over the direction of NATO nuclear strategy in West Germany.\textsuperscript{16}

The New Look supported the view that allies were becoming unable to maintain a troop presence in West Germany. As indicated, by the mid-1950s US decision-makers began to appreciate the difficulty of managing the relationship between balance-of-payments issues and current defense expenditures. British decision-makers were already struggling with fulfilling military commitments in West Germany while crafting monetary policy. The United Kingdom’s high debt, incurred during the Second World War and the subsequent recovery, made the sterling – the second reserve currency of the Bretton Woods system – susceptible to crises of confidence, devaluations, and exchange rushes. Though the British agreed to maintain four divisions and the Second Tactical Air Force in the West European Union Treaty of 1954, they began demanding the next year that West Germany cover seventy million pounds in troops’ foreign exchange costs.\textsuperscript{17} The West German government resisted such demands, arguing that they reinforced West Germany’s “second-class status” within the alliance. Furthermore, British troop redeployment would weaken Western European defense and even precipitate US withdrawal. Both nuclear weapons states, after all, were exploring how to substitute relatively cheap nuclear weapons for expensive conventional military assets deployed in Europe.\textsuperscript{18}

In light of these issues, US decision-makers were not naive regarding West Germany’s

\textsuperscript{15}My translation of “une piétaile évoluant au milieu des unités nucléaires.” Conze (1990, 119).
\textsuperscript{16}Kelleher (1975, 36).
acceptance of New Look as a reorientation of US strategic posture. To the contrary, they recognized that West German – and other European – leaders would regard New Look as a symbol of declining commitment. In a meeting with the National Security Council (NSC), Eisenhower noted:

“[t]he presence of our troops there is the greatest single morale factor in Europe. You cannot therefore make a radical change so quickly. Besides, the physical cost of bringing back these troops will be so high as to effect very little savings in the course of next year, even if considerable numbers were to be redeployed.”

He added that “[w]hile it is true that the semi-permanent presence of United States Forces (of any kind) in foreign lands is an irritant, any withdrawal that seemed to imply a change in basic intent would cause real turmoil abroad.” 19 An “educational campaign” and a “new general program for European defense” were necessary before such withdrawals could take place. In the meantime, Dulles averred, “no impression should be allowed to get about that we may be thinking of pulling troops out of Europe.” 20 Nevertheless, Eisenhower personally recorded Dulles’s view that the United States should avoid “ground deployments in Asia” and that the United States “should begin to withdraw ground troops from Korea.” Air and naval power were sufficient to deter future communist aggression. Eisenhower agreed in principle that “some reduction in conventional forces” was justifiable. 21 Other members of the Eisenhower administration felt that troop withdrawals in Western Europe were also warranted. One official noted how the “present deployment in Europe is excessive and should be reduced, since the forces necessary to provide requisite assurance to friend and enemy are less than those now deployed.” 22

19 Both quotes from Memorandum of Discussion at the 166th Meeting of the National Security Council, Tuesday, October 13, 1953, FRUS 1952-54 2: 548.
20 Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President, October 21, 1953, FRUS 1952-54 2: 549-550.
21 Memorandum for the Record by the President, November 11, 1953, FRUS 1952-54 2: 597.
22 Memorandum by W. Barton Leach of the Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, to the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Bowie), November 18, 1953, FRUS 1952-54 2: 598.
The rhetoric of the New Look served as an omen for US withdrawal, but the United States refrained from taking active steps to make the proposed change in US strategic posture reality. Absent such concrete measures Adenauer may have felt that he lacked sufficient cause to truly fear abandonment. However, when news reports appeared during the summer of 1956 that the US government had active plans to cut the size of its military, it seemed that New Look was becoming a reality. The Eisenhower administration found itself having to dispel a rumor put forward by an unsubstantiated *New York Times* report on July 13, 1956. According to this report, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff sought to reduce the size of the US Army by a third. The so-called Radford Plan sufficiently disturbed Adenauer that he responded by launching a “major diplomatic effort” to curb these reductions.\(^{23}\) West German diplomats sought renewed assurances from their US counterparts over the status of US troop deployments in West Germany. After all, the substance of the news reports constituted the “greatest concern to the German Government.”\(^{24}\) Adenauer even expressed his alarm in a personal letter to Dulles, noting that “Europe including Germany is losing confidence in the reliability of the United States.”\(^{25}\) As Hubert Zimmermann notes, “for [Adenauer] these troops were the fundamental symbol of the American commitment to Europe.”\(^{26}\) Fortunately for Adenauer, the Eisenhower administration recognized the problems

\(^{23}\)Zimmermann (2002, 90). Several months later the US Secretary of the Air Force explained the basis for the *New York Times* report. He told Adenauer that it was “a staff proposal which was prepared for discussion by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This plan had neither the approval of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford, nor had it been officially presented to the Government. In working out the draft paper, the question under study was an examination of how the strength of the forces could be adjusted to the constantly increasing costs which arise from equipping the individual soldier with the newest weapons. In view of the increased costs and the accompanying increase in striking power, one could not maintain the same number of soldiers under arms. It was therefore a question of establishing a balance between these two factors ...” See Memorandum of a Conversation, September 10, 1956, FRUS 1955-57 26: 159-160.


\(^{25}\)Letter from Adenauer to Dulles, July 22, 1956, folder: “(5),” Box 23, Files Relating to John Foster Dulles, White House Memoranda Series, Seeley Mudd Library. Further, Adenauer surmised that these adverse redeployments would empower Soviet relative power. Memorandum of a Conversation, September 10, 1956, FRUS 1955-57 26: 158-159. To be sure, the timing of this news report was politically problematic for Adenauer’s government. An ongoing debate in the Bundestag over conscription, rearmament, and West integration proved to be deeply controversial due to their unfavorable implications for German reunification. See Zimmermann (2002, 91).

\(^{26}\)Zimmermann (2002, 90).
associated with large-scale troop reductions and as such had no desire to implement them during this time.

A major reason for why the Eisenhower administration was so reluctant to undertake such redeployments was because it regarded the geopolitical situation in Europe as dangerous. Just weeks before the Hungarian Revolution broke out in October 1956, Eisenhower asserted that “he felt very definitely that we cannot take divisions out of Europe at this time. The effect on [West German Chancellor Karl] Adenauer would be unacceptably damaging. He could not agree with a Defense position contemplating such reductions.”

US diplomats reported the widespread unease regarding the international threat environment at a NATO conference held in December 1956. With the end of the Hungarian Revolution, the Soviet Union had already demonstrated its willingness to use force to suppress liberalizing movements in the Soviet bloc. Cold War dangers did not abate. In November 1958, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev delivered an ultimatum to the West, decreeing that Berlin should be a free, demilitarized city from which all non-Soviet forces had six months to evacuate. Indeed, during this phase of the Cold War, Khrushchev often used inflammatory rhetoric to emphasize the Soviet Union’s military and political advantages over the Western alliance.

Circumstances continued to forestall any significant troop redeployment. Thus, Eisenhower stated that “nothing could be more fatal than to withdraw our troops from Europe or to say we are about to withdraw them.” He even expressed this view despite later adding that “it was high time that the population of Europe did its part with respect to ground forces.”

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30 These quotes are pulled from a larger discourse on the political problems associated with troop withdrawals. Eisenhower “felt that there had been too much talk about reduction of U.S. forces committed to NATO ... we should not talk about reducing our forces committed to NATO until we are able to educate our
that the United States shouldered in conventional military defense overseas. This problem would be left to his Eisenhower’s successors to resolve.

Eisenhower’s sensitivity regarding troop withdrawals notwithstanding, Adenauer’s alarm over the New Look gives context to his decisions to, first, promote his Minister of Atomic Affairs to be the Minister of Defense, and to, second, enter a tripartite initiative with France and Italy to develop nuclear weapons. The fear of abandonment that were manifest in West German decision-makers’ repeated requests for assurances demonstrates that Adenauer lost faith in US policies to safeguard West German interests.31

4.3 Explaining Continuity in West German Nuclear Behavior

My goals in this section are modest. I first show that West Germany retained an ambiguous posture towards nuclear weapons into the 1960s. This ambiguity provoked the consternation of decision-makers of other countries, most notably the United States and members of the Soviet bloc. I then highlight that flexible response and its implementation encouraged West German fears of US abandonment. With this section and the last put together, this description of West German nuclear behavior sets up the discussion for how US decision-makers attempted to compel West Germany to credibly renounce nuclear weapons acquisition and

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31 Schwarz (1997, 236) writes that in early 1956 Adenauer informed the French ambassador to West Germany Maurice Couve de Murville that he lost “confidence” in Eisenhower’s approach towards the Soviet Union. Yet the primary source Schwarz uses is dated October 3, 1956, thereby fitting the timeline put forward here.
thus fully reverse its nuclear behavior.

More Ambiguous Posturing by West Germany

West Germany did not reattempt a nuclear weapons program after de Gaulle’s abrupt cancellation of the trilateral initiative. Indeed, de Gaulle’s actions imposed a new constraint on any new effort that West Germany could undertake in order to ratchet up its nuclear behavior. That is, another effort involving its European neighbors was unlikely, and a unilateral West German program might not evade international detection. Despite this constraint, the West German government retained an ambiguous stance towards nuclear weapons acquisition well into the 1960s, even if it had no real intent to indigenously develop them. This ambiguity was characteristic of several diplomatic actions made by West Germany during this time. First, it criticized (and resisted) early international efforts at drafting a treaty banning the spread of nuclear weapons. As we will see, some West German decision-makers understood a non-proliferation treaty as being designed against them. Second, West German decision-makers were the strongest advocates of nuclear-sharing arrangements (e.g., the Multilateral Force [MLF]) that the United States proposed during the first half of the 1960s. In fact, one reason for why US leaders supported the basic concept underlying MLF as long as they did was their concern for how West Germany would behave in the absence of such an initiative. West German leaders recognized these fears, and even encouraged them by issuing statements that suggested their interest to acquire nuclear weapons.\footnote{For a contemporary account of West German posturing, see Kelleher (1975).}

Contemporary international observers and decision-makers themselves were uncertain of West Germany’s nuclear intentions, even when they had to assure fellow decision-makers. Take, for example, a correspondence between Kennedy and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. Kennedy wrote Macmillan that “the Chancellor made very clear his conviction that German unilateral ownership or control over nuclear weapons is undesirable, and [Min-}
ister of Defense Franz Josef Strauss expressed the same view; they agreed that their needs could be met within a multilateral framework.”

The basis of these impressions was in a conversation that Kennedy had just the previous day with Adenauer. During this meeting Kennedy asked the Chancellor directly on whether he would continue abide by the terms of the 1954 renunciation of the experimentation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Adenauer reaffirmed these commitments, but he added that the obligation had legal validity as long as “circumstances remain unchanged.” According to Adenauer, Dulles himself endorsed this application of the legal principle of *rebus sic stantibus*.

Despite the apparent confidence that he conveyed to Macmillan, Kennedy was privately less sure. In a 1964 interview with Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jnr., Kennedy adviser Charles E. Bohlen recalled:

“I think that [Kennedy] had a certain reservation as to the German future and the danger of German militarism. I think he was very conscious of the possibility that given a few turns or twists of events, you could be headed back into another situation where Germany could again become a menace.”

These fears encouraged various probes into West German nuclear weapons, including one study whereby US government officials explored the meaning of Adenauer’s statement to Kennedy and its significance for West German policy. This report failed to confirm whether Dulles had enunciated the principle of *rebus sic stantibus* and noted that its place in international law was dubious.

While this report was being drafted during the summer of 1962, US government officials investigated whether France and West Germany were cooperating in nuclear weapons development. With British collaboration, the Department of State

33Letter from President Kennedy to Prime Minister Macmillan, November 22, 1961, FRUS 1961-62 14: 633.
34Memorandum of Conversation, November 21, 1961, FRUS 1961-62 14: 616.
35Charles E. Bohlen Oral History Interview, no. 1, 5/21/1964, 37, JFKL.
37These concerns were rooted in the observation that economic and technological ties between the two
found “no concrete evidence now exists confirming any such cooperation.” Nevertheless, the US ambassador in Bonn noted that the British felt it was “prudent to assume that, even in absence of direct collaboration in weapons field, probability is great that French and German scientists do in fact cooperate at theoretical level on matters of nuclear physics which cld (sic) be related to nuclear weapons technology.”

Investigations into possible Franco-German nuclear cooperation continued until at least December 1962.

Other statements made by various US government officials highlight a shared sense of unease over the West Germany’s nuclear weapons stance. A telegram from the US embassy in Bonn for the Secretary of State Dean Rusk nicely captures the prevailing attitude at the time:

“[a]t present there does not exist deliberate intention in [West] Germany to embark on nuclear weapons program, either alone or with French, but caution requires us assume (sic) that latent intention exists that any responsible German leader must keep possibility in back of mind as possible answer to future contingencies for which no concrete anticipation now required.”

One such contingency was the successful acquisition of a nuclear arsenal by the French government. In a memorandum to Kennedy, Rusk explained that a primary reason for which the United States was opposed to French nuclear efforts was the risk they would create for nuclear proliferation by West Germany. Furthermore, the US government also appreciated countries were growing. As one telegram put it, “if continued integration of scientific and technical resources of France and Germany goes on at its present rate, and the economic cooperation of both countries continues in [the European Economic Community], surely US must realize it is very likely that France will provide technical nuclear information to Germans.”

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38 Telegram 3165 from Paris to the Secretary of State, June 25, 1962, folder: “NATO, Weapons, Cables, Germany, FRG-French Nuclear Cooperation”, National Security Files, Regional Security, Box 226A, JFKL.
39 Telegram 1538 from Bonn to the Secretary of State, folder: “NATO, Weapons, Cables, Germany, FRG-French Nuclear Cooperation”, National Security Files, Regional Security, Box 226A, JFKL.
the domestic politics of West Germany’s nuclear status and felt that time was not on its side for resolving this issue. One decision-maker in May 1961 commented that “we can best settle the German issue in Adenauer’s, not Strauss’, time.” A Department of State study group produced a document that noted how a future West German government would likely have to satisfy demands from their electorate that it does not face discrimination on nuclear-related matters in world politics.

Fears of a nuclear West Germany were not confined to the Kennedy administration. They persisted during the Johnson administration and became salient after October 1964 when China detonated its first nuclear weapon. Indeed, two months later Johnson indicated to British Prime Minister Harold Wilson that failure to resolve West Germany’s status would have significant implications for continental security. Referring to a very specific historical analogy, he said that “[i]f we cannot solve this problem ... there was (sic) some 17-year old right now in Germany who would be a 20-year-old little Hitler in another three years.” Others in his administration were less gloomy but were still apprehensive. A 1966 report prepared by the Department of State Policy Planning Council listed the West Germany as a possible proliferator. Although this report argued that the incentives for West Germany to proliferate were low in light of domestic politics and existing collective security arrangements, ensuring a credible non-nuclear status on the part of West Germany remained a major preoccupation of the Johnson administration.

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42 Quotation recorded in Costigliola (1984, 236).
45 Quoted in Schrafstetter and Twigge (2004, 155). Khong (1992) describes how Johnson sometimes used analogical reasoning to frame policy debates and make key decisions. I did not find other instances of Johnson using this specific historical analogy. That said, many documents contain statements by various officials that highlight concerns over a nationalist demagogue that would one day equate a non-diffusion treaty with the Treaty of Versailles.
This uncertainty was not unique to US decision-makers. Members of the Soviet bloc were also unsure how to evaluate West Germany’s position on nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{47} East German and Polish leaders were particularly unnerved by the possibility of a nuclear West Germany. By this time, the Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki had already proposed a plan for a nuclear weapons free zone in Central Europe that would comprise Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the two Germanies.\textsuperscript{48} During early negotiations for a treaty to ban the spread of nuclear weapons, these leaders voiced deep concerns about initial Soviet inclination to accommodate NATO nuclear sharing arrangements. After these initial stages in treaty negotiations, the Soviet Union sought an agreement that expressly forbade the possession or transfer of control of nuclear weapons to West Germany. The Soviet Union did not tolerate the attempted creation of the MLF because its leaders feared that the MLF would encourage, rather than dampen, West German interest in nuclear weapons acquisition.\textsuperscript{49}

**Persistent West German Fears of US Abandonment**

West German nuclear behavior continued because fears of US abandonment persisted. Flexible response did not allay the worries of West German decision-makers, and so they did not embrace this strategy. Though my theory implies that the conventional military buildup should reassure the West Germany of the US alliance commitment, by signaling a reversal of the New Look, flexible response in fact ended up having the opposite effect. As John Duffield argues, they felt that enhancing the alliance’s conventional capabilities risked signaling that the US was *not* willing to engage in a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union. That is, the conventional military buildup undercut nuclear deterrence. Duffield cites West German

\textsuperscript{47}I discuss below that the difference, however, was that US decision-makers felt that they could manage West German nuclear ambitions whereas decision-makers in the Soviet bloc publicly voiced their anxieties over the prospects of a nuclearized West Germany.


\textsuperscript{49}Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in France, October 2, 1961, FRUS 1961-62 14: 459.
Defense Minister Strauss as an opponent of flexible response because it contradicted his goal to arm the Bundeswehr with dual capable weapons. Astute readers will note the irony. Notwithstanding the credibility problems of Massive Retaliation, the New Look suggested a US willingness to turn Europe into a nuclear wasteland should general nuclear war occur. Thus, West German decision-makers accorded significance to US conventional military deployments on the continent, and thus reacted negatively to signs that these forces would be withdrawn. Flexible response might have lowered the likelihood of Europe becoming a nuclear wasteland, but because of this effect it undercut the perceived credibility of US nuclear deterrence. This observation raises an important question: if New Look undermined conventional deterrence and flexible response undermined nuclear deterrence, then was it the case that West German leaders simply saw US commitment as irredeemably unbelievable? Put differently, how could the US signal credible commitment if seemingly opposite strategies produced the same fears of abandonment?

The answer is that US behavior undercut the believability of flexible response that US would use both conventional and unconventional forms of military power to defend West German security interests. For one, key West German decision-makers were unimpressed with how the US handled the Berlin Crisis in 1961. West Berlin mayor Willy Brandt was incensed at the delays characterizing the US military response to the Soviet blockade. When US military patrols arrived in Berlin twenty-four hours after the Soviets began erecting the Berlin Wall, he exclaimed: “[t]hose shitheads are at least finally sending some patrols to the sector borders so that the Berliners won’t think they are totally alone.” Second, the Berlin Crisis encouraged the belief amongst members of the Kennedy administration that the conventional military buildup widened the range of options for dealing with Soviet Union. Despite increases in US conventional forces in Western Europe during the Berlin Crisis, US

\[50^\text{Duffield (1995, 156-157).}\]

\[51^\text{Translated quotation cited in Lippert (2005, 25). Sarotte (2001, 11) also describes Brandt as being dubious on the positive role played by the United States in West German security due to the events of the Berlin Crisis.}\]
decision-makers by 1962 that conventional defense burden within NATO should fall more on Western European allies. Not only did these allies believe that upgrading conventional defense would invite more Soviet aggression, they also felt such requests smacked of an unfavorable military division of labor. The United States would be responsible for the management and deployment of nuclear weapons (i.e. the sword) whereas the Europeans would collectively supply the conventional military power (i.e. the shield). That the United States increased the number of its tactical nuclear weapons by 60% in Western Europe was proof that such a military division of labor was emerging. Indeed, the United States did not help to allay concerns of abandonment when it staged a major airlift exercise intending to demonstrate its ability to quickly dispatch an armored division to Europe. West German leaders had their own reason to fear the military division of labor that the US was apparently trying to establish. If the British and the French were to retain their nuclear capabilities, and continental European allies were to provide the conventional military defense, West Germany would thus occupy a subordinate status within the alliance.

As during the Eisenhower administration, officials in the Kennedy administration recognized the possibility of allies like West Germany would have these concerns. Evidence of this awareness appears in internal deliberations over Adenauer’s casual mention to Kennedy of the legal principle of *rebus sic stantibus*. A Department of State report highlighted several factors that were motivating Adenauer’s behavior. It deserves to be quoted at length:

"The consensus in the Department of State is that the Chancellor’s citing of the *rebus sic stantibus* doctrine reflects a deep-seated German concern about the implications of national British and French nuclear deterrents. The Germans are anxious to assure for themselves a leading position in European arrangements and at this juncture tend to view the nuclear diffusion problem more in political than strategic terms. The immediate problem for the Germans, of course, is the

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discussion of the non-diffusion problem in the contexts of the Geneva disarmament talks and the Berlin proposals. In both cases, they have made it clear they would not subscribe to proposals which they felt discriminated against them. In the Department’s view, there is an even more important long-range problem for the Germans – that is, the establishment of acceptable multilateral nuclear arrangements. The Chancellor, they believe, feels that unless there is a satisfactory multilateral arrangement, there will be increasing pressures within Germany for the development of a national nuclear deterrent, a development the Chancellor hopes can be forestalled .... Bonn will not acquiesce in an arrangement which subordinates it to Britain and France, or to Britain and France in a tripartite directorate with the US.”

This observation by US government officials suggests a possible counterargument to the thesis I am advancing. That is, concerns over discrimination and unequal status within Western European security arrangements, rather than fears of US abandonment, drove West German ambiguity. Yet fears of abandonment are causally prior to status concerns. Inequality might breed West German resentment, but it could still be acceptable if allied defense of West German security interests was assured. It was not. With uncertainty over the received security guarantee, however, submitting to an unequal arrangement (e.g., the one that the US appeared to approve) remained unattractive.

In sum, West German decision-makers continued to be skeptical of US alliance commitments. Flexible response did not elicit their approval. Nor did it allay their concerns regarding US credibility. The military build-up that flexible response may have been significant, but it lasted only briefly before US decision-makers reverted to their desire to restrain (if not reduce) conventional military commitments. Indeed, as we will see below, the Kennedy and Johnson administration’s shared the view that Western Europe should provide more

of NATO’s conventional defense burden. West German concerns over the direction of US foreign policy continued throughout the 1960s, shaping the bargaining dynamic between the United States and West Germany regarding the latter’s nuclear behavior.

### 4.4 Trying to End West Germany’s Nuclear Behavior

Wanting to curb West Germany’s nuclear behavior had a strong strategic rationale for neighboring states and the rival major powers. Still, it is also important to note here another factor that drove their apprehensions. After all, diverse decision-makers feared the nuclear potential of West Germany partly due to their collective historical experience of the twentieth century. Writing on Joseph Stalin’s geopolitical perspective in the early 1950s, David Holloway captures the point well:

> “Stalin drew a parallel between the interwar years and the period after World War II. Germany had risen to its feet fifteen to twenty years after World War I. Britain and the United States had helped Germany to recover, in order to set it against the Soviet Union. But Germany moved first against the ‘Anglo-French-American bloc,’ and when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union those capitalist countries were compelled to enter into a coalition with the Soviet Union.”

Stalin was unique amongst leaders for his paranoia and cruelty, but this recapitulation of his thinking demonstrates that the analogy that Johnson raised regarding ‘little Hitler’ was not entirely inappropriate. If this analogy of post-war Germany were the most available to decision-makers, then the task of at once restraining and assuring West Germany would seem to be all the more urgent lest history repeat itself.

The preceding two sections establish that West Germany engaged in nuclear behavior, first by pursuing nuclear weapons development with France and Italy and then later by de-

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55Holloway (1994, 290).
liberately making its nuclear intentions ambiguous. West German nuclear behavior posed a serious geopolitical problem, not least because of the fears shared by communist and US decision-makers alike regarding the dangers presented by a nuclear-armed West Germany. Alliance compensation theory does not indicate what precise factor should cause West Germany to finally forswear nuclear weapons acquisition. No magic bullet exists in counterproliferation and, more often than not, states tend to use as many instruments at their disposal (be they carrots and sticks) to make a potential proliferator abandon its nuclear ambitions. Nevertheless, it identifies conditions that complicate or facilitate US counterproliferation efforts: the security and economic dependence of West Germany on the United States. This section demonstrates that the multilateralism underpinning NATO hampered US efforts to obtain an official (and credible) West German renunciation of nuclear weapons. US imperatives to secure offset payments from an economically prospering West Germany were another important obstacle to a US counterproliferation strategy. Accordingly, the West German government finally agreed to renounce nuclear weapons when such a gesture served its other security interests, independent of US preferences.

Alliance Multilateralism as a Hindrance

Multilateral alliances can be hard for a patron to manage. Aside from having to take into account a wider spectrum of interests, the establishment of a multilateral alliance can require the patron to give up some of its foreign policy autonomy so as to gain the consent of its weaker partners. It thus cannot change the institutional parameters of the alliance at will. When the patron tries to adjust the alliance with goal of shaping the behavior of a particular member, it must generate consensus first. Unfortunately for the patron, this endeavor risks backlash if that target member can counter the patron’s effort by rallying fellow allies to its cause. This dynamic was in full force when US decision-makers first sought an alliance solution to the problem of West German nuclear ambiguity.

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56Ikenberry (2008).
To begin, the US government identified a possible solution in the form of the Multilateral Force, an institutional upgrade to NATO that strove to take alliance preferences into account. The intention behind this arrangement was to improve the participation of NATO members (e.g., West Germany) in nuclear decision-making and reduce the incentives for states to develop their own independent nuclear deterrents. Though the MLF was predicated on accommodating the interests of allies, it failed to gain their approval. The initial reception of the MLF was lukewarm. The UK showed some willingness to consider membership in the MLF, though the Macmillan government sought to clarify some of its operational details in light of the Nassau Agreement. Italy expressed an early interest to participate in the MLF. Turkey and Greece also supported the MLF while Belgium and the Netherlands indicated their desire to follow the UK’s own approach to this issue. Most critically, West Germany offered firm support to the MLF. Adenauer even described the MLF as a “magnificent undertaking, magnificent militarily and politically.” Despite indicating that France was unlikely to join, even De Gaulle “thought it good for the Germans to do so as a way of preventing from developing their own force.” The tepid support that greeted the MLF was not a surprise. In the early phases of the program’s advocacy, Kennedy recognized the limited support the MLF appeared to receive. He noted that “it was his impression that the British were not for it; the French were clearly against it; and the Italians did not have a deep-seated interest in it. The Germans reportedly were interested, but once they realized how little they were getting for their money, they might look at it differently.” He advised that the United States should not “stick to the MLF too long if it seemed to be a losing

57Ikenberry (2001) argues that such a strategy was typical of the US approach to managing trans-Atlantic relations during this period.
58Middeke (2000, 77).
proposition.” Still, it was not inevitable that the MLF would fail. France notwithstanding, NATO members were not completely averse to the initiative.

And yet the MLF failed spectacularly, almost tearing the alliance apart during its consideration. The Johnson administration – having inherited the initiative from Kennedy – ultimately had to abandon the proposal before searching for an alternative method to get West Germany to renounce nuclear weapons. What accounts for the failure of the MLF and, by extension, this shift in counterproliferation strategy?

At least three factors produced the demise of the MLF. One was the inability of the United States to acquire the support of either the United Kingdom or France for the project. The Western alliance was already experiencing tumult even before the United States actively promoted MLF. The British were resentful of their treatment at the hands of US during the Skybolt affair and the ensuing negotiations that led to the Nassau Agreement. The Skybolt affair erupted when the United states cancelled the provision of a weapons system that the British needed to maintain their independent nuclear deterrent. Several weeks after Nassau, when British decision-makers were still interpreting the significance of the MLF for their own nuclear policy, de Gaulle announced his intention to veto British entry into the European Economic Community (EEC). de Gaulle’s motives appear to have been less geopolitical and more economic, but US decision-makers at the time understood the action as primarily anti-American.64

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63 Memorandum of Conversation, February 18, 1963, FRUS 1961-63 13: 502 and 504. During this meeting, US decision-makers affirmed their interest to preserve US veto power over nuclear decision-making in the alliance.

64 An important historiographical controversy surrounds the January 14 speech in which de Gaulle declared his veto. The conventional view, widely shared by historians, is that de Gaulle rejected British entry into the EEC due to his aversion to the United Kingdom’s close relationship with the United States. Having the British in the EEC, according to this view, was unacceptable to de Gaulle because it would have deepened Europe’s dependence on the United States. Yet, as Andrew Moravcsik shows, the substance of this speech focused almost exclusively on France’s need to protect its agricultural interests from British imports. Only a small fraction of the speech is devoted to geopolitics. Though true, many US decision-makers attended primarily to the brief allusion to geopolitics in de Gaulle’s speech in order to infer France's motives. For a discussion of this historiographical debate, see Moravcsik (2000a), Trachtenberg (2000), Milward (2000), Nuenlist, Locher, and Martin (2010), Moravcsik (2012), and Trachtenberg (2012). For evidence that US decision-makers understood the veto as rooted in anti-American motives, see Memorandum of Conversation, May 28, 1963, FRUS 1961-63 13: 583. I discuss British and French nuclear weapons history in the Addendum.
As much as relations between all three nuclear members of NATO were acrimonious, the United Kingdom and France had their own reasons to find the MLF objectionable. For the British, the Nassau Agreement did not assure them of access to the much-wanted Polaris missiles. Instead, it added to their suspicions of US reliability. Moreover, their desire to preserve an independent nuclear deterrent was inconsistent with the basic mixed-manned operational form of the MLF. For de Gaulle, the MLF was inimical to his grandiose conception of France’s role in international affairs. It also would have further tethered Western Europe to the United States – an unlikeable idea for Gaullism. What distinguished the United Kingdom from France was that the need to at least maintain the fiction of an independent nuclear deterrent had important electoral consequences for British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. By contrast, de Gaulle wanted the substance of independence rather than just its appearance. The range of possible agreement between each of these two states and the US varied only in their narrowness.

The second factor was the propagandistic effort by members of the communist bloc to link the MLF with West German nuclearization. The earliest international critics of the MLF were Poland and East Germany. They feared that nuclear-sharing arrangements would

65 Middeke (2000, 77-78).
66 For a US description of de Gaulle’s views on the MLF, see De Gaulle and Atlantic Nuclear Matters, November 2, 1964, folder: “Multilateral Force, Vol. 2 [3 of 3],” National Security File, Subject File, Box 23, LBJL. Having its own nuclear capability will not only establish France’s greatness in world politics but will enable it to exercise leadership in Europe. According to the Belgian foreign minister Paul Henri Spaak, de Gaulle “sincerely believes that the U.S. is going to withdraw from Europe, and this imposes upon him the duty to be prepared for such a possibility. He is not too unhappy about such a possibility, because if the United States withdraws from Europe and if France has a nuclear force, then the hegemony of France in Europe will be assured.” See Memorandum of Conversation, May 28, 1963, FRUS 1961-63 13: 583.
68 US decision-makers candidly spoke of how the MLF would “weaken French and British determination to hold onto their national nuclear establishments.” Memorandum of Discussion of the MLF at the White House, April 11, 1964, folder: “Multilateral Force, Vol. 2 [3 of 3],” National Security File, Subject File, Box 23, LBJL.
offer West Germany unfettered access to nuclear weapons. Indeed, Polish leader Władysław Gomułka expressed his opposition to earlier Soviet draft proposals for a nonproliferation treaty that appeared to accept NATO’s use of nuclear-sharing arrangements. According to Gomułka, “[t]he creation of multilateral nuclear forces would greatly increase the role of West Germany in NATO, enable it to apply more forceful pressure . . . upon the policy of the USA and the entire NATO bloc towards the adoption of uncompromising and more aggressive positions with regard to the socialist states.” The Soviet politburo accepted these arguments and, upon the ousting of Khrushchev from power, emphasized them in subsequent negotiations with the US on a non-diffusion treaty. Over time the Soviet Union’s anti-MLF position hardened: it would not accept a non-proliferation treaty that allowed any nuclear-sharing arrangements, much less the MLF. As a result, the United States could not have both the MLF and the NPT – or, in starker terms, a multilateral solution that would discourage West German nuclear proliferation, in particular, and a different multilateral solution that would discourage nuclear proliferation, more generally. Further, the Soviet anti-MLF campaign might have had some influence in shaping the popular discourse on the US-led initiative. For example, public opinion polls in Britain provided evidence of popular distrust in allied societies regarding the role of West Germany within the proposed MLF.

\[69\] The Soviet ambassador to Poland admitted that the Soviet decision not to demand legal prohibitions against the MLF within the treaty framework was made out of “expediency.” Memorandum by Ambassador Aristov, April 1, 1963, translation, KC PZPR, syn. 2639, 335-337. Available online: http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org.


\[71\] Research Memorandum for the Acting Secretary of State, December 16, 1964, folder: “Multilateral Force, General Vol. 1 [2 of 3]” National Security File, Subject File, Box 23, LBJL; Telegram from Embassy in Bonn to Dean Rusk, October 26, 1963, folder: “Germany, Erhard Visit 12/63 [2 of 3],” National Security File, Country File, Box 190, LBJL. As evident in the Berlin Crisis, the Soviet Union also found itself holding a contradictory position during the early 1960s: it desired both US troop withdrawals from West Germany and West German abstention from nuclear behavior.

\[72\] Memorandum for the President, December 4, folder: “Multilateral Force, General Vol. 1 [2 of 3]” National Security File, Subject File, Box 23, LBJL. That said, public opinion polls in West Germany indicated public indifference to the MLF – a point that certain West Germany government officials emphasized in allaying concerns that their country might in the near-future seek its own independent capability.
The third factor was that other US allies doubted whether the benefits of the MLF justified its costs. The Benelux countries raised concerns over the project's costs as well as its implications for the integrity of the EEC. Canada withdrew its support while Greece and Turkey became more lukewarm to the initiative. Domestic politics hampered the ability of Italian politicians to fully endorse the MLF. de Gaulle changed his position and thus became intensely imposed to not only the MLF but also the West Germany's involvement in it. Despite its cautionary optimistic tone, an internal research memorandum summarized the emerging challenges that now confronted the MLF. First, European governments appeared to regard the MLF as "a direct American challenge to de Gaulle's ambition to use a Franco-German entente as the basis for France's predominance in Europe. They were concerned that the "launching of the MLF could provoke [de Gaulle] to lash out in some destructive act aimed at NATO and/or European Communities." Second, the Europeans were skeptical as to whether the financial burden associated with the MLF was worth the marginal benefits to the nuclear deterrent that the alliance already possessed.

A consequence of these three factors was that West Germany remained as the lone supporter for the MLF. To some extent, that West Germany remained committed to the MLF in spite of its unpopularity was unsurprising. As one US government official noted, West Germany saw "the MLF as an instrument for keeping US nuclear power inextricably tied to the defense of Europe." A failure to endorse the MLF might also suggest to some states that the West German government was considering the acquisition of its own independent nuclear arsenal.

73 The Canadian government was sympathetic to the aim of the MLF to prevent the West German acquisition of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, it was reluctant to participate. Telegram from Hyannis Port to the Department of State, May 11, 1963, FRUS 1961-63 13: 1203.
74 Telegram from Embassy in Bonn to Dean Rusk, July 23, 1964, folder: "Multilateral Force - Cables, Vol. 2 [1 of 3]," National Security File, Subject File, Box 24, LBJL.
75 Research Memorandum to Dean Rusk, October 28, 1964, folder: "Multilateral Force, General Vol. 2 [3 of 3]," National Security File, Subject File, Box 23, LBJL.
nuclear deterrent. Supporting the US proposal might have still played to such fears, but such was the corner in which West Germany found itself. Furthermore, it could not renounce nuclear weapons altogether lest such an action would expose it to Soviet blackmail or consign it to second-tier status within the alliance. Privately, West German leaders assured their US counterparts of their lack of intention to seek an independent nuclear capability. Their public stance remained ambiguous, however. West German foreign and defense ministers claimed that the MLF would “strengthen moderate leadership in Germany, and by acting forehandedly will help prevent nationalistic adventures.” Chancellor Ludwig Erhard and Willy Brandt, then mayor of West Berlin, echoed these sentiments. By implication, as these statements insinuated, the failure of the MLF would increase the likelihood of a nationalist political movement emerging in West Germany. But if a multilateral solution in the form of the MLF were not feasible, neither was a bilateral one. Indeed, adding to the problem for the United States was that it could not strike a bilateral deal with West Germany. The United States was by now considering making cooperative arrangements with the United Kingdom and France by 1964, but these countries already had a nuclear weapons capability. Extending similar treatment to West Germany posed too great of a risk in alienating US allies (e.g., France) and further antagonizing the Soviet Union. Thus, towards the end of 1964, the US government began to realize that the MLF was in tatters. As a result, much to the dismay of West German leaders, US decision-makers quietly abandoned the idea that nuclear-sharing arrangements constituted a viable solution in late 1964 and early 1965.

77 Martin (2013, 34) writes that Erhard was confident in the US nuclear umbrella.  
78 MLF Congressional Presentation, June 1, 1964, folder: “Multi-lateral Force, General Vol. 1 [1 of 3],” National Security File, Subject File, Box 22a, LBJL. Erhard did make some public statements disavowing nuclear weapons, but he would also press for a ‘hardware’ solution. See Young (2003, 311, 315)  
79 Despite earlier reservations, Erhard offered indications that he would be interested in “going alone with the US”, according to one internal report. Intelligence Note to the Secretary of State, October 7, 1964, “Multilateral Force, General, Vol. 2 [3 of 3]” National Security File, Subject File, Box 23, LBJL. For a summer 1964 statement by Erhard that a bilateral arrangement was not doable, see Telegram from the Embassy in Bonn to Dean Rusk, June 25, 1964, folder: “Multilateral Force - Cables, Vol. 2 [1 of 3], National Security File, Subject File, Box 24, LBJL. For an intelligence note that summarizes Western European and Soviet views on such a bilateral arrangement, see Intelligence Note to Dean Rusk, October 7, 1964, folder: “Multilateral Force, Vol. 2 [3 of 3],” National Security File, Subject File, Box 23, LBJL.  
80 See, e.g., National Security Action Memorandum no. 322, December 17, 1964, FRUS 1964-1968 13: 165-167. The public demise of the MLF was rather gradual and quiet for reasons I will elaborate below.
West Germany’s unflagging support for the MLF suggests a strong degree of West Germany’s security dependence on the United States – an observation that runs counter to my theory. Theoretically, the security dependence of an ally on the patron should vary by the membership scope of the alliance. A multilateral alliance empowers its membership vis-à-vis the patron in several ways. Its members can form a countervailing coalition to block an undesirable institutional change proposed by the patron. Indeed, to make its leadership acceptable, the patron has to rely more on consensus and thus sacrifices some of its foreign policy autonomy. The evidence presented here nicely captures these dynamics at play, but West German interest in MLF might indicate dependency. Though this interpretation is reasonable, it cannot make sense of West Germany’s lack of pliability – that is, West Germany’s persistent nuclear ambiguity despite the unease it provoked amongst allied decision-makers. Logically, a state that is security dependent should not be able to pull its patron into proposing an unattractive institutional upgrade that proved deeply controversial with the larger alliance membership. More importantly, West Germany did have a substitute security option available in France. This alternative was imperfect, especially in light of de Gaulle’s conflicting economic interests within the EEC. Nevertheless, de Gaulle would have preferred a West Germany more ensconced in European institutions under France’s leadership than those under American tutelage. The divide between the Atlanticists and the West Europeanist factions in West German domestic politics made this policy option a realistic one. This factionalism would be more evident in other aspects of West Germany’s relationships with the US during the 1960s.

when I discuss adjustments in US counterproliferation efforts. Suffice it to say, in early 1965, US decision-makers were assuring their West German counterparts that MLF was still an available policy option so as to not alienate them completely. Telegram from the Embassy in Germany to the Department of State, January 5, 1965, FRUS 1964-1968 15: 189-190; Telegram from the Embassy in Germany to the Department of State, January 11, 1965, FRUS 1964-1968 15: 201-204; Letter from Secretary Rusk to Foreign Minister Schroeder, January 13, 1965, FRUS 1964-1968 13: 172-174. Despite US reassurances, the crisis over the MLF embarrassed West German decision-makers. Telegram from the Embassy in Germany to the Department of State, January 16, 1965, FRUS 1964-1968 15: 213-214.
West German Nuclear Posturing and the Limits of Economic Coercion

If a multilateral solution under the aegis of NATO were unworkable, then could the United States not have applied unilateral economic pressure on West Germany so as to coerce a desirable outcome? It would seem that during the 1950s and early 1960s the United States occupied a privileged status in the global economy due to its market size and the role of the greenback as the international reserve currency. This phase of the Cold War was neither after victory nor after hegemony. It was during hegemony, allegedly. Therefore, the United States should have been able to use its clout to force West Germany into adopting credible pledges not to acquire nuclear weapons. Yet, for reasons highlighted in chapter three, such arguments are wrong. Rather, while attempting to establish the MLF, the US government had a difficult time using such sources of leverage to force allies, including West Germany, to behave congruently with US interests. This difficulty was manifest in negotiations over offsets and balance of payments, precisely because the United States relied too much on West German good-will to satisfactorily resolve these issues.

The United States incurred large balance of payments deficits throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Resolving the balance of payments crisis became an urgent task for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and West Germany was a focal point for efforts to eliminate the deficit. Because six US divisions were located in its territory, West Germany benefited from a major inflow of US dollars. This inflow had two specific sources. One source was the military expenditures themselves. According to one briefing document, by 1963 “[e]xpenditures in Germany by the US forces entering the international balance of payments (sic) run to about $675 million a year at current rates.”81 The other was that US troops stationed in West Germany would use US dollars to buy Deutschmarks (DM) in order to purchase local goods and services. Hubert Zimmermann estimates that the foreign exchange costs of US troops

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grew from $345 million in 1956 to almost $750 million in 1962. Despite the doubling of these costs, the US troop presence experienced a net increase of ten percent over this time period, largely because of the Berlin Crisis in 1961 and 1962.\footnote{About 275,000 US troops were located in West Germany during the latter stages of the Berlin Crisis.} West German reserves of gold and US dollars also evinced dramatic growth. In particular, West German gold reserves expanded by about 135 percent between 1956 and 1962.\footnote{The statistics reported in this discussion are drawn from Zimmermann (2002, 246-249).}

Two options were available to US decision-makers for addressing West Germany and the balance-of-payments problem.\footnote{To be sure, the Kennedy administration adopted other more general measures to solve the balance of payments crisis. One strategy was to encourage widespread tariff reductions so to encourage greater consumption of goods produced in the United States. Such was the purpose of the Kennedy Round.} The first option was unilateral and involved reducing defense expenditures overseas. Like the Eisenhower administration, the Kennedy administration felt the economic strain associated with having significant defense outlays spent abroad. As a result, the Department of Defense faced significant pressure to find ways to cut spending in light of the balance-of-payments problem.\footnote{Joint Chiefs of Staff Telegram, June 28, 1962, folder: “NSAM 171, Department of Defense Actions to Reduce its Overseas Expenditures,” National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, Box 337, JFKL; Department of State Telegram, July 19, 1962, folder: “NSAM 171, Department of Defense Actions to Reduce its Overseas Expenditures,” National Security Files, Meetings and Memoranda, Box 337, JFKL. See FRUS documents from 1961-63, vol. 8. April and July 1963.} Although the Department of Defense, under Robert McNamara’s leadership, was willing to trim its budget, the Department of State pleaded caution so as to not alarm allies or show weakness to the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the Berlin Crisis forestalled any austere budgetary measures in the early 1960s.\footnote{Duffield (1995, 158-162) describes efforts by member states to strengthen NATO’s conventional forces.}

The second option was bilateral and involved West Germany and the US negotiating the extent to which the West German government was willing and able to cover the costs of the US military presence. These types of agreements began in the early 1950s when the West German government paid so-called “occupation costs” that amounted to 600 million DM a month. Throughout the late 1950s, the West German government negotiated support-cost agreements with the United States, the United Kingdom, and other NATO members. Some of the agreements with the UK even included assurances from the British government of its
intentions to maintain the numerical strength of the British Army of the Rhine at certain levels. By the 1960s, the word ‘offset’ entered into the vocabulary of such negotiations. Offset was the principle by which “every dollar spent in Germany defending Europe should be used by the Federal Republic to purchase American military equipment.” As Francis Gavin notes, this policy provoked resentment in West Germany because it at once stoked fears of US abandonment and encouraged West German dependency on the US arms industry.

Despite having concluded a series of support cost agreements in the 1950s, negotiating a new offset agreement with West Germany in 1960 and 1961 proved especially difficult. The United States wanted West Germany to make purchases of US weapons. These requests encountered delay and then resistance that the West German government justified on the grounds that US weapon systems were technologically outdated. Moreover, Adenauer and Minister of Defense Strauss expressed concern over Kennedy’s stated inclination for flexible response and preventing nuclear proliferation. As Zimmermann argues, gaining a “more direct influence over the use of nuclear weapons on its territory ... became one of Strauss’s conditions for agreeing to the gigantic amount of military purchases that the Americans demanded.” An agreement did emerge, but it was largely due to the erection of the Berlin Wall. This Soviet action prompted the West German government to increase its own defense budget and, accordingly, procure more military hardware from the United States.

Thus, West German security interests shifted in a way that facilitated talks between the two countries and led them to conclude an agreement in which procurement and other military investments would “offset the transactions of US forces in Germany of benefit to West German balance of payments.” Still, in a subsequent letter exchange between the two governments, the West Germans asserted that they could not make pledges regarding budgetary decisions beyond the US Fiscal Year 1962. They also sought assurances of US

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87 For a discussion of these negotiations, see Zimmermann (2000).
88 Gavin (2004, 64).
89 Zimmermann (2002, 133).
90 Ibid., 134.
support in the event that details of this agreement would upset relations with other NATO allies.92

The cooperation embodied in the Strauss-Gilpatric agreement slowly started to unravel over the next few years. During this time, gold losses in the US economy mounted and the balance of payments deficit worsened. In the first half of 1962 alone, the US economy saw gold losses of $420 million dollars.93 Indeed, the US gold stock had fallen by almost a third between 1958 and 1962 as losses increased in volume with each passing year.94 Meanwhile, the West German economy was facing a prospective slowdown. As much as negotiations for a second offset agreement in early 1962 proved straightforward, West Germany began seeking additional conditions so that offset payments be made “subject to the availability of funds” in light of a prospective slowdown in the West German economy.95 The US government was initially successful in quashing early gestures made by the West German government to reduce the size of the defense budget and, by extension, the scope of military procurement. Yet this sort of acquiescence by West Germany was short-lived. Budgetary constraints grew more severe and, much to the dismay of the US government, the West German Defense Ministry reiterated over the next few years that it could not offer more than one billion dollars of payments despite the terms of the second offset agreement. US pressure was successful in eliciting contractual agreements, but it was becoming less able to compel the West German government to make budgetary decisions that accorded with US interests.96

It was in this context that US decision-makers reconsidered the first strategy described above, that of reducing troop levels in West Germany and the rest of Western Europe.

92Zimmermann (2002, 136-137). It is important to note that knowledge of these negotiations, and the resulting agreement, was limited to only a few agencies in both West Germany and the United States. Indeed, the West German Defense Ministry consulted with neither the Finance Ministry nor the Bundestag in making these arrangements. So long as the solution focused on military procurement could the Defense Ministry act autonomously. See ibid., 145-146.
93Report to the President by the Cabinet Committee on Balance of Payments, July 27, 1962, folder: “Balance of Payments, 1963,” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject Files, Box 14, LBJL.
95Memorandum of Understanding quoted in Zimmermann (2002, 147).
96This discussion draws extensively from Zimmermann (2002, 147-152).
Kennedy had initially regarded US troop presence in Europe as an indispensable tool for reassuring allies and preventing Soviet aggression. His views changed in the face of the mounting balance of payments crisis and frustrations with West Germany's uncooperativeness. The minutes from one meeting with the NSC held in January 1963 report that:

“[t]he President said that we must not permit a situation to develop in which we should not have to seek economic favors from Europe ... He thought we should be prepared to reduce quickly, if we so decided, our military forces in Germany.”

The Kennedy administration’s reconsideration of undertaking troop withdrawals, however, did not last long. News that the US government was exploring the issue eventually leaked to the media, prompting outcry from West Germany. Eventually, Secretary of State Rusk publicly assured West Germany in October 1963 that the United States will maintain its six divisions in West Germany “as long as there is need for them – and under present circumstances, there is no doubt that they will continue to be needed.” Just one day before issuing this statement, Rusk privately stipulated to the West German Minister of Defense that West Germany would have to meet the agreed-upon offset payments to ensure the US troop presence in its territory.

The United States did succeed in extracting one concession, however, from the West German government during the summer of 1963: its signature to the Partial Test Ban Treaty. Banning aboveground test detonations of nuclear weapons, this treaty emerged from negotiations between the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom. Much to the dismay of West German decision-makers, which initially thought themselves as immune from these treaty considerations, the United States opened the agreement for signature by

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100Ibid.
all states in the international system. Out of alliance considerations West Germany was obliged to accept, but its leaders were taken aback by this surprise development. Marc Trachtenberg argues that a major intention of this treaty was to prevent West German and Chinese proliferation. For the West Germans, though, the true cost of treaty was not that they had to suddenly renounce testing nuclear weapons they did not have nor could indigenously produce. After all, as indicated above, efforts to rally NATO support for the MLF continued to proceed well into the Johnson years, raising West German hopes and fueling Soviet bloc anxieties in the process. Rather, aside from the mere shock of the US decision, what alarmed West German decision-makers was the concern that, because the treaty was now open to all states, the United States and other participating states would have to accord diplomatic recognition to East Germany should it, too, sign the treaty. Thus, the treaty risked undoing in one fell swoop all of West Germany’s efforts to deny East Germany the diplomatic recognition it had coveted since its creation. In light of this possibility, West German and US decision-makers had to downplay the significance of East Germany’s adherence to the treaty. Despite its success in negotiating the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the United States stoked further alarm amongst West German decision-makers and CDU/CSU politicians who felt blindsided by its decision to open the agreement beyond the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom.

In autumn 1963, Ludwig Erhard replaced Adenauer as Chancellor, thereby creating new opportunities for the United States to negotiate favorable offset arrangements. After all, in contrast to his predecessor Adenauer, Erhard was eager to deepen US-West German relations when he began his term in office in October 1963. Accordingly, the US government

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102 Gray (2003, 143-144).
103 Erhard was widely touted for managing postwar West German economic recovery (Wirtschaftswunder) as Minister of Economics (1949-1963).
104 In fact, a background paper prepared for Johnson suggested that Erhard was so pro-American that the Chancellor might be liable to domestic and international criticism. Background Paper: Atlantic Partnership and European Integration, December 20, 1993, folder: “Germany Briefing Book – Erhard Visit, 12/28-29/63 [2 of 2],” National Security File, Country File, Box 190, LBJL.
secured pledges from him to provide a full offset during his visit to Texas in December 1963. Yet obtaining such pledges did not automatically mean that the United States would financially benefit from them. The lack of growth confronting the West German economy led the government to express its unwillingness to spend additional funds on defense. Budget plans belied Erhard’s private assurances that “[West Germany] would do everything that is possible to fulfill these offset commitments which have been approved by the Cabinet.” One major indicator is that Erhard’s cabinet agreed to freeze defense spending, which meant that military procurements would have to be cut so as to have sufficient funds for public wage increases.\textsuperscript{105}

In view of these developments, the Johnson administration had to find additional sources of leverage. It thus placed renewed emphasis on the link between offsets and troop levels in order to augment its bargaining position. McNamara was especially vocal in making this connection. In meeting with his West German counterpart, “[McNamara] wished to make clear that he was making no threats, but it would be absolutely impossible for the United States to accept the gold drain caused by the US forces in Germany if Germany did not assist through continuation of the Offset Agreements.”\textsuperscript{106} Such statements might have compelled the Erhard government to agree to maintaining its commitments, but their practical effects on budgetary policy were still limited. Offset payments remained behind schedule. Rather than spending more on defense, the Erhard government lowered taxes and expanded social welfare programs in 1965 and 1966.\textsuperscript{107} Despite pursuing such programs, West German government officials highlighted budget difficulties to their US interlocutors. They even raised the specter of the Weimar Republic’s experience of hyperinflation to suggest that increases in defense spending would generate additional inflationary pressure.\textsuperscript{108} Erhard

\textsuperscript{105}Memorandum for the President, June 10, 1964, folder: “Germany – Erhard Visit [6/64], 6/12–6/13 [1 of 3],” National Security File, Country File, Box 190, LBJL.
\textsuperscript{106}Excerpt of conversation quoted in Zimmermann (2002, 165).
\textsuperscript{107}Ibid., 168. As early as late 1963, members of the Johnson administrations took notice of these trends. See Memorandum from Dillon for the President, December 20, 1963, folder: “Germany, Erhard Visit – 12/63 [1 of 3].”
\textsuperscript{108}[Defense Minister Kai-Uwe von Hassel] “said that prices are going up, and that the capital market has
himself suggested that the “stability of Germany was at stake.” Thus, the gap between actual and promised payments widened over time with culminating effects. With respect to the 1964 offset agreement, the West German government paid only $267 million of $1.14 billion during the first year the agreement was in effect. The implicit threat behind the offset-troop linkage had little success. In fact, some US government officials worried that stressing this linkage was counterproductive amidst Erhard’s growing unpopularity at home and the emerging “German malaise on offset and NATO issues.”

Towards the latter half of Johnson’s term in office, the balance-of-payment negotiations with West Germany deteriorated. It became increasingly clear that what financial or economic leverage the United States may have still enjoyed over West Germany was rapidly diminishing. Several observations are worth noting. First, the United States had difficulty obtaining a viable (and favorable) outcome at the Trilateral Negotiations with the West Germany and the United Kingdom. US decision-makers encouraged these negotiations out of concern that, because the British had severe difficulties maintaining the value of the Sterling, the United Kingdom would have to withdraw of the BAOR from West Germany. Although this action would save the United Kingdom from further foreign exchange losses, US decision-makers feared that the net effect would lead to an unraveling of the Western

109 Memorandum for the President, September 13, 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [1 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject Files, Box 20, LBJL.

110 United States Information Agency – Office of Policy and Research, “German Malaise over Growing Differences with the US on Offset and NATO Issues,” August 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [1 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject Files, Box 20, LBJL. West German Minister of Foreign Affairs Gerhard Schroeder sought assurances that the US was not contemplating troop withdrawals. See Letter from Schroeder to Rusk, August 9, 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [1 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject Files, Box 20, LBJL. See also “What Does Erhard Get Out of Visit,” September 20, 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [1 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject Files, Box 20, LBJL. The West German press was especially critical of McNamara’s diplomacy towards West Germany. Memorandum for Francis Bator, June 30, 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [1 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject Files, Box 20, LBJL; Memorandum for Robert S. McNamara, June 17, 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [2 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject Files, Box 20, LBJL.

111 Briefing Memorandum for the President, undated, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [2 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject File, Box 20, LBJL. Memorandum for McNamara, July 18, 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [2 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject File, Box 20, LBJL.
alliance and provoke fresh fears of abandonment in West Germany. The Trilateral Negotiations, however, were acrimonious. Even organizing them proved difficult. To avert a diplomatic breakdown, Zimmermann claims, the three countries reached an agreement out of “mutual interest in the preservation of the European security structure and a series of concessions by all sides.” The agreement enabled the United States and the United Kingdom to withdraw 35,000 and 5,000 military personnel, respectively. West Germany eventually agreed to additional offsets when the United States offered greater flexibility in considering the purchasing of US Treasury bonds as meeting its offset needs. Second, the US economy continued to hemorrhage gold, as the Vietnam War and the Great Society program generated new inflationary pressures on US prices. It was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the peg of $35 US dollars to an ounce of gold. Third, Erhard’s political position weakened in the face of the looming budget crunch facing his government. In fact, the Erhard government collapsed one week into the negotiations, and a disastrous visit to the United States to meet with Johnson further damaged Erhard’s prospects for reviving his political fortunes in 1967. As a result, German Gaullists, who did not share Erhard’s Atlanticist orientation, were able to gain politically, further complicating any renewed effort at negotiating offsets. Offset negotiations still took place after these events, but the difficulties associated with these experiences led future US decision-makers such as Nixon and Kissinger to abandon such an aggressive strategy and adopt a more congenial attitude towards West Germany.

The US experience with negotiating West German offsets seems to fly in the face of an important observation made by Albert O. Hirschman. He argues that being the beneficiary

112 Telegram from Bonn to Rusk, September 8, 1966, folder: “Offset (US/UK/FRG) [3 of 3],” Papers of Francis M. Bator, Subject File, Box 20, LBJL.
113 Zimmermann (2000, 235).
114 Duffield (1995, 185-187) observes that West Germany offered to narrow the offset gap with the British upon recognizing that possible British withdrawal would have precipitated greater cuts to US conventional forces.
116 Ibid., 190.
of an unequal economic exchange should make a state more dependent on the bilateral relationship than its disadvantaged partner. According to this view, because it received major inflows of US dollars and gold, West Germany was economically dependent on the United States. Therefore, it should have been more compliant with US demands to provide ‘offshore’ payments. Though true, West Germany’s status as a front-line state in Cold War Europe inoculated the country against the effects of unequal exchange that Hirschman postulated. US decision-makers might have threatened to pull out of West Germany (and Europe), stoking fears of abandonment in so doing. Yet concerns over German neutralism and nuclearization in the face of a significant land-based Soviet threat also meant that withdrawal would have been politically difficult to achieve (though not necessarily incredible). Thanks to its unique circumstances, West Germany was not at the economic mercy of its US patron – something which US negotiators began to appreciate over the course of the 1960s.

4.5 A West German Reversal: Ostpolitik and Nuclear Weapons Renunciation

Absent favorable circumstances for the patron to compel an end of its ally’s nuclear behavior, the ultimate decision to renounce nuclear weapons would reflect the ally’s security interests, independent of the patron’s preferences. How did this ending to West German nuclear behavior come about? Below I argue that the United States (and the Soviet Union) made various concessions to West Germany so as to gain its signature on the NPT. Yet these concessions still did not produce the desired effect. What produced West Germany’s agreement to the NPT was Chancellor Willy Brandt’s desire to reinforce Ostpolitik.

\footnote{Hirschman (1945).}
Soviet-American Agreement on a Counterproliferation Strategy

To ensure West German nuclear abstention, US decision-makers needed to reconsider their strategies so as to obtain a more practical but still satisfactory arrangement in Europe. The difficulties associated with the MLF and West German offset negotiations exposed the limits of US influence in eliciting cooperative behavior within the alliance. More importantly, for the purposes of this discussion, these efforts did little to assuage concerns over West Germany’s nuclear status. This need to resolve West Germany’s problematic stance towards nuclear weapons became even more urgent following the China’s detonation of an atomic weapon in October 1964.

Apprehensive of the consequences this event had for international stability, Johnson formed a panel to identify potential proliferators and evaluate US counterproliferation strategy. This panel, called the Gilpatric Committee, produced its report in January 1965.\textsuperscript{118} Amongst its policy recommendations, the report asserted that nonproliferation should receive top priority in Johnson’s foreign policy. It also argued that the United States “must acknowledge the importance of participation by the Soviet Union in efforts to stop proliferation.”\textsuperscript{119} Because the report emphasized the need for a global non-diffusion agreement, it advised that any nuclear-sharing arrangement should require non-nuclear participants to pledge not to acquire nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{120} Johnson did not immediately take up the Gilpatric Committee’s suggestions, partly to avoid giving West Germany the impression that a US-Soviet agreement would be made at its expense.\textsuperscript{121} Members of the Gilpatric Committee were split in their views on how to approach the issue of West Germany. The report described that:

\textsuperscript{118}For historical overviews and analyses of the Gilpatric Committee, see Gavin (2004/2005) and Brands (2007).
\textsuperscript{119}Report by the Committee on Nuclear Proliferation, January 21, 1965, FRUS 1964-1968 11: 175.
\textsuperscript{120}British proposals for the ANF suggested that non-nuclear weapons states make similar pledges in order to participate in the arrangement.
\textsuperscript{121}Brands (2007, 102).
“[s]everal of the members of the Committee believe that an MLF/ANF or something like it may be essential if the Germans are to be inhibited from eventually acquiring an independent nuclear capability. Others feel that more modest measures such as increased sharing in nuclear consultation and planning and further exploitation of bilateral arrangements for nuclear weapons systems would suffice to deter the Germans from an independent nuclear course, particularly since the Germans are aware that such a course would be strongly opposed by France and the Soviet Union. In addition, it could be made clear to the Germans that the maintenance of United States forces in Germany would be inconsistent with the independent possession of nuclear weapons by Germany. Others of the Committee, seeing a basic incompatibility between the goal of German reunification and German acquisition of nuclear weapons, feel that greater emphasis should be placed on reunification as a means of shifting German interests away from nuclear weapons toward an objective more consistent with long-term European stability.”

In short, many policy options for dealing with West Germany were available, but members of the Gilpatric Committee were unanimous on the need for a global non-diffusion treaty. Accordingly, by summer 1965, the administration slowly came to adopt a nonproliferation strategy that resembled the prescriptions advanced by the Gilpatric Committee. Enabling this change in policy was in fact the Soviet Union. Similarly alarmed by the prospects of wider nuclear proliferation in East Asia, the Soviet Union eased its rhetoric regarding nuclear-sharing arrangements. The softening of the Soviet position made it possible for the United States to finally disavow MLF. With this quid pro quo, the two major powers converged in their positions regarding the NPT and West Germany.

Johnson still did not want to create the impression that the United States was willing

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to sacrifice West Germany’s security interests so as to obtain Soviet agreement. Such an action risked not only generating new fears of abandonment, but also raising the likelihood of resurgent German military nationalism. Accordingly, West Germany continued to seek new security assurances from the United States. As ‘hardware’ solutions (i.e. nuclear-sharing arrangements) fell out of favor with the United States, a ‘software’ solution that addressed West German concerns was becoming more attractive. The British had already been insisting on the importance of a ‘software’ arrangement that centered on military consultations and nuclear planning involving allies. In 1966, McNamara recommended that consideration of a Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) be given priority in order to answer West German demands for a greater role in nuclear decision-making in NATO.

West Germany accepted this compromise, but participation in the NPG did not completely address the insecurity felt by West German leaders. One concern was that the NPT would adversely affect West Germany’s participation in the NPG.\footnote{The US negotiated the language of Articles I and II of the Treaty so as to protect alliance consultations. Letter from Katzenbach to Clifford, April 10, 1968, National Security Archive: Nuclear Vault, George Washington University, document available online: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb253/index.htm (hereafter Nuclear Vault).} Moreover, as late as January 1968, West German decision-makers expressed unease over recent developments in the US-Soviet discussion of the NPT. At a meeting of the West German National Defense Council, the “atmosphere ... was heavy and despondent.” With his top cabinet officials in attendance, West German Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger complained that the “inflexibility” that characterized existing drafts of the NPT “represented a real danger for [West Germany]’s security interests in the long term.”\footnote{Telegram from the Embassy in Bonn to Dean Rusk, January 23, 1968, Nuclear Vault.} As Brandt explained in a letter to Rusk, greater flexibility would have entailed changes to the “procedural provisions on duration and extension, withdrawal, amendments, and review of the operation of the treaty.”\footnote{Letter from Brandt to Rusk, February 10, 1968, Nuclear Vault.} If the treaty were to embody even more flexibility, Kiesinger asserted, West Germany would find the treaty agreeable and even be amongst the first to sign.\footnote{Telegram from the Embassy in Bonn to Dean Rusk, January 23, 1968, Nuclear Vault.} One reason for this specific demand was
that West German decision-makers were unsure as to the treaty’s significance for West Germany’s civilian nuclear industry. By this time, the West German civilian nuclear industry was amongst the most advanced in the world. Participating in the treaty risked undermining the industry. This concern was justifiable: international monitoring might facilitate industrial espionage and the Soviets could use the treaty as an opportunity to tighten restrictions on the availability of key nuclear materials to countries like West Germany. As a result, West German officials of various partisan inclinations disagreed with international negotiators on what sort of safeguards should apply to their nuclear facilities. They generally preferred EURATOM safeguards, partly because International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards would have enabled Soviet inspectors to collect sensitive information on West German facilities.\textsuperscript{128}

Another reason for West German intransigence is the very geopolitical position that the country found itself in relation to both the United States and the Soviet Union. As one account of the meeting noted:

“... there were important additional concerns, for instance as regards nuclear blackmail: for there was a growing number in the [West German Foreign Office] deeply worried that further Western troop withdrawals were inevitable and that possible safeguards against Soviet pressures should be obtained.”\textsuperscript{129}

In response to these concerns, the United States and the Soviet Union accommodated West Germany on this issue by allowing that EURATOM inspectors would enforce International Atomic and Energy Agency controls. The major powers also agreed that the NPT would be in force for a fixed-term length of twenty-five years rather than lasting indefinitely. The United States addressed other, less important demands put forward by West Germany.

\textsuperscript{128}This issue was also a source of tension in treaty negotiations between the major powers. The Soviets were opposed to inspections on their own facilities whereas the United States sought to make control provisions voluntary for nuclear weapons states. See Schrafstetter and Twigge (2004, 170-171). For primary documents that touch on these debates, see Telegram from the Mission in Geneva to Rusk, November 3, 1967, Nuclear Vault; Memorandum of Conversation, December 16, 1967, Nuclear Vault; and Memorandum of Conversation, January 3, 1968, Nuclear Vault.

\textsuperscript{129}Telegram from the Embassy in Bonn to Dean Rusk, January 23, 1968, Nuclear Vault.
For instance, the United States also accepted (unilaterally) that a federal European force, should one appear, would be permitted to have a nuclear arsenal under the NPT.\textsuperscript{130} Nevertheless, even these additional compromises did not determine West Germany’s signature of the NPT. In view of these concessions, an important question remains: \textit{if the software agreement was then insufficient for NPT agreement, but necessary for settling West German’s role in NATO nuclear decision-making, then what brought about West Germany’s signature and made it credible?}

To address this question it is important to note that a major obstacle for West Germany’s signature was rooted in the West German domestic politics. The NPT had become a source of domestic controversy. Much of the outcry came from Gaullists in both the CDU and the CSU – the two political parties that formed much of the Grand Coalition between 1966 and 1969. Though Gaullism proved to be ideologically flexible, if not promiscuous, it had promoted in the late 1960s a pro-continental vision that emphasized European integration. For West Germany, it meant closer alignment with France rather than the United States.\textsuperscript{131} By proposing to institutionalize a global division of nuclear-haves and nuclear-have-nots, the NPT privileged a small coterie of well-armed states at the behest of emerging powers like Germany. The rhetoric adopted by the Gaullist opponents of the NPT was often passionate, if not disturbingly hyperbolic considering that the Second World War only ended about twenty years before. Politicians like Adenauer, Strauss, and Kiesinger saw the NPT as a “superpower diktat,” “worse than the Morgenthau Plan,” “a Versailles of cosmic dimension,” and “another Yalta.”\textsuperscript{132} These politicians even echoed earlier statements by Erhard and

\textsuperscript{130}Schrafstetter and Twigge (2004, 185).

\textsuperscript{131}As Andrew Moravcsik notes with respect to the French political context, “[d]e Gaulle and Gaullists supported dismemberment of Germany and an ‘Atlantic Community’ in the late 1940s, advocated a ‘federal’ Europe until around 1951, criticized proposals for the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Defense Community and a confederal Europe in the early-1950s, remained relatively silent on European economic integration from 1952 to 1958, proposed a United States-Britain-France triumvirate excluding West Germany in 1958, pressed for the implementation of the Treaty of Rome in 1958, advocated European political cooperation from 1960 to 1962, supported a close bilateral Franco-West German relationship after 1962, and turned to Great Britain in the late 1960s.” Moravcsik (2000b, 58-59). For a brief historical overview of the CDU and the CSU, see Granieri (2009).

\textsuperscript{132}Statements of CDU and CSU officials recorded in Schrafstetter and Twigge (2004, 182-183). By contrast,
others that nuclear discrimination would fuel militarism in West Germany. They alleged that the NPT would produce electoral gains for the neo-nazi National Democratic Party. Regardless as to whether these politicians believed in their own rhetoric, the governing coalition of the CDU/CSU faced internal discord that the NPT exacerbated. Indeed, because CSU leader Strauss had threatened to resign from his post as Finance Minister if West Germany agreed to the NPT, Kiesinger had a domestic incentive to forestall progress on the treaty. Strauss’ resignation would have entailed the collapse of the Grand Coalition. Simply put, so long as this array of political interests within West Germany existed, West Germany’s status with regards to the NPT would remain dubious.

Making Ostpolitik Credible

Yet another cleavage within the governing coalition had implications for West German foreign-policy making. Though the Chancellor was the Christian Democrat Kiesinger, the Vice Chancellor and foreign minister in the Grand Coalition was the former mayor of West Berlin and a member of the center-left SDP: Willy Brandt. Both individuals shared the view that the existing West German policy towards Eastern Europe was unsustainable. Since obtaining sovereignty in 1955, a key pillar of West German foreign policy was the Hallstein Doctrine. This policy stipulated that because West Germany held an exclusive right to govern the German nation, West Germany would not pursue diplomatic relations with countries that recognized East Germany. Brandt had for some time believed that the Hallstein Doctrine needed to be abandoned. Having developed the intellectual basis of the policy as mayor of West Berlin, Brandt saw Neue Ostpolitik (New Eastern Policy) as a means to spur

West German leftists often emphasized that “the moral burden of two world wars on [West Germany’s] conscience was ill-advised to lead international opposition against the treaty.” Quotation recorded in ibid., 189. For how West German society dealt with its role in the Second World War and the Holocaust, see Buruma (1994).

133 Ibid.
135 For an account of the extent to which the West German government sought to deny its East German counterpart any diplomatic recognition, see Gray (2003).
the Cold War blocs to not only peacefully co-exist, but also foster closer cooperation between Eastern Europe and the West.\footnote{136} The means of eliciting such cooperation encompassed the use of “economic, technical, scientific, cultural, and – wherever possible – political contacts with the peoples and states of Eastern Europe.”\footnote{137} It was under Kiesinger’s leadership of the Grand Coalition that Ostpolitik slowly emerged as a guiding principle of West German foreign policy.

Though this early application of Ostpolitik enjoyed some diplomatic success, it was limited as to what it could achieve under Kiesinger’s Chancellorship. After all, it created important contradictions with long-standing West German policy. Aside from drawing skepticism from the CDU/CSU members of the Grand Coalition, the Soviets and their Eastern European satellites saw the Grand Coalition’s practice of Ostpolitik as objectionable. William Glenn Gray nicely captures the Soviet position:

“In Soviet terms, the Federal Republic continued to pursue a revanchist agenda aimed at overturning several elements of the postwar settlement. First, Bonn continued to insist that the final boundaries of the unified German state could only be drawn at a peace conference. Second, the West Germans kept pressing for modifications in the draft of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty to ensure that a joint West European nuclear force would not be prohibited. Third, Kiesinger’s cabinet refused to accept the existence of the GDR or to consider its territory as a foreign country. These issues boiled down to a single overarching question: Was the Federal Republic prepared to accept the status quo in Europe and, in particular, the perpetuation of a weakened, divided Germany? Only on this basis was the Soviet Union prepared to honor Bonn’s new Eastern policy.”\footnote{138}

\footnote{To clarify, Ostpolitik had developed in two stages. The first stage reflected Brandt’s thinking on East-West relations during the 1960s before he was member of the Grand Coalition. The second stage represented a revision of his ideas during the latter half of the 1960s. See Sarotte (2001).}

\footnote{Brandt quoted in Lippert (2005, 45).}

\footnote{Gray (2003, 205).}
In other words, Ostpolitik lacked credibility as a policy that would express West Germany’s good intentions.\textsuperscript{139}

To achieve credibility, according to the Soviet Union, West Germany had to undertake three actions: recognize the Oder-Neisse line as the border between East Germany and Poland, agree to the NPT, and renounce the foreign policy behavior of the Soviet bloc made it politically difficult for the Grand Coalition to implement Ostpolitik. To begin, the East German government imposed new travel restrictions on, and denied access rights, to West Berlin citizens. Soviet leaders reiterated their right to intervene in German affairs by appealing to Articles 53 and 107 of the UN Charter.\textsuperscript{140} Most alarmingly, the Soviets mobilized the Warsaw Pact so as to quash the reform-oriented Prague Spring in neighboring Czechoslovakia in October 1968.\textsuperscript{141} In response to these regional developments and Kiesinger’s (uneven) application of the Ostpolitik, members of the CDU/CSU hardened their conservative positions.\textsuperscript{142} Thus, even with Brandt as Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister, a Grand Coalition that largely comprised the CDU/CSU was unable to properly undertake Ostpolitik.

Breaking this logjam was the accession to power of a coalition government forged between the SPD and the Free Democratic Party following the national elections in late October 1969. Now Chancellor, one of Brandt’s first pledges after the election was to hasten West Germany’s signing of the NPT. On November 28, 1969, West Germany finally signed the treaty.\textsuperscript{143} Also consistent with Ostpolitik, Brandt opened negotiations with the Soviet Union and Poland over recognition of the Oder-Neisse Line several weeks later.\textsuperscript{144} To be sure, this change in

\textsuperscript{139}Krell (1991, 318-320) draws the same conclusion regarding the inconsistency characterizing the Grand Coalition’s implementation of Ostpolitik.

\textsuperscript{140}An artifact of the immediate postwar period, these articles gave the right of victor states to intervene in the domestic affairs of their defeated adversaries. Gray (2003, 206).

\textsuperscript{141}For an account of Brandt’s handling of the Prague Spring, see Schoenborn (2008).

\textsuperscript{142}Gray (2003, 206).

\textsuperscript{143}The Nixon administration generally stood aloof as this process unfolded. Indeed, one document argues that progress was finally achieved because an “absence of pressure ... has substantially decreased emotional resistance in Germany.” Memorandum from Eliot to Kissinger, October 29, 1969, FRUS 1969-1976 E-2: 2. This statement might be self-congratulatory, but Nixon and Kissinger both felt that previous Administrations inappropriately exerted diplomatic pressure on West Germany. For a discussion on Nixon and Kissinger’s views on nuclear proliferation, see Gavin (2008).

\textsuperscript{144}Sarotte (2001, 27) mentions in passing that signing the NPT was to signal Brandt’s peaceful intentions
the West German démarche on these issues was not so precipitous as the chronology might suggest. Kiesinger had made progress towards defining West Germany’s position on the NPT throughout 1969, with Brandt and his Soviet interlocutors addressing such outstanding issues as the non-use of force in Central-Eastern Europe and Soviet rhetoric over Articles 53 and 107. Still, Kiesinger could only achieve so much. He even acknowledged this reality when he told US President Richard Nixon that “[t]he NPT situation is still difficult; there is division in my country and in my party, but we now should be discussing it on a higher level.”

Without having to contend with CDU/CSU dissent, Brandt was in a stronger position to implement his vision of Ostpolitik. He did, and the improvement of East-West relations seen during his Chancellorship solidified détente in Europe following the signing of the 1970 Moscow and Warsaw Treaties as well as the Basic Law Treaty in 1972.

The benefits of Ostpolitik were not automatic in 1969. Many contemporary decision-makers were unsure of how to interpret Brandt’s foreign policy. Mary Elise Sarotte documents how Soviet leaders remained skeptical of West German intentions as of December 1969. Even West Germany’s NATO allies had their own reservations. Nixon and Kissinger were both wary of Brandt. Kissinger feared two very different outcomes were possible: one in which German reunification would be made impossible and another in which German reunification would be possible but with the result being an independent Germany that could behave much in the same way as post-Rapallo Germany had during the interwar period.


Brandt recognized the hindrance that Kiesinger’s own party posed to the signing of the NPT. Memorandum of Conversation, April 9, 1969, FRUS 1969-1976 E-2: 1. As late as January 1969 did some US government officials still express uncertainty over West Germany’s status regarding the NPT and nuclear weapons. One member of the NSC wrote: “[i]n my view, the problems with the FRG are understated. In the first place, German reservations are not due only to reluctance to surrender a future nuclear option but to a more general uneasiness regrading the FRG’s position in the world and US attitudes.” Memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, January 27, 1969, FRUS 1969-1976 E-2: 1.

147 Sarotte (2001) provides an account of the complex negotiations that produced these agreements.

148 ibid., 28-29.

149 Kissinger (1979, 409-411).
The French were worried because they preferred to see Germany divided rather than re-united. Georges-Henri Soutou claims that French President Georges Pompidou feared that intra-German reconciliation could in the future lead to US troop withdrawals from Europe and a German-Soviet accord.\textsuperscript{150} Still, Brandt did not believe that \textit{Ostpolitik} was anti-NATO. To the contrary, he thought that the affirmation of alliance ties was necessary for \textit{Ostpolitik} and détente to flourish.\textsuperscript{151} What these observations suggest is that when West Germany did finally renounce nuclear weapons, it did so in a way of its own choosing that departed from the larger interests of its patron and continental allies.

### 4.6 Summary and Alternative Arguments

This chapter so far has advanced evidence that accords with my argument. I have shown that fears of US abandonment – made salient by proposed changes to United States forward deployments in line with the New Look – prompted West German leaders to move towards nuclear weapons acquisition. Even when de Gaulle halted their initial efforts at pursuit, West German leaders deliberately refrained from clarifying their country’s stance towards nuclear weapons acquisition. Anxious that a nuclear-armed West Germany was possible, the United States sought to resolve West German nuclear ambiguity. Yet US efforts faced serious challenges. First, dynamics within a broad alliance like NATO thwarted attempts to advance an institutional solution like a nuclear-sharing arrangement (i.e. MLF). Second, the United States need to obtain (and sustain) West German offset payments highlighted the limits of US economic leverage. West Germany did eventually back down, but with the intention to demonstrate the sincerity of \textit{Ostpolitik} and only after receiving concessions from the United States and the Soviet Union. Signing onto the NPT was part of a larger bundle of policies that were independent of US preferences. That is, the terms of nuclear renunciation

\textsuperscript{150}The possibility of neutral, nuclear-armed Germany also figured into Pompidou’s fears. See Soutou (1996, 319).

\textsuperscript{151}Sarotte (2001, 35-36)
ended up being closer to West Germany’s interests than those of the United States.

In this chapter, I will assess the validity of alternative arguments, beginning first with threat-centered explanations before addressing domestic politics explanations. These alternative hypotheses are general, yet it is also worth noting how my reading of the West German case departs from Marc Trachtenberg’s description of the ‘German problem’ in his major book *A Constructed Peace*. Table 3 summarizes the main findings.

**Balance-of-Threat Theory**

Fears of abandonment would have not existed if there were no external threat, but it is still plausible that adversarial threat – irrespective of the patron’s own conduct – is sufficient to explain the pattern of nuclear behavior. An extension of this view would posit that Adenauer would have found the Soviet threat so alarming that he would have wanted to engage in nuclear behavior regardless of changes in the US strategic posture. West German nuclear behavior would largely be a function of West German decision-makers’ assessments of Soviet intentions.

Objectively, the arc of Soviet behavior during the 1950s started as militarily hardline, proceeded to be accommodationist, and then ended the decade with aggressive brinkmanship. The Soviet Union detonated its first nuclear weapon in 1949, thereby beginning the process of erosion in the US unconventional military advantage.\(^{152}\) Tensions continued between the two rival powers so long as Stalin lived. When he died in 1953, these tensions eased. In fact, shortly after becoming First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev began issuing orders for the military to partially demobilize. Before postponing them during the first phase of the Berlin Crisis, Khrushchev wanted these unilateral troop reductions to signal his interest to US decision-makers in demilitarizing and denuclearizing Central-Eastern Europe.\(^{153}\) Such gestures might have signified the so-called

\(^{152}\)Trachtenberg (1988) recounts how US decision-makers and strategists approached this issue.

\(^{153}\)Evangelista (1997) describes the motivation, the implementation, and the response to Khrushchev’s
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Predictions for Onset</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alliance Compensation Theory:</strong> Onset</td>
<td>West Germany is sensitive to the reduced significance accorded by New Look to conventional military deployments.</td>
<td>High. New Look provoked West German decision-makers following indications that the US military would drastically cut its manpower. Ambiguity of flexible response failed to resolve US commitment problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alliance Compensation Theory:</strong> Termination</td>
<td>French outside option and strong balance-of-payments position entails ineffective and prolonged counter-proliferation effort</td>
<td>High. United States had limited economic leverage over West Germany thanks to the balance-of-payments issue. Multilateral solutions such as MLF failed to elicit wide support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance-of-Threat Theory</strong></td>
<td>West Germany would begin and terminate their nuclear behavior as a function of the direct military threat posed by the Soviet Union.</td>
<td>Low. Soviet threat was a response to the risks of West German nuclear proliferation. NPT signing was to reassure Eastern bloc members of West German intentions behind Ostpolitik.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (1): Onset</strong></td>
<td>Gaullist or continentally-minded West German leaders should be more likely to engage in nuclear weapons.</td>
<td>Low. The trilateral nuclear initiative was a secret. Accession of Strauss to Atomic Affairs post was politically expedient, but Strauss’ defense policy ideas already resonated with Adenauer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (1): Termination</strong></td>
<td>Ascendance of more economically-liberal or left-of-center ruling political coalitions lead to an end of nuclear behavior</td>
<td>Mixed. Erhard was friendly to the United States but unable to make binding commitments. The elevation of the SPD overcame the problems of the Grand Coalition to sign the NPT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (2)</strong></td>
<td>The West German public is becoming increasingly anti-militarist, so its leaders should turn away from nuclear weapons.</td>
<td>Low. West German leaders, particularly of the CDU/CSU, used incisive rhetoric to protest the NPT.</td>
</tr>
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Table 4.3: Summary of empirical support for each systematic argument.
Khrushchev thaw, but tensions ultimately flared up again. In 1956, the Soviet Union undertook troop maneuvers on its borders with Poland, an action intended to intimidate the burgeoning reform movement in that country. The Soviet Union also violently suppressed the Hungarian Revolution in October 1956. Around this time, too, the Soviet Union was hardening its position on German reunification. Furthermore, it was enhancing its own nuclear weapons capability by steadily improving the destructive yield of its weapons and acquiring intercontinental delivery systems. The Soviet Union, in other words, was becoming more capable in launching a devastating attack on West Germany and, by extension, using nuclear blackmail to extract concessions. Its foreign policy behavior, from late 1956 onwards, reflected a greater willingness to use force in order to advance political objectives.

Adenauer had an acute sense of the Soviet threat. He found the Soviet Union a menace towards Western Christianity and Enlightenment values. Writing to an American friend in 1946, Adenauer remarked that:

"[t]he danger is grave. Asia stands at the river Elbe. Only an economically and politically healthy Europe under the guidance of England and France, a Western Europe to which as an essential part the free part of Germany belongs, can stop further advancement of Asian ideology and power."

North Korea’s invasion of the South reinforced this view. It signaled that the Soviet Union was very willing to use force to pursue expansionary goals. However, as much as historians generally concede that he used the ‘Soviet bogey’ to extract concessions from allies, they are divided as to how to measure Adenauer’s actual threat perceptions. Though fearful of the spread of communism, he recognized the weakness of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis troop reductions. I discuss Soviet alliance dynamics in Chapter Eight.

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154 On the post-Stalin lull, see Zubok and Pleshakov (1996).
155 Schwarz (1997, 189).
156 For a discussion of Soviet nuclear delivery systems during the 1950s, see Zaloga (1993).
158 Critchfield (2003, 131-150).
159 Large (1996, 53).
vis the Western alliance. The West German diplomat Herbert Blankenhorn noted in 1952 that Adenauer felt that the Soviet Union was internally weak due to relatively low living standards. Consequently, it had powerful incentives not to pursue western expansion.\textsuperscript{160}

Most tellingly, Adenauer saw the Soviet threat as a function of US protection. in a March 1953 meeting with his political party’s national executive, he noted that:

“all our hopes and our salvation itself rest in American policies maintaining a constant course, and that Soviet Russia is aware that if it did anything, it would have the full force of American power at its throat.”\textsuperscript{161}

According to official Adenauer biographer Hans-Peter Schwarz, the Chancellor “staked everything on the United States.”\textsuperscript{162} Soviet actions in the early 1950s did not shake these beliefs. Though concerned by the Red Army’s suppression of revolts in East Berlin and East Germany in 1953, he still believed that the Soviet Union was vulnerable. Ensuring this vulnerability was its “encirclement” by the United States, its allies, and even China.\textsuperscript{163} Adenauer continued holding these views despite other Soviet assertions of force in the Eastern Bloc. Georges-Henri Soutou asserts that Adenauer saw the Soviets as weak because of their resort to violence in quashing the Hungarian Revolution.\textsuperscript{164} So long as the United States provided sufficient protection against Soviet aggression, West Germany remained relatively safe from harm.

It was when US credibility was straining that Adenauer’s sense of threat grew. Although he felt that Soviet actions in Hungary demonstrated weakness, he started to believe that his allies were lacking resolve – a necessary if not sufficient condition for ‘encircling’ the Soviet Union. The French and British appeared too keen on improving diplomatic relations with

\textsuperscript{160}Relevant Blankenhorn and Adenauer statements found in Schwarz (1997, 9-10).
\textsuperscript{161}Adenauer quoted in ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{162}Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{163}Schwarz writes that Khrushchev privately asked the Chancellor for assistance on dealing with the Chinese. Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{164}Soutou (1993, 2).
the Soviet Union, promoting disarmament in Europe, and seeking to share the burden of their defense spending – initiatives that all came at West Germany’s expense. The United States, too, seemed to waver between containment and rapprochement.\textsuperscript{165} Despite the Soviet Union becoming increasingly unable to expand westward, as indicated by its inability to render satellite populations into submission, Adenauer was mostly vexed by the possibility of US abandonment. In a letter written in the fall of 1956, he wrote that “there can hardly be any doubt that in three, at the latest four years, American troops will have left Germany, even the whole of Europe. All good observers of US policies share this opinion.”\textsuperscript{166} Simply put, the personal assessments of Adenauer’s that saw the most change were those regarding US commitment rather than the Soviet threat. The Soviet threat might have been necessary for Adenauer to consider nuclear behavior as a valid policy option. It was not a sufficient condition.

Ironically, relations between West Germany and the Soviet Union were improving in the years before 1958. In 1955, the two countries restored diplomatic relations and Adenauer even obtained a modest agreement with Khrushchev to return the German prisoners-of-war that had remained in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{167} It was in 1958 that diplomatic tensions suddenly flared up when Khrushchev issued his first ultimatum regarding the status of Berlin. In November 1958, Khrushchev declared that the Western powers should withdraw from Berlin within six months so as to make the city free and demilitarized. He also announced that East Germany would acquire control over all lines of communication with West Berlin, requiring the Western powers to negotiate with a state they had not yet recognized. Khrushchev eventually cancelled the deadline, but the controversy over the occupational status of Berlin lingered. Marc Trachtenberg argues forcefully that Khrushchev began the crisis not to bolster a weakening East Germany but in response to his apprehensions of a West Germany that

\textsuperscript{165}Schwarz (1997, 192-193).
\textsuperscript{166}Ibid., 256.
\textsuperscript{167}Gray (2003, 95).
could have access to nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{168} Soviet hostility was a response to West German nuclear behavior rather than its cause.

The Soviet threat persisted into the 1960s so as to reduce any incentives for West Germany to articulate a credible anti-nuclear stance. The Soviet Union issued another ultimatum in June 1961 at the Vienna Summit when Khrushchev indicated to Kennedy that he would sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany unless Western armed forces left Berlin. The Berlin Crisis ended with the erection of a wall dividing between the two zones of occupation. Nevertheless, Khrushchev continued to practice nuclear brinkmanship when he placed nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba, sparking a tense nuclear stand-off between the rival major powers.\textsuperscript{169} This onslaught of crisis behavior eventually ceased and the Soviet politburo replaced Khrushchev with Leonid Brezhnev.

Some historians credit Brezhnev’s conciliatory personality as being integral for the emergence of détente.\textsuperscript{170} Yet, as we will see below, Brezhnev’s emergence as Soviet leader did not immediately produce a significantly improved relationship with the United States. Though lacking in his predecessor’s histrionics and predilection for nuclear brinkmanship, Brezhnev reversed some of Khrushchev’s liberalizing reforms and remained harshly critical regarding the United States on such issues as Vietnam and the MLF. He also undertook a series of provocative actions that directly affected West Germany’s security, such as asserting the right to intervene directly in West German domestic affairs and directing the Warsaw Pact to quash the Prague Spring in nearby Czechoslovakia. These two actions occurred just as the Grand Coalition under Kiesinger and Brandt was attempting to implement Ostpolitik, deepening disagreements amongst West German politicians over how best to respond to Soviet hostility. Once the Grand Coalition collapsed the Willy Brandt-led SPD was able to advance its own particular vision towards East-West relations. By implementing Ostpolitik

\textsuperscript{168}Trachtenberg (1991) and Trachtenberg (1999).
\textsuperscript{169}Fursenko and Naftali (1998) argue that both sides felt that their crisis behavior in the Cuban Missile Crisis would have affected their bargaining position over Berlin.
\textsuperscript{170}Zubok (2007).
(and signing onto the NPT) East-West relations on the continent improved. In the words of William Glenn Gray, “détente in the 1960s had skirted the German Question; détente in the 1970s achieved precisely because of agreements on Germany.”

In sum, tensions with the Soviet Union was more a function of West Germany’s stance towards nuclear weapons, not vice versa as the alternative hypothesis would have it. The Berlin Crisis likely took place as a result of Khrushchev’s worries regarding West Germany. The negotiations between the two Germanies that produced a European détente followed Brandt’s disavowal of nuclear weapons with his NPT signature. For an alternative hypothesis to have more compelling and more unambiguous empirical support, West Germany should have moved towards nuclear weapons after Khrushchev began dabbling in nuclear brinkmanship over Berlin. It should have moved away from nuclear weapons acquisition once relations with the East Germany had already improved. Of course, the persistence of the Soviet threat during the 1960s (whatever its cause) was an incentive for West Germany to remain ambiguous over its stance towards nuclear weapons for as long as it did. Yet, on this issue regarding the duration of West German nuclear behavior, the United States also bears some responsibility. Confusion within the Johnson administration, for example, extended the MLF’s lifespan beyond the wishes of many non-West German decision-makers, including Johnson himself. Nevertheless, this error in US foreign policy was itself a function of the complexity of having to deal with such a state as West Germany, its possible nuclear ambitions, and a sophisticated alliance like NATO.

**Domestic Politics Explanations**

The above description of West German coalition politics and the rise of the SPD suggests that domestic politics explanations are valid. These explanations can take two forms. One focuses on the role of preferences (i.e. interests) and how these preferences are distributed amongst

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171Gray (2003, 229).
members of a ruling coalition. Another centers on the prevailing norms or attitudes that characterizes a society, alleging that public opinion can decisively shape decision-making.

Adenauer dominated West German foreign policy during the 1950s, but his foreign policy behavior lacked a stable ideological foundation despite his professed Atlanticism. As Ronald Granieri observes, “[c]omparing Adenauer’s comments at different moments, the reader is faced with a paradox. How could the same man at one time sound like a committed Atlanticist and at another like a Gaullist?” The German chancellor saw US protection as essential for containing the Soviet Union and bolstering West German security. Yet, when news of the Radford Plan appeared to confirm the Eisenhower administration’s commitment to the New Look, he reached out to European allies so as to develop nuclear weapons and advance core West German security interests.

A more compelling variant of the domestic politics explanation is that he needed to demonstrate to voters that he was taking adequate measures to bolster their country’s security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Accordingly, he needed to show that his Atlanticism was the best strategy. Keen on maintaining the political standing of his party, the CDU, he staked his own political capital on West Germany’s alliance with the United States. And indeed, a divisive issue for the CDU – and in West German politics, more generally – centered on rearmament and whether West Germany should reunite with the East but become politically neutral. Adenauer sought rearmament and refused to countenance neutrality so to encourage German reunification. Domestically, one focal point for these debates was the Bundeswehr. Specifically, its rate of rearmament and force structure were sources of controversy. Adenauer wanted the Bundeswehr, established in 1955, to make speedy progress. Unfortunately for Adenauer, the Bundestag rejected voluntary force legislation that he personally endorsed. As his initiatives for the Bundeswehr floundered, opinion polls showed flagging support for Adenauer, dropping from fifty-six percent in January 1956 to forty-percent by May and pro-

\[^{172}\text{Granieri (2004, 3).}\]
voking him to reshuffle his cabinet in advance of the 1967 elections. Did Adenauer intend to use nuclear behavior in order to restore political support?

The answer must be negative. To begin, Adenauer had pursued a series of unpopular foreign policies during the 1950s. This tendency was especially evident when he rejected the Stalin Note of 1952 in which the Soviet Union offered the prospect of German reunification in exchange for neutralization. One survey showed that a neutral political alignment became increasingly popular amongst voters. Due to growing distrust over nuclear weapons and rearmament, as described by Thomas Berger and Peter Katzenstein, it is not clear how engaging in nuclear behavior would have enhanced Adenauer’s domestic prestige during the 1950s. Respondents of one opinion survey were split over the desirability of the Bundeswehr, for example. Indeed, the secrecy and ambiguity that characterized the Colomb-Bréchal Pact points to an apprehension Adenauer and his French and Italian counterparts might have experienced over the agreement’s effects on their own domestic political standing. This observation also casts doubt on norms-centered explanations because the emergence of anti-militarist norms in West German society did not forestall or curb West German nuclear behavior.

I have indicated that Adenauer’s promotion of his Minister of Atomic Affairs to be the Minister of Defense reflected the Chancellor’s greater interest in nuclear weapons. Some might argue that this promotion was politically expedient for Adenauer. That is, granting a more prominent role to Strauss would have allowed Adenauer to forego a grand coalition. Though true, Adenauer was also frustrated with the incumbent Minister of Defense’s inability to implement a coherent and effective national strategy. Moreover, Adenauer was attuned to Strauss’ own ideas regarding West German force planning. As biographer Schwarz notes:

174 Granieri (2004, 74). For more on Adenauer’s reaction to the Stalin Note, see ibid. 53-56.
175 Almost two-thirds of respondents supported neutral alignment. Survey reported in Berger (1998, 68).
177 It is plausible that they feared the effects of international disclosure as well.
“Strauss, and with him Adenauer, got away with the idea of a smaller ‘quality army’, because a similar trend had become quite clear in the United States two months beforehand, during the discussion on the Radford Plans, which would reduce conventional forces in Europe and instead arm them with tactical nuclear weapons. Strauss wanted this. Adenauer wanted this. Accordingly, the new Defense Minister demanded at the meeting of the NATO Council in December that NATO units must be armed with nuclear weapons at division level. It was, then, not just Strauss who was convinced the necessity of arming the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons. Adenauer also wanted it.”179

Note that this observation of what Adenauer wanted does not imply that he believed in the credibility of US alliance support. What bears noting is that Adenauer certainly derived a domestic benefit by elevating a politician whom he personally distrusted. Some readers might interpret the historic role of Strauss as a pivot player in West German politics. According to this line of argument, his status as the leader of the CDU’s junior partner tilted the West German government’s position closer to one that desired nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, Strauss was important precisely because his ideas resonated well with other decision-makers, not the least of whom was Adenauer. He held a strategic vision that Adenauer came to accept as appropriate for advancing West Germany’s Cold War interests.

The Chancellor did not always reign supreme in the making of West Germany foreign policy. The Bundestag restrained the efforts of Adenauer and CSU leader (and Minister of Foreign Affairs) Franz Josef Strauss for stronger Europeanist ties in the early 1960s. When West Germany signed the Elysée Treaty in 1963 under their leadership, the Bundestag added a provision affirming the importance of West Germany’s ties to the United states so as to repudiate the treaty’s Gaullism.180 Erhard may have asserted the role of the chancellor in foreign policy during his tenure, but his successor Kiesinger had to share responsibility with

179 Ibid., 219.
180 Gray (2003, 141).
Brandt during the Grand Coalition. That the CDU/CSU required the partnership of the SPD for the Grand Coalition to survive meant that West German foreign policy was, as we seen, incoherent. As the experience of the Grand Coalition and the Bundestag’s handling of the Elysée Treaty make clear, domestic politics did at times inhibit the freedom of maneuver that West German decision-makers sometimes.

Recognizing that these domestic inhibitions existed, it would seem that domestic politics explanations at first glance appear to be quite compelling for understanding why West Germany terminated its bout of nuclear behavior when it did. The diplomatic tilt towards the NPT’s signature reflected the gradual coming to power of the left-of-center SPD and its leader Willy Brandt. So long as the CDU/CSU were in power, in other words, West German nuclear behavior would have ended differently because that bloc consisted of politicians – the CDU/CSU bloc – consisted of politicians that were most suspicious of Ostpolitik, Soviet intentions, and the reliability of the United States. One may even go further and claim that threat perceptions were endogenous to the preferences of political groups and their leaders.181

Yet this line of reasoning is also problematic. Certainly, domestic politics played an important role in forestalling any settlement of the ‘German problem’ during the Grand Coalition, but such an explanation for the general pattern of West German ambiguous posturing is inadequate for the following reason. In the early 1960s, bipartisan agreement existed on both the desirability of West Germany’s participation in the MLF and unreliability of the United States. The CDU’s Adenauer and the SPD’s Brandt expressed support for the MLF. Indeed, during the late 1950s, the SPD changed its ideological platform with the Godesborg Program and showed greater support to the United States as well as European integration.182

Although the SPD had an anti-nuclear stance, Brandt suggested in his election campaign in 1960 that “as chancellor, he might override party policy and allow tactical, albeit no strategic, nuclear weapons for the German army.”183 Brandt also came to the belief during

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181 Haas (2005).
182 Marcussen et al. (1999).
183 Lippert (2005, 22).
the Berlin Crisis that the United States was an unreliable ally. The lack of distinction we observe here in the positions of these parties and these leaders over these issues suggests that both parties were reacting to external developments rather than being motivated from pre-strategic preferences on how to conduct West German foreign policy. Of course, the counterfactual of what the SPD would have done had it been in power in the early 1960s is difficult to determine, but divergence in the underlying preferences of the two parties on these issues only began to emerge in the late 1960s. Although I agree that the accession of Brandt and the SPD to power in 1969 were critical for West Germany’s signature to the NPT, the domestic politics factor does not satisfactorily account for the length of time West Germany engaged in varying forms of nuclear behavior.

Resolving West German Ambiguity in 1963: A Constructed Peace?

In *A Constructed Peace*, Trachtenberg argues that the basis of an enduring European settlement between the United States and the Soviet Union emerged in the early 1950s. Unfortunately, tensions and nuclear brinkmanship ended up characterizing the next decade in East-West relations, culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis. According to Trachtenberg, what forestalled the actual development of a durable settlement were policy gestures undertaken by the Eisenhower administration to reduce its European conventional military presence and rely more on nuclear deterrence. Because one implication of this policy was the nuclearization of US allies, the Soviets were concerned that West Germany would gain access to nuclear weapons. These concerns had international significance: the threat posed by a possibly militarizing West Germany encouraged Soviet leaders to provoke the Berlin and Cuban Missile Crises. In light of these dangers, the US and the Soviet Union finally agreed to a détente that was premised on three pillars: the “general respect for the status quo in Central Europe,” “the non-nuclear status of ... Germany,” and an “American military presence on German soil.”

\[184\] Trachtenberg (1999, 399, 402).
The implication of Trachtenberg’s analysis is that each of these issues were resolved towards the end of Kennedy’s presidency. Though Trachtenberg’s study is a monumental achievement in Cold War history and qualitative analysis, my findings cast doubt on whether such a “constructed peace” really took hold in Central Europe in 1963. I agree that the three pillars that Trachtenberg identifies were essential for any European détente. I also agree that US choices in its strategic posture in the 1950s encouraged nuclear proliferation in Western Europe and that the Cold War entered a new phase following the Cuban Missile Crisis. During the remainder of Kennedy’s presidency, the US and the Soviet Union signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty (and obliged the West Germans to do the same). The Kennedy administration even reached out to Khrushchev to suggest a joint strike against the Chinese nuclear program.\textsuperscript{185} These observations notwithstanding, it is debatable whether the three conditions were truly in place by late 1963. At least four reasons exist to doubt this critical aspect of Trachtenberg’s argument.

First, both major powers experienced abrupt leadership changes between 1963 and 1964 with Kennedy’s assassination and Khrushchev’s sudden ouster by the Soviet politburo. Any tacit agreement struck between these two leaders was thus susceptible to renegotiation (if not reneging) by their successors. Indeed, one reason for Khrushchev’s ouster was the politburo’s dissatisfaction with his foreign policy. On the one hand, his willingness to engage in nuclear brinkmanship alienated other major communist officials and military leaders in the Soviet bloc. On the other hand, talk of rapprochement with both the United States and Western Europe was inconsistent with the longstanding Soviet goal of ‘dividing the capitalist camp.’\textsuperscript{186} In light of these reasons for Khrushchev’s departure, his successor Brezhnev had incentive to pursue a hardline stance towards the United States – an incentive that appears to have encouraged him to intensify the Soviet Union’s opposition to the MLF. As for Johnson, he was certainly inclined to continue the policies undertaken by his predecessor, but he soon


\textsuperscript{186}For a discussion on the international factors of Khrushchev’s dismissal, see du Quenoy (2003). For more on ‘wedge’ strategies, see Crawford (2011).
clashed diplomatically with the Soviets over Vietnam. Although Brezhnev was interested in improving relations with the Western alliance, he also felt bound to provide military assistance to North Vietnam in a show of communist solidarity. In 1965, the United States rankled the Soviet Union by undertaking bombing campaigns in North Vietnam (during Premier Alexei Kosygin’s visit no less) and an intervention in Dominican Republic. Vladislav Zubok finds that Soviet decision-makers contemplated countermeasures against the United States, with the defense minister even proposing that “we should be ready to strike on West Berlin.”

The departures of Kennedy and Khrushchev – the authors of the constructed peace – and the emergence of new leaders in Johnson and Brezhnev created new occasions for discord.

Second, the United States might have agreed with the Soviet Union on the value of preserving “the non-nuclear status of ... Germany,” but it had a different view as to which policies could achieve such an objective. The MLF was explicitly intended to bind West Germany more firmly to NATO and lower its incentives to acquire nuclear weapons by it a greater role in nuclear decision-making. Yet the Soviet Union (after 1963) and its satellites regarded this proposal as a provocative measure that risked reinvigorating West German militarism. The lack of agreement on which measures were appropriate created tensions between the two major powers that persisted throughout Johnson’s term in office. In fact, as late as 1969 did Soviet leaders contemplate strategies to loosen West Germany’s ties with NATO so as to neutralize it.

Third, although Kennedy ultimately decided against troop withdrawals from Europe, his successor reopened debate on this issue. When negotiations over offsets with the West Ger-

\[187\text{Zubok (2007, 198-199). Defense minister quoted in } \text{Ibid., 199.}\]

\[188\text{To be sure, due to the constraints exerted by international and domestic factors, the East-West conflict cannot be reduced to the personalities and predilections of individual leaders. Still, the abrupt departures of both Khrushchev and Kennedy meant that neither had the time to institutionalize any sort of agreement struck between them.}\]

\[189\text{For an additional documentary source, see Message from the Soviet Government to President Johnson, February 1, 1965, FRUS 14: 229-230.}\]

\[190\text{Sarotte (2001, 70).}\]
mans were proving difficult, Johnson tried to manipulate West German fears of withdrawal in order to gain favorable West German pledges of support. If the United States were so committed to some form of agreement with the Soviet Union on preserving a troop presence in West Germany, why would it moot policies that blatantly contradicted such pledges?

Fourth, the documentary record suggests that US decision-makers did not see anything resembling a ‘constructed peace’ as characterizing East-West relations. A telling piece of evidence that directly challenges Trachtenberg’s claim is a briefing paper prepared for Johnson in December 1968 ahead of a visit by Erhard. Within the space of two short paragraph, this document addresses each of the foregoing three conditions that Trachtenberg identifies:

“1. There is no ‘detente’ between US and Soviet Union. But US will continue to search for ways to reduce tensions.

2. US is studying question of observation posts in preparation for further NATO consultation. Our position will be determined in light of those consultations. We are mindful of [West German] views on observation posts and will wish to consult further on this. We will not accept Soviet linking of observation posts with troop reductions or ‘denuclearization’ in Germany.”\(^{191}\)

US decision-makers were still wary of Soviet efforts to use observation posts as a means to extract concessions on Germany’s status and the US military presence. They were reluctant to encourage discussion on these issues as bargaining chips in East-West negotiations. To be sure, a possible interpretation of this document is that its intention was to reassure West Germany of US support. Yet other documents show that US government officials did not believe that a ‘constructed peace’ was present. Dean Rusk claimed to his interlocutors in the EEC that “it would be incorrect to refer to the situation as one of detente.”\(^{192}\) Consistent


\(^{192}\)The full quote from the memorandum is as follows: [i]t would be incorrect to refer to the situation as one of detente. A new sobriety had been introduced into the East-West relations due to an awareness of the terrible dangers of nuclear war. This new sobriety was one result of the Cuban affair. Southeast Asia.
with this stated view, a simple search on the Department of State’s Office of the Historian’s website demonstrates that most uses of the word ‘détente’ (or ‘detente’) do not appear in the documentary record until 1967.

These four points together suggest that it would be a mistake to argue that the ‘German question’ – that is, the nuclear status of West Germany – was finally resolved in 1963. If that view were to be correct, it would still have trouble explaining why such issues as the MLF, the NPT, West German nuclear intentions, and the US military presence in Europe continued to be major sources of controversy and debate throughout the 1960s. As much as both US and Soviet decision-makers sought to improve relations in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it would be an exaggeration to label 1963 as the beginning of détente. Neither side understood this phase of the Cold War as such at the time, especially given how so many issues integral to the European settlement remained unresolved.

Moving Forward

Mostly land-locked and having to directly face massive Soviet conventional military power, West Germany had much at stake in the protection offered by the United States. Far from being a vassal to US foreign policy, West German leaders manipulated the threat of nuclear proliferation so as to advance their understandings of West German foreign policy interests at the expense of the rival major powers. In the next chapter, the focus shifts to East Asia where Japan – another state sometimes depicted as overly subordinate to the United States – confronted a dramatically different strategic environment.¹⁹³

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¹⁹³Mearsheimer (2001, 382) calls Japan (and [West] Germany) as “semi-sovereign.”
Addendum: London Calling, Paris Leaving: British and French Nuclear Experiences

Chapter Four examined why West Germany began moving towards, and eventually pulled away from, nuclear weapons acquisition. To discourage West German nuclear ambitions, the United States advocated an institutional upgrade that would see NATO formalize a nuclear-sharing arrangement (that is, the MLF) under its aegis. Yet the MLF would have had implications for the independent nuclear deterrents of two other Western European countries, the United Kingdom and France.

I have already highlighted several reasons for their opposition to the MLF, yet a fuller account of why the United States was unable to reduce those countries nuclear independence is desirable. After all, the main cases under review here – West Germany, Japan, and South Korea – exhibit variation on the length of the nuclear behavior. They do not exhibit variation insofar as each of these three countries ultimately decided against nuclear weapons. By contrast, the United Kingdom and France have retained their nuclear capability to this day. Nevertheless, their success in keeping their nuclear weapons arsenal was not a foregone conclusion. The United Kingdom had trouble keeping pace with technological developments and so paradoxically relied on the United States to maintain an independent nuclear deterrent capability. France, too, was initially hamstrung by its inability to procure the materials necessary for its nuclear program. Why did these countries succeed in overcoming these challenges, particularly when the United States at times stood in the way? To what extent can my theory account for US failures in curbing their ambitions?

Examining these cases of alleged failure allows us to probe the generalizability of alliance compensation theory. I argue that my theory still accounts for important aspects of British and French nuclear behavior. As (former) imperial powers, both states saw nuclear weapons as a new means to maintain international prestige within the international system. Yet fears of abandonment were important in both countries’ decisions to acquire the bomb. In the
final analysis, neither European power trusted the United States to defend their security at its own expense. Many differences exist between the United Kingdom and France, but their economic trajectory in the post-war period took very different paths despite being NATO members. The United Kingdom’s struggle with the sterling left it vulnerable to US pressure whereas President Charles de Gaulle benefited from the high pace of economic growth in the French economy. Accordingly, the British were able to keep their nuclear weapons but the independence of its deterrent from the United States was at best unclear. The French force de frappe was autonomous from US or NATO nuclear planning. In other words, some basic congruence exists between my main explanatory variables and the final outcome in both countries.

This appendix begins with the case of the United Kingdom. Section 1 first examines why the British pursued the bomb and how they were able to retain their nuclear arsenal despite US pressure. It then evaluates the same questions but with regards to France. Section 2 concludes.

4.7 The United Kingdom, France, and the Bomb

Below I rely on the historical secondary literature to analyze why the two major US allies acquired and kept their nuclear weapons.

British Motives for the Bomb

I must state at the onset that the case of the United Kingdom fits uneasily with my theory. For one, the United Kingdom did not regard itself as a junior ally to the United States at the very beginning of the Cold War. Prior to the Second World War, when isolationism characterized US foreign policy, the United Kingdom was the pre-eminent global power with colonial possessions and political commitments in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East.
This pre-eminence was not to last. The United Kingdom’s superordinate status was fragile even before the war. Independence movements had begun challenging British imperial authority in India and the United Kingdom had found itself unable to support a strong international economic order.\textsuperscript{194} The Second World War further eroded the United Kingdom’s international standing by having it expend more war material and manpower, incur greater international debts, and reveal its inability to militarily defend its Southeast Asian colonies against Japanese aggression. Its diminishing role in international affairs becoming more evident, British decision-makers recognized that it was the United States that now had the capacity to assume a global leadership role. That is not to say that British decision-makers accepted second-tier status.\textsuperscript{195} Indeed, as discussed below, part of the appeal for the atomic bomb was that it signified privilege and prestige in international relations.

British interest in the atomic bomb preceded the Cold War. In July 1940 – the same month that the Battle of Britain began – the government-commissioned Maud Committee determined that the United Kingdom could and should develop a “uranium super bomb” so as to favorable influence the outcome of the war. Progress on developing this weapon was sufficient to encourage the British to respond condescendingly to US requests for nuclear assistance. However, within a year the United Kingdom began to fall behind and by 1943 Churchill successfully beseeched the United States to involve British scientists in the Manhattan Project under the Quebec Agreement. The result of the Manhattan Project was the production of the atomic bombs that the United States dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Another result of the Manhattan Project was the misplaced optimism held by British decision-makers regarding Anglo-American nuclear cooperation. A few days after Hiroshima, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee sent a missive to Truman that referred to the military atomic capability as belonging to them both as “heads of the Governments.”\textsuperscript{196} Truman was

\textsuperscript{194} Kindleberger (1973).

\textsuperscript{195} Says one foreign office document in March 1944, “[i]f we go about our business in the right way we can help steer this unwieldy barge, the United States of America, into the right harbor. If we don’t, it is likely to continue to wallow in the ocean, an isolated menace to navigation.” Quote recorded in Marsh (2012, 305).

\textsuperscript{196} Goldberg (1964, 411).
vague in his response and soon British decision-makers were unsure how to interpret US intentions with its atomic monopoly. Did the United States wish to maintain this monopoly, or develop some international control system of this new weapon? Within a year Attlee realized that the United States had little intent to share the bomb. The United States rejected requests for British scientists to visit the plutonium production plant and making an executive agreement to share scientific research. More ominously for British decision-makers, the US Congress considered (and approved) the McMahon Bill, which would have made it illegal to share information on atomic bomb production with all other countries. In the end, the United States refused to collaborate with the United Kingdom on nuclear cooperation. British decision-makers “felt themselves unfairly victimised and considered the Americans guilty of a breach of faith.”

Being spurned by the United States lent new urgency and stimulus to British nuclear ambitions. In 1946 the British government began a civilian nuclear program that was also intended to produce fissile material necessary to create a weapons stockpile. The military supported the initiative due to its experience in the Second World War. After all, while the United States stood neutral, the United Kingdom confronted Nazi Germany alone following the spring 1940 defeat of France. It withstood a sustained air attack called the Blitz during the Battle of Britain. A nuclear deterrent became even more necessary to deter a similar attack in the atomic age. Government consensus notwithstanding, progress was slow in the absence of US technical aid. Indeed, the failure of the Baruch Plan in 1949 presented a new opportunity that the British used to seek US support. None was forthcoming due to US concern for the effectiveness of British security and counterespionage. Undaunted, the

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197 British requests for nuclear cooperation did put US decision-makers in a bind. The United States put forward the Baruch Plan that called for the international control of the bomb. Anglo-American nuclear cooperation would have been inconsistent with the Baruch Plan. *Ibid.*, 412.


199 For a description of how the Battle of Britain influenced later British strategic thinking, see Grant (2010).

United Kingdom proceeded with the program and finally succeeded in detonating a nuclear weapon in the Pacific. It became the third state to do so after the United States and the Soviet Union.

In addition to dissatisfaction with the United States and fears of nuclear attack, prestige was another motive for the British to acquire a bomb. I noted already that nuclear weapons compensated for the United Kingdom’s declining role in international affairs. This sentiment became more acutely felt during the Second World War when British decision-makers realized that great power status in the near-future required mastery over atomic technology. Wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill saw the bomb as the “key to national power in post-war world.”\textsuperscript{201} The chief scientist working on the British nuclear program himself noted that “[t]he discriminative test for a first class power is whether it has made an atomic bomb and we have either got to pass the test or suffer a serious loss of prestige both inside the country and internationally.”\textsuperscript{202} The Official Historian of the British nuclear program concluded that the decision to acquire the bomb was due to “a feeling that Britain must possess so climacteric a weapon in order to deter an atomically armed enemy, a feeling that Britain as a Great Power must acquire all the major new weapons, a feeling that atomic weapons were a manifestation of the scientific and technological superiority on which Britain’s strength so deficient if measured in sheer numbers of men, must depend.”\textsuperscript{203} Yet even these prestige-based arguments are inseparable from more realpolitik considerations such as the need to project, and deter, power.

The United Kingdom does not represent a case in which a state observes unfavorable changes in the strategic posture of a formal ally and decides to undertake a nuclear weapons program. The United Kingdom and the United States were not yet formal allies in 1946, though they were the closest aligned members of the wartime Grand Coalition that included the Soviet Union. British decision-makers did see themselves as their country as having a

\textsuperscript{201} Churchill quoted in Arnold and Smith (2006, 3).
\textsuperscript{202} Baylis and Stoddart (2012, 335).
\textsuperscript{203} Gowing (1974, 74).
special relationship with the United States, but this relationship was to them between close equals rather than between a superordinate and subordinate. Still, the British preference was to develop nuclear weapons in partnership with the United States. Frustration and a sense of being “victimised” impelled the United Kingdom to unilaterally seek an independent nuclear deterrent. Had the United States behaved differently, the British would have still sought the bomb. It would have done so under the banner of an Anglo-American special relationship.

**Britain Keeps the Bomb?**

The difficulties experienced in acquiring the bomb presaged the challenges the United Kingdom would face in keeping a reliable and independent nuclear deterrent. Similarly to the United States, the United Kingdom first relied on strategic bomber aircraft (the V-force) to deliver nuclear weapons against Soviet targets. However, towards the late 1950s, the V bombers soon faced obsolescence as the Soviet Union acquired an intercontinental missile capability and, more importantly, effective anti-aircraft missiles. Underpinning this inability to keep pace with technological developments was the economic weakness of postwar Britain. As was true for the United States, the British Chief of Staffs wanted the United Kingdom to implement ‘massive nuclear retaliation’ so as to “allow reductions of the manpower goals” set for withdrawing British forces from Europe. When Britain tried to demonstrate political initiative and independence, as in the instance of the Suez Crisis, the result revealed British military and economic dependence on the United States.

To upgrade its deterrent in light of Soviet military advances, the United Kingdom sought to develop its own missile capability with the Blue Steel stand-off missile and the Blue Streak

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204 Beatrice Heuser shares this view, alleging that the McMahon Act at best impressed upon the British that the US nuclear support was unreliable and at worst stoked fears of US abandonment. See Heuser (1997).


206 The Eisenhower administration threatened to devalue an already fragile pound should the United Kingdom fail to withdraw from Suez.
intermediate-range ballistic missile.\textsuperscript{207} When neither of these weapons systems proved satisfactory, the British government sought to acquire from the US access to the AGM-48 Skybolt system, which could be mounted on the Vulcan bomber and be launched without the aircraft having to penetrate Soviet airspace. Buoyed by the promises of its strategic benefits, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan received authorization from Eisenhower to acquire the Skybolt and had committed the British defense establishment to focus exclusively on integrating this weapon system. Nevertheless, the British conveniently overlooked a critical aspect of the agreement struck by Eisenhower and Macmillan. The Eisenhower administration saw the deal as contingent on the technological success of the Polaris program.\textsuperscript{208} Some members of the British defense establishment understood the implication. Quietly, they spoke of how “the time has come to consider giving up the concept of independent control of the British nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and that we should negotiate the best terms possible with the Americans in return or handing over control to them.”\textsuperscript{209}

Unfortunately for the British, the Kennedy administration was hesitant to grant Britain these weapons. The weapon itself was failing early tests. Improvements in silo-based and submarine-based missiles (e.g., the UGM-27 Polaris) also dampened the US government’s interest to such an extent that it began contemplating the cancellation of the program altogether. Yet the crisis that this thinking provoked – the Skybolt Crisis – was not as rooted in technical differences and bureaucratic understandings as one major (insider) analysis of the subject argues.\textsuperscript{210} The reasons were more political. First, members of the Kennedy administration thought lowly of Britain and even less of the so-called ‘special relationship.’ Acheson once remarked that “Great Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role. The attempt to play a separate power role - that is, a role apart from Europe, a role based on

\textsuperscript{207}For more on Blue Steel, see Baylis (1995, 349-351). On Blue Streak, see \textit{ibid.}, 279-288.
\textsuperscript{208}See \textit{ibid.}, 290-291.
\textsuperscript{209}Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defense and Chairman of the British Nuclear Deterrent Study Group, Sir Robert Scott, quoted in \textit{ibid.}, 278.
\textsuperscript{210}Neustadt (1970).
a ‘special relationship’ with the United States... is about played out.”  
Second, the United States wished to integrate its NATO allies into the MLF under its leadership. Depriving the British of the Skybolt meant denying them the ability to retain their independent nuclear capability, thereby forcing them into MLF.

US behavior with regards to the Skybolt issue stunned British decision-makers and provoked a series of protests. To repair the alliance relationship, both countries successfully negotiated the Nassau Agreement – a treaty that, as Michael Middeke shows, some historians see as Kennedy granting the British the ability to retain an independent nuclear capability. Yet the terms of this treaty were as follows: the United Kingdom would obtain nuclear-capable Polaris missiles whereas the United States would receive rights to use a nuclear submarine base located in Scotland. More critically, the Polaris missiles would be fitted on British submarines that would be integrated into the MLF. How to interpret and handle this provision would become the preoccupation of the British government for sometime. Certainly, getting Macmillan to agree to consider the MLF was a serious concession that the United States managed to gain in the negotiations.

Arguably more critical of the British nuclear arsenal than members of the Kennedy administration were members of the Labour Party, the official opposition. Some party dissension aside, the main party-line on the issue was that the United Kingdom should abandon its nuclear deterrent program. The Nassau Agreement was one target of attack. Said the Labour Party’s manifesto:

“The Nassau agreement to buy Polaris know-how and Polaris missiles from the USA will add nothing to the deterrent strength of the Western Alliance, and it will mean utter dependence on the US for their supply ... [Polaris] will not be independent and it will not be British and it will not deter ... We are not

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211 Speech delivered at US Military Academy, West Point, New York, December 1962.
212 On these debates, see Middeke (2000).
prepared any longer to waste the country’s resources on endless duplication of strategic nuclear weapons. We shall propose the re-negotiation of the Nassau agreement.”

Moreover, in 1963, the shadow Secretary of State for Defense opined in the House of Commons that “we must at last reach a clear-cut decision to end the hopelessly extravagant and wasteful attempt to maintain a British independent nuclear deterrent.” Another Labour member of parliament drew attention to how Britain’s expensive nuclear force now relied on US technology: “Polaris may come off, but it is still an expensive pretence because it can never be independent in any genuine sense of the word and it will cost us an enormous sum of money.” Harold Wilson, the Labour Party leader, sometimes lacked inhibition when he spoke of British nuclear forces during his visit to Washington, D.C. in spring 1964. Meeting with Defense Secretary McNamara, Wilson talked of eliminating them and using some of the resulting savings to improve British conventional military capabilities. He echoed these sentiments in a later meeting with President Johnson. Nevertheless, despite these proclamations, the Labour leadership under Wilson was averse to making firm commitments on these issues. Though critical of the MLF, the Labour Party offered no concrete policy alternatives. Wilson qualified his remarks made in Washington by suggesting that the Polaris program would still continue. For all intents and purposes, Labour adopted a ‘wait-and-see’ approach.

This approach was prudent because Wilson and Labour did win in what was termed as the ‘nuclear deterrent election’ of 1964. Shortly thereafter, they put forward various proposals regarding nuclear-sharing arrangements and military strategy. Sharing the predecessor Conservative government’s lack of enthusiasm for MLF, the British government under Wilson’s leadership advanced the idea of an Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF). As Susanna Schrafstetter and Stephen Twigge describe it, the ANF would “consist of the British V-bombers, British

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214 Quoted in Priest (2005, 360).
215 Both citations found in Gill (2011, 254).
216 Ibid., 255 and 262.
and US Polaris submarines, an unspecified French contribution and a jointly owned mixed-manned component, the force would be controlled by a Nuclear Control Commission linked to NATO containing representatives of all contributing countries. In short, each participation would have a veto on the launch of the force. Thus the final decision on the use of nuclear weapons remained in the hands of the nuclear powers.”

Historians have debated as to whether the ANF was a sincere proposal, or whether it was just a tactic to delay having to make a firm commitment to the United States on a nuclear-sharing proposal. Suffice it to say, Wilson was equivocal on nuclear matters. He did not wish to alienate the United States by actively resisting the MLF.

Alliance compensation theory emphasizes an ally’s reliance on its patron for its security and economic needs as a driver of counterproliferation. These criteria were partly met in the British case. First, as much as Britain defined its security in terms of transatlantic relations, its relations with other NATO members on the European continent offered an outside option. It is true that France offered a stumbling block. After all, Charles de Gaulle was averse to granting the British with membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). Nevertheless, British decision-makers still saw opportunity in strengthening Anglo-French nuclear cooperation. Both allies were united in their skepticism of the MLF, and both allies would prefer not to surrender their nuclear arsenal to the United States. It is unsurprising that a consistent area of interest to British governments throughout the 1960s was some attempt at nuclear cooperation with de Gaulle. Even if these efforts encountered little cooperation from the French President, partly because the British could not make credibly promises to loosen ties with the United States (the Skybolt affair smacked of Anglo-Saxon collusion), the British continued making them during the remainder of the decade.

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\[217\text{Schrafstetter and Twigge (2000, 168).}\]
\[218\text{See Young (2003).}\]
\[219\text{See Stoddart (2007). One interpretation of the British lack of success with France is that the United States did not sufficiently alienate the United Kingdom into making British partnership appealing enough for the French. For a broad historical assessment of Anglo-French nuclear relations, see Harries (2012).}\]
Second, the British postwar economy failed to exhibit the same dramatic growth as its continental counterparts. Though the United Kingdom played a central role in the establishment of the Bretton Woods system, it was unable to meet the requirements of having the Sterling be a reserve currency. The weaknesses of the postwar British economy created much stress on the sterling, sparking a run on the currency in 1947. The currency experienced devaluation in 1949. As Stephen Blank reports, a mixture of internal and external constraints inhibited British economic growth. Internal constraints ranged from inefficient industrial production, shortage of credit, and management-union relations. External constraints included persistent balance-of-payments deficits and more financial and economic commitments that the United Kingdom could bear.²²⁰ Moreover, though it did recover from the crippling Second World War, the British economy had to experience several major adjustments even though unemployment was low.²²¹ These adjustments came as a result of a costly nationalization program, the Labour Party’s creation of the welfare state, and the opening of the British Pound Sterling bloc to international trade. Stresses on the sterling continued – a fact that the Eisenhower administration exploited during the Suez Crisis when it threatened to sell its Sterling Pound holdings – and another devaluation occurred in 1967.²²² In light of this monetary instability and these economic challenges, growth in Britain during the 1960s was about half as that of France. Hence the British desired entry into the EEC; it was attractive precisely because access to European markets would have helped revitalize British trade. Put together, the British might have enjoyed the outside options that existed within NATO, but they were also vulnerable to economic pressure.

Alliance compensation theory predicts that this combination of factors would produce a counterproliferation effort that would resemble a situation in which the alliance is bilateral, but without the prompt responsiveness of the ally.²²³ The ally will still search for ways to

²²⁰Blank (1977, 674).
²²¹On British immediate postwar recovery, see ibid., 678-679.
²²³See Chapter Six for an instance in which the ally is economic vulnerable to major power pressure but has a bilateral security arrangement to the patron.
preserve its nuclear capability. Indeed, because the United Kingdom had already acquired the weapon and developed government and military infrastructure around it, the costs associated with a nuclear reversal of this magnitude would have been high for the United States to pay. It is relatively easier to get a state to renounce nuclear weapons when it has none.

Yet the evidence regarding British efforts to preserve its arsenal fits the counterproliferation process my theory expects. The United States did seek to do away with the British independent nuclear deterrent, but encountered a variety of delay tactics (such as the ANF, presumably) from the British government. In the end, the United States was partially successful: Britain did lose an independent nuclear deterrent in the 1960s. By mid-decade, needing diplomatic support on Vietnam and with a mounting balance-of-payments crisis on its own, US decision-makers became reluctant to force the British to hand over control of British nuclear weapons. And so the matter ceased to be an issue.

**France Getting the Bomb**

The consensus among historians is that 1954 was the year in which the French government began to take an active interest in acquiring nuclear weapons. The precipitating event took place in March of that year when the Fourth French Republic suffered a major military defeat at Dien Bien Phu after Vietnamese insurgents decimated French colonial forces in the valley stronghold. Before this battle, the French were already struggling to assert imperial control in Indochina and had appealed to the United States for military assistance, claiming that a loss of their colony would be a victory for the communist bloc. Accordingly, the French saw their struggle against Vietnamese insurgents as an opportunity for the Eisenhower administration to demonstrate its commitment to the notion of massive retaliation. To their disappointment, however, Eisenhower refused to grant them with such support, preferring to only offer limited amounts of military supplies and advice. If the Eisenhower administration failed to massively retaliate to curb the expansion of communist-nationalist revolutionaries,

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224Gill (2013). Personal correspondence with David Gill.
then – so went French thinking at the time – why should it be expected to deliver on promises of extended nuclear deterrence to service other French interests?\textsuperscript{225}

Although the New Look might have only seemed to be rhetorical in light of Dien Bien Phu, this change in military thinking within the Western alliance further impressed upon the French leadership the military value of nuclear weapons. As the \textit{CHEFS D’ÉTAT-MAJOR} (or the French equivalent of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) believed, “the determining importance of atomic weapons is that from now on only those countries that possess their own arsenals of this type will conserve some degree of autonomy in defense and would be able to have a real influence in the development of common (defense) plans.”\textsuperscript{226} A French diplomat concurred with this assessment, noting that “an army deprived of atomic means will no longer be an army ... National independence, the autonomy of our diplomacy ... demand that France make its own proper atomic effort in the military domain.”\textsuperscript{227} Thus, when the French National Assembly considered a treaty regarding the European Defense Community (EDC), one of the areas that drew heavy criticism was a clause that stipulated that all member states would be forbidden to undertake an atomic military program. Though out of government, de Gaulle decried this treaty as one that would reduce France into a permanent state of dependency.\textsuperscript{228} Despite being a proposal by a former French Prime Minister, the EDC failed to obtain ratification in the French National Assembly.\textsuperscript{229}

With these developments in military thinking and French strategy, the French leadership

\textsuperscript{225}The pressure exerted by the Eisenhower administration on Britain and France also demonstrated the fundamental differences in the interests of these allies.

\textsuperscript{226}My translation of “importance déterminante des armes atomiques fait que désormais seuls les pays possédant en propre des armements de cet ordre conserveront une certaine autonomie de défense et pourront avoir une influence réelle dans le développement des plans communs.” Quoted in Mongin (2011).

\textsuperscript{227}My translation of “une armée dépourvu de moyens atomiques ne sera plus une armée... L’indépendance nationale, l’autonomie de notre diplomatie... exigent que la France fasse son propre effort atomique dans le domaine militaire.” Quoted in Vaïsse (1992). Vaïsse accords significance to the Suez Crisis as a catalyst for the French nuclear program, but many of the preparations for the nuclear program were already in place by 1956.

\textsuperscript{228}This debate already had a precedent. The French National Assembly deliberated in the early 1950s over the direction of France’s nuclear program. The communist party advanced one motion to forbid nuclear weapons production that was roundly rejected. See Mongin (2011).

\textsuperscript{229}On the development and failure of this initiative, see Hitchcock (1998).
proceeded to remove all remaining legal obstacles to developing nuclear weapons. Of course, French interest in nuclear energy predated these political developments. After all, it was in the lab of Pierre and Marie Curie that radioactive isotopes were first isolated. Their son-in-law – Frédéric Joliot-curie – also undertook atomic research and, thanks to an appointment by Charles de Gaulle following the Liberation, became the High Commissioner for Atomic Energy.\textsuperscript{230} It was under his supervision that the first French atomic reactor was built and the French civilian nuclear energy program began in earnest. Still, French government outfits and working groups aimed at nuclear weapons production first appeared at the end of the 1954. The Centre Saharien d’Expérimentations Militaires – which would oversee French nuclear tests in central Algeria – was established in 1957.\textsuperscript{231}

French nuclear ambitions thus preceded de Gaulle’s return to power and the establishment of the Fifth Republic. Yet de Gaulle’s influence on the trajectory of the French nuclear weapons program is difficult to overstate. As noted in chapter four, upon becoming President, he cancelled the nascent nuclear program that the Fourth Republic had started with Italy and West Germany. The reasoning behind this action was straightforward: France should only arm herself, and not her allies (and certainly not a West Germany of dubious intent and meaning within the Western alliance). The French nuclear nuclear program accelerated thereafter and had ceased to be clandestine with a memorandum dated September 17, 1958 sent to Washington, DC. Within two years, in February 1960, France detonated a seventy kiloton nuclear weapon (four times the power of the bomb dropped over Hiroshima) in the Algerian desert. Additional nuclear tests over the course of the next year reinforced France’s confidence in its own nuclear program.

de Gaulle’s mistrust of the United States and its avowed willingness to use nuclear weapons to defend European interests is well documented. It was he who asked whether the United States would be prepared to sacrifice New York City for Paris. As much as

\textsuperscript{230}For more on Joliot-Curie, and his role in French nuclear cooperation with the United States and the United Kingdom in particular, see Boumolleau and Levain (1994).  
\textsuperscript{231}On French nuclear experiments, see Le Baut (1994).
his suspicions influenced his thinking towards nuclear weapons, another motive was likely present. Similarly to the British, nuclear weapons were another means with which France could credibly claim international prestige in an era of decolonization. After all, de Gaulle came to power because France’s war in Algeria generated centrifugal forces that were threatening to pull French society and its political system apart. The military victory at the Battle of Algiers and the intense internal division of the Fourth Republic created the risk of a coup d’état by a confident yet frustrated French military.

**France Keeping the Bomb**

Why was France relatively immune to US efforts to fold its newly acquired nuclear deterrent into NATO? The easiest available answer emphasizes the strong personality of de Gaulle. He had a vision for French grandeur and pursued whichever military policy was necessary for advancing that vision.\(^232\) Not all of his policies were rooted in such motives – his approach towards the British on the question of their participation in the EEC appears to be much more rooted in managing interest group demands.\(^233\) Yet those policies in the military realm were informed by his acute need to preserve French political sovereignty and diplomatic prestige. These needs were all the more urgent in the face of a United States whose European commitments were fickle. The bomb was the most visible and significant manifestation of de Gaulle’s strategic vision. Accordingly, it was beyond compromise.

This observation has much to recommend it, but one should note that de Gaulle had it easy. At least, the circumstances he faced were more favorable than those that faced his Fourth Republic predecessors. In the immediate postwar period, France was in a state of dependency. Recapitulating the foreign economic relations between the United States and France after the Second World War, Philip Nord writes:

\(^{232}\)For an exemplar of this view, see Vaïsse (1998).

\(^{233}\)Moravcsik (2012).
gued, reduced France to a state of fiscal dependency, and not just fiscal dependency, for the Blum-Byrnes accord [a major agreement for France to receive debt relief and financial aid] included a provision that opened the French market to US films. The coming of the Marshall Plan in 1947 deepened yet further France’s reliance on the United States. On this account, the France that emerged from the war was different indeed from what it had been before, but the change was not a welcome one. France was reduced to an economic satellite of the United States, its culture beleaguered by Hollywood films and what was called at the time ‘coca-colonization.’”\textsuperscript{234}

And yet over time the leaders of the Fourth Republic were able to use their cunning and shrewdness to extract more favorable bargains from the United States.\textsuperscript{235} France’s economic development proceeded at a high clip. When de Gaulle returned to power, France had already enjoyed the first third of what would be termed as \textit{les trentes glorieuses} – a thirty-year period of high economic growth.

France prospered despite the damage it endured in the two world wars and the false economic starts of the immediate postwar years. It was steadily becoming an economic powerhouse that benefited its highly productive and well salaried citizens with one of the best standards of living in the world. Its growth rates for the years between 1950 and 1973 were amongst the highest in Europe, about twice as much as the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{236} Not all was rosy: French balance-of-payments did weaken over the course of the 1950s as a result of persistent reserve losses that accumulated with the military expenditures to fight in Vietnam and Algeria.\textsuperscript{237} But by the 1960s even this situation changed to the advantage of France as both the United Kingdom and the United States saw growing deficits in their

\textsuperscript{234} Nord (2010, 7).
\textsuperscript{235} See Hitchcock (1998).
\textsuperscript{236} Eichengreen (1996, 39). I do not mean to suggest that France’s economic growth could have been better. Growth could have been higher if not for the strongly corporatist industrial relations and a relative closure to trade. France’s economic performance was still not as strong as that of West Germany. This discrepancy produced a number of geopolitical implications. Eichengreen (2007, 100).
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid., 102.
balance-of-payments. By 1965 France was converting its balance-of-payments excesses into gold, thereby mounting pressure on the US dollar.\textsuperscript{238} France had come a long way from being sorely dependent on US economic power immediately after the Second World War. Indeed, it posed a major threat to US efforts to preserve the integrity of the international economic order.

In addition to casting away the fetters of US economic hegemony, France was able to pivot its diplomatic power to support either a continentalist or a transatlantic vision for defense cooperation. Amidst deepening suspicions over US alliance reliability, France had alliance partners in West Germany and Italy with whom it could pursue an autonomous vision.\textsuperscript{239} That is not to say these countries were always receptive to de Gaulle’s overtures. The relationship between de Gaulle and Adenauer was uneven. de Gaulle had trouble with Chancellor Erhard’s Atlanticist tilt.\textsuperscript{240} Moreover, Charles de Gaulle was not entirely hostile to the United States as some descriptions of his foreign policy would suggest.\textsuperscript{241} The US military presence in West Germany, after all, posed a welcomed constraint on that country’s foreign policy ambitions – a direct benefit to France. Still, the structural conditions were permissive for France by the 1960s to pursue an independent and assertive foreign policy in 1960s. Thus, de Gaulle could bat away US proposals for a nuclear-sharing arrangement like the MLF and retain its \textit{force de frappe}. By the end of the 1960s, the United States even sought to court France and pursue cooperative arrangements in nuclear weapons technologies.\textsuperscript{242}

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{238}Monnet (2013). Bordo, Simard, and White (1994) challenge the conventional view that de Gaulle’s conversions of dollar holdings to gold were part of some plan of his to destabilize the Bretton Woods system. They argue that France sought a reversion to the gold-based international monetary system that had existed during the interwar period.
\item \textsuperscript{239}Costigliola (1984).
\item \textsuperscript{240}See Vaisse (1993) and Martin (2013, 34).
\item \textsuperscript{241}See Moravcsik (2000\textsuperscript{a,b}).
\item \textsuperscript{242}Trachtenberg (2011).
\end{itemize}

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4.8 Summary

The purpose of this addendum was to widen my analysis by taking into account cases in which two major US allies – the United Kingdom and France – successfully acquired the bomb. In examining these cases, we find support for alliance compensation theory. Simply put, the British had it difficult and the French had it easy. Both states decided to pursue nuclear weapons in the first place in part out of concern of US alliance reliability. Other motives, however, were also present, not the least among was the desire for prestige in an era when colonies were becoming independent. Unlike the French, the British nuclear deterrent was very much reliant on the US provision of technology and support. The *force de frappe* was autonomous – a fact that was later reinforced once France withdrew from NATO’s military command structure in 1965. Still, as much as de Gaulle was unique amongst postwar European statesmen for his brash assertiveness, he benefited from his country’s expanding economic power and ability to straddle continental and transatlantic visions for European security. Permissive structural conditions allowed him to command agency.
Chapter 5

The Unforgettable Fire: Accounting for Japanese Nuclear Ambiguity,
1953-1976

Post-war Japan had even less room to maneuver than West Germany in determining its foreign policy. Like West Germany, the Japanese government renounced militarization in order to restore its political sovereignty. Article 9 of the Japanese constitution and the so-called Yoshida Doctrine explicitly disavows the threat and use of force to resolve international disputes. Distinguishing itself from West Germany, however, was that Japan had even more reason to be averse to exploiting the political or military uses of sensitive nuclear technology. After all, two of its cities – Hiroshima and Nagasaki – were the only cities ever to be devastated by nuclear weapons when the United States bombed them in August 1945. Following the 1954 Daigo Fukuryu Maru incident, in which the crew of a Japanese fishing trawler were exposed to radiation fallout from US nuclear weapons tests, an anti-nuclear movement emerged as a major force in Japanese domestic politics. To describe Japanese society as anti-militarist may be an exaggeration in light of its continuing refusal to properly atone
for its conduct towards its East Asian neighbors during the Second World War.\(^1\) Nevertheless, the combination of legal restrictions and the potency of the anti-militarist Japanese left make post-war Japan a difficult case for my theory. That is, even in instances where alliance credibility appears questionable, the domestic disincentives for nuclear behavior should overwhelm any possible benefit associated with nuclear posturing.

As in the case of West Germany, the pattern of Japanese behavior *does* provide empirical support for my theory. Yet domestic political considerations were at play such that I must make important qualifications to my argument. Simply put, domestic political factors significantly circumscribed the range of actions that Japanese decision-makers could undertake with respect to nuclear posturing. They could not, for example, leak false memos suggesting their interest in nuclear weapons or collaborate with regional neighbors in the production of nuclear weapons. Nor could they plainly deflect international calls for them to credibly renounce nuclear weapons. Moreover, lest they would lend credibility to leftist opposition groups, Japanese leaders could not openly convey whatever misgivings they may have had with the United States.

Still, they used what little freedom they did have to act upon their own fears regarding US abandonment. These actions involved discreet forms of nuclear posturing, much of it was intended to buy time so as to develop a latent nuclear capability even if no explicit desire to acquire nuclear weapons existed. Indeed, to this day, Japan is often said as being able to develop nuclear weapons within a period of several months. The merits of this claim aside, this capability was not an accidental by-product of a well-developed civilian nuclear industry. Rather, it was the result of deliberate though discreet efforts in the 1960s and the 1970s to further Japanese security interests. Whether this interpretation of Japan’s nuclear policy is valid, the available evidence strongly suggests that as much as domestic politics forced the Japanese government to eschew nuclear weapons altogether, international politics

\(^1\)On this issue, see Buruma (1994) and Lind (2009).
encouraged Japan to refrain from making clear signals about this internal decision.\(^2\)

Such is the general argument of this chapter, but my specific findings are as follows. In addition to the domestic inhibitions described above, Japan’s strategic context was a critical filter through which Japanese decision-makers evaluated changes in US strategic posture. Unlike in West Germany, the New Look did not produce doubts regarding US credibility amongst Japan decision-makers. In fact, the New Look accorded with their strategic vision, particularly because neither the Soviet Union nor China posed a direct military threat during that phase of the Cold War. That the United States came to the defense of South Korea (in the Korean War) and Taiwan (in the Quemoy-Matsu Crises) provided further evidence of US commitment to the region. If fears regarding US behavior did exist, then they pertained to entrapment rather than abandonment.

This situation changed when China detonated a nuclear weapon in 1964. The military threat posed by these communist adversaries began to make itself felt. Consequently, Japanese decision-makers started probing US commitment to their country’s security. Peaking when Nixon articulated the Guam Doctrine, fears of abandonment intensified towards the late 1960s when the United States was seeking to lessen its involvement in the Vietnam War. Dubious Japanese use of sensitive nuclear technology similarly intensified, beginning with a series of government studies before a government decision to make a centrifuge program a national priority. US decision-makers were not indifferent to these developments. At times, they voiced concern to their Japanese counterparts, but they felt unable to fully act on their worries. Though Japan was dependent on the United States for its security needs, its growing economic power inoculated them from major power punishment. Domestic politics also meant that the United States could not apply economic statement to compel nuclear renunciation. As a result, largely on its own initiative, Japan ratified the NPT belatedly in

\(^2\)I do not argue that Japan pursued nuclear weapons acquisition as South Korea and Taiwan did. What I claim here is that the Japanese government was mixed in its signaling regarding its nuclear policy. This ambiguity was not accidental, and served a narrow set of political interests for the Japanese government. Indeed, this ambiguity resulted from the Japanese government’s desire to seriously examine its nuclear options between the mid-1960s and 1976.
This chapter is divided in the proceeding six sections. Section 1 outlines the predictions of my theory and alternative hypotheses for the case of Japan. Section 2 begins the empirical analysis by explaining how and why the New Look did not suggest alliance abandonment as in the case of West Germany. Section 3 describes the beginnings of Japanese nuclear behavior and shows that Japanese decision-makers began to question US credibility following the Chinese nuclear weapon detonation in 1964. These concerns became ample when the US leadership – first under Johnson, and then under Nixon – sought a political and military withdrawal from Vietnam. Japan ratcheted up its nuclear behavior as these concerns intensified. Section 4 describes the limited range of options afforded to US decision-makers to compel a nuclear reversal before process tracing in Chapter 4 the manner in which the Japanese leadership finally renounced nuclear weapons in 1976. Section 5 concludes with a summary of my main argument and an appraisal of alternative arguments.

5.1 Empirical Predictions

Before engaging with the case evidence, it is important to grasp the strategic and domestic political contexts facing Japanese decision-makers. I highlight the implications of these contextual observations for alternative hypotheses before describing my theory’s main hypothesis for this case.

The Strategic Context

The bilateral alliance between the United States and Japan had its roots in the US post-war occupation of Japan. The Treaty of San Francisco formalized the political commitment of the United States to Japan and was later amended in the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. During the 1950s and the 1960s, the
Japanese economy enjoyed comparable success to that of West Germany. Still, Japan relied on the United States for its civilian nuclear industries. Following Eisenhower’s announcement of the ‘Atoms for Peace’ program, Japan benefited from access to US reactor technology, uranium, and even reprocessed fuel. This reliance continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Its dependence on the United States suggests that they should be sensitive to US pressure, particularly given the bilateralism of their alliance. Yet even this form of reliance should not be overstated: the United States was to some extent a victim of its own success. It is true that one goal of the ‘Atoms for Peace’ was to assure ally dependence on the United States for their nuclear materials and thus curb nuclear proliferation. However, another stated aim was to enable these countries to overcome their energy shortages and expand their economies. That way these states could become sufficiently capable as “strongpoints” in containing the Soviet threat. Thus, these states might have needed the United States to provide nuclear materials, but the United States needed these states to be economically power in order for containment to work. More narrowly, by the late 1960s and the 1970s, applying economic pressure on Japan would have even been counterproductive for the US economy.

In contrast to land-locked West Germany, Japan is an archipelago state with islands located in close proximity to the former Soviet Union’s and China’s eastern frontiers. Neither of these communist adversaries had a navy capable of project military power against Japanese territory until the 1970s. Even though Japan faced an unfavorable balance of power

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3The Japanese civilian nuclear industry dates back to the Atomic Energy Basic Law of 1955. It limited the use of nuclear power to peaceful purposes.
4Drifte (1989) describes the efforts on the part of the Japanese government to gain technological autonomy in the nuclear domain in the 1970s and 1980s. Japan also imported a large share of its uranium. About 30,000 tons of uranium purchased in 1990, for example, came from Canada. Endicott (1977, 291).
5Strategist George Kennan believed that the United States should focus its containment of the Soviet Union on so-called ‘strongpoints’ rather than ‘weakpoints.’ The former includes those territories that encompass economically productive countries that already feature a large industrial base. The United States ultimately practiced a strategy of containment premised on an undifferentiated view of the world (that is, that communist expansion anywhere was dangerous) does not undermine the point regarding West Germany and Japan. See Gaddis (1982).
6Some islands are still under dispute with Russia (the Kuril islands) and China (the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands).
vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in aggregate terms, it did not confront the ground power threat that endangered West Germany. Consequently, Japan had less use for the US conventional military power that the New Look sought to diminish due to its reliance on nuclear weapons. The New Look, in other words, had little practical significance for Japan’s national security insofar as ground troops had lesser deterrent value in Japan than air and naval forces.\(^7\) If anything, Eisenhower’s foreign policy direction, because it elevated the role of air power and missile delivery, should accord with the strategic vision of Japanese decision-makers.

The absence of a direct military threat, to be sure, did not imply that Japan lacked a political threat. Throughout the 1950s, China behaved aggressively abroad: it joined the Korean War on the side of the North and launched multiple crises regarding the status of Taiwan, an island ruled by anti-communist republicans over which China claimed sovereignty. That these military engagements ended far short of victory did not face the ideological fervor characterizing China’s leadership.\(^8\) To the contrary, communist leaders turned inward and adopted a devastating set of social and economic reforms embodied by the Great Leap Forward campaign. Still, Chinese leaders did not ignore foreign policy altogether. China began constructing uranium-enrichment plants in 1958, the same year as the Great Leap Forward started. As will be discussed in Chapter Eight, this effort reflected the growing distrust and animosity that Mao Tse-tung and other Chinese decision-makers felt towards the Soviet Union. Although US decision-makers became aware of Chinese efforts in producing nuclear weapons in 1960 and 1961, it remains unclear when Japanese decision-makers (if at all) were similarly informed before 1964.\(^9\) Regardless, with these dimensions of the security environment in East Asia in mind, Japanese decision-makers did not face the same incentives

\(^7\)Below I address the moral implications of a repeat use of a nuclear weapon in East Asia for New Look.

\(^8\)To be sure, China could claim (and has claimed) that it succeeded in defending North Korea and repulsing US military advances on the peninsula.

\(^9\)US and Japanese decision-makers consulted with each other on the probable implications of a Chinese nuclear detonation at least as early as June 1964. See Memorandum from Rostow to Rusk, June 19, 1964, folder: “POL. Japan, Chinese Communism (Chicom), 1965,” RG 59, Records Relating to Japanese Political Affairs, Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Still, in her research on Japan’s stance towards nuclear weapons in the 1960s, Wakana Mukai finds that the Japanese government were discussing the eventual
for nuclear behavior as their West German counterparts during the 1950. They lacked a direct military threat and the United States was moving towards a strategic posture that seemed appropriate for their geopolitical situation.

Japan’s strategic environment changed when China detonated its first nuclear weapon on October 16, 1964. Taking place about one week into the Summer Olympic Games that were being held in Tokyo, the timing of this event was likely deliberate.\textsuperscript{10} This Olympiad was the first ever held in Asia and symbolized Japan’s rehabilitated status in international politics. Although China did not yet have a ballistic missile capability, the nuclear detonation meant that China was now less susceptible to US nuclear threats, thereby raising concerns that it would pursue its foreign policy objectives more boldly than before. Upon this unfavorable change to Japan’s strategic context, its decision-makers should become more preoccupied with the status of US security guarantees.

The appearance of China’s newfound nuclear capability coincided with ongoing deliberations within the Johnson administration over whether to escalate US military involvement in Vietnam. Similarly to the Korean War and the Taiwan Straits Crises, US decision-makers felt that their approach towards Vietnam would shape perceptions of US resolve and credibility to security partners around the world, especially in Asia. Thus, if US decision-makers were correct at least, then US progress in the Vietnam War should inform assessments regarding US alliance support. Deploying manpower and resources in supporting the anti-communist regime in South Vietnam should forestall the emergence of fears of abandonment. However, if the Vietnam War was to become a major power conflict, then Japan could be involved due to its status as the most significant US ally in the region. That Japan was not obliged by the terms of the 1960 Security Treaty to assist the United States might not have been sufficient to dispel the ensuing fears of entrapment. Still, the Vietnam War did not become a major power conflict. Instead, it became a military debacle for the United States. Unfavorable political developments in the war (e.g., the Tet Offensive) and their consequences for US do-

\textsuperscript{10}The sudden ouster of Khrushchev from power also took place during this Olympiad.
mestic politics led US decision-makers to seek an end to the war and a military withdrawal. As a result, the United States began to risk appearing unwilling to bear the military burden in East Asia – an indication that US retreat from the region was forthcoming. Given its geographical position, fears of abandonment thus should become more prominent for the Japanese.

**The Domestic Political Context**

Domestic politics explanations put forward two independent variables: the particular interests of the governing political factions or the norms or attitudes that permeate domestic society. To begin with the first variant, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) emerged as the dominant political force in Japan with the 1955 System. It was the product of a conservative merger between Shigeru Yoshida’s Liberal Party and Ichiro Hatoyama’s Japan Democratic Party. Yoshida is mostly known in the west for providing the namesake of the Yoshida Doctrine – the foreign policy notion that Japan should focus primarily on economic growth while depending on the United States for its security. Hatoyama, however, was more nationalist and sought to advance Japanese foreign policy autonomy.

Unsurprisingly, as much as this political marriage enabled the hegemony over the electoral system, the LDP still had its cleavages within its ranks. One conservative mainstream faction of the LDP was *Kochikai* and comprised followers of Yoshida such as Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda (1960-1964). Two other important factions centered on two political personalities: the self-made and entrepreneurial Kakuei Tanaka and the career bureaucrat Takeo Fukuda. Over time, the Tanaka faction became known as Heisei Kenkyukai and had favored international cooperation with China and South Korea. Prime ministers associated with this faction included Eisaku Sato (1964-1972) and Tanaka himself (1972-1974).\(^{11}\) Fukuda established the rival faction in 1962 that was originally named Tofu Ishin Renmei. It was more nationalist

\(^{11}\)Sato was a staunch anti-communist, however.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Termination</th>
<th>Theoretical Mechanism</th>
<th>Observable Implications</th>
<th>Case Predictions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alliance Compensation Theory</strong></td>
<td>Major power pressure and bargaining</td>
<td>Interaction of economic and security dependence shape counterproliferation effectiveness and ally responsiveness to major power pressure</td>
<td>Bilateralism of security treaty and economic interdependence forestalls US efforts to curb Japanese nuclear behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance-of-Threat Theory</strong></td>
<td>Threat perceptions</td>
<td>Absence or reduction of threat lowers incentives to engage in nuclear behavior</td>
<td>Détente and Chinese-Japanese normalization motivate Japanese nuclear reversal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (1)</strong></td>
<td>Preferences over political economy and foreign policy; coalition politics</td>
<td>Economically conservatives engage in nuclear behavior so long as they stay in power; nuclear reversal follows change in ruling coalition</td>
<td>Economically liberal LDP politicians would reverse nuclear behavior once they gain power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (2)</strong></td>
<td>Norms and widely shared attitudes</td>
<td>Levels of militarism in society shapes decision-makers’ likelihood to engage in nuclear behavior</td>
<td>With increasing antimilitarism in Japanese society, lesser likelihood of nuclear behavior declines over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Summary of theoretical explanations, observable implications, and predictions for Japan’s nuclear behavior.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Defense</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Prime Minister</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Eisenhower</td>
<td>Dulles</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>Radford</td>
<td>Yoshida</td>
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<td>1954</td>
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Table 5.2: The category “Other” lists those individuals whose decision-making significance for the case studies was a function of either historical circumstance or personality. Arthur W. Radford was Chair of the Joint Chief of Staff (1953-57). C. Douglas Dillon was the Secretary of Treasury (1961-65). Henry Kissinger was National Security Advisor (1969-75). Some individuals occupying important offices exerted relatively little influence on policy (e.g., Rogers as Nixon’s Secretary of State).
and economically liberal than its competitor. This group eventually became known as *Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai* but did not produce prime ministers during the time period under review here. Nevertheless, though Nobusuke Kishi had already been prime minister by the time Fukuda formed this faction, he was a member of this faction for the remainder of his political career. Because of the more nationalist character of this particular faction, it should be more likely to engage in nuclear behavior as a means to gain autonomy from the United States.\(^\text{12}\)

The LDP’s main source of electoral competition was the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), which was itself split into various factions. The JSP ultimately did not pose much of a challenge under the 1955 System, but its popularity was sufficient to generate concerns over Japanese internal order and neutralism amongst LDP and US officials.\(^\text{13}\)

With regards to the second variant of domestic politics: despite the political hegemony of the LDP and its more conservative-nationalist factions, the salience of anti-militarist and anti-nuclear attitudes in Japanese society should discourage politicians of all stripes from engaging in nuclear behavior.\(^\text{14}\)

### Summary

Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses for this case study whereas table 2 lists the relevant US and Japanese decision-makers for the period under review.

\(^\text{12}\)As we will see in the case study, Sato of the Tanaka faction expressed pro-nuclear sentiments prior to becoming prime minister.

\(^\text{13}\)For more on Japan’s political factionalization, see Berger (1998).

5.2 Explaining the Onset of Japanese Ambiguous Posturing

We have seen in the West German case that Adenauer began striving for nuclear weapons when it appeared to him that the United States was finally reducing its conventional military power so as to implement the New Look. Yet Japan did not share West Germany’s interest in maintaining a significant ground military presence to deter communist adversaries in its region. Thus, Japan should not make movements towards nuclear weapons acquisition until much later than West Germany. To what extent is this hypothesis regarding timing true? I describe first the pattern of Japan’s nuclear behavior before proceeding to show how alliance politics affected Japanese decision-making.\(^{15}\)

Nuclear Disinterest, Then Ambiguity

The documentary record suggests that the Japanese leadership exhibited very little interest, if any, in nuclear weapons during the 1950s. As was the case with West Germany, an issue that dominated US-Japanese security relations concerned rearmament. In the view of many Japanese politicians, it was uncertain how rearmament was consistent with Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. This provision renounced war, forbade the use or threat of force to resolve international disputes, and abjured the development of an armed force that had ‘war potential.’ How nuclear weapons fit under such arrangements was also unclear. Akira Kodaki, the director of the National Defense Agency, suggested that the Japanese military possess “nuclear weapons to minimum extent necessary for safe of defense.”\(^{16}\) At a Diet


\(^{16}\)Telegram from the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, May 8, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 23: 285.
committee meeting on May 7, 1957, Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi intervened in this debate and stated:

“I do not think so-called nuclear weapons are prohibited entirely by constitution. In view of progress of science, we must have effective power to carry out modern warfare within scope self-defense (sic).”

Adding significance to these remarks was that Kishi had previously rejected nuclear weapons. Still, Kishi coupled this statement with assurances that he did not seek to arm the Self-Defense Forces with nuclear weapons or accept US stationing of nuclear units in Japan.

Some US government officials noticed these statements by Kodaki and Kishi. A background paper on the Japanese military situation noted that “the Japanese Government appears to be interested in acquiring eventually tactical nuclear weapons for its own forces.” The paper proceeded to argue that Kishi’s evolving stance on nuclear weapons “represent[ed] a major modification in previous Japanese Government opposition to any form of nuclear weapons, offensive or defensive.” The psychological impact of Hiroshima and Nagasaki mattered insofar as it fueled domestic opposition to US stationing of nuclear weapons on Japanese territory. Yet available documents show that US decision-makers did not accord much significance to these statements. Nor did US decision-makers use them to infer that Japan was interested in developing a nuclear weapons program. These seemingly pro-nuclear statements by Japanese decision-makers reflected little in terms of actual government policy and thus provoked little attention from the United States.

Japanese decision-makers did not appear to consider re-evaluating their stance towards nuclear weapons acquisition until late 1964 at the latest. China’s detonation of its first nuclear devices on October 16, 1964, provoked a re-evaluation of Japan’s security policies. The Tokyo government moved to strengthen its defenses against potential Soviet aggression, and a coalition of anti-nuclear weapons forces formed in opposition. In January 1965, the Japanese National Diet approved a bill that prohibited the manufacture, storage, and use of nuclear weapons, while also committing Japan to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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17 Ibid.
19 In a meeting with an Japanese Defense Agency official, a member of the Department of State referred to Kishi’s statements to argue that the Japanese could develop guided missile units (with nuclear warheads) and still be in keeping with Japan’s constitution. Memorandum of a Conversation, June 26, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 23: 420.
nuclear weapon in October 1964 shattered Japanese seeming complacency regarding the Chinese threat. This change in nuclear behavior admittedly occurs earlier than my theory anticipates. The Japanese government commissioned in December 1964 a report by the Cabinet Research Office entitled “Security of Japan and the Nuclear Test of the CCP.” Written by Kai Wakaizuimi and presented to the Intelligence Office of the Cabinet, this report called for the development of a latent nuclear capacity by way of investing in satellite and missile technology and nuclear power plants. Thereafter, the Japanese government adopted an ambivalent position towards the NPT. It endorsed the goal of universal nuclear disarmament but it also decried the political inequality (between nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states) that the treaty would eventually legitimate. In January 1968, Prime Minister Eisaku Sato made a speech to the Japanese diet that, according to Yuri Kase, sought to “challenge the prevalent of ‘nuclear taboo’ that existed among the population at the time ... especially among the idealist left.” Though Japan signed the treaty in 1970, its decision-makers argued that its ratification would be conditional on great power behavior.

The Japanese government stepped up its centrifuge program in 1969. Even though I find no evidence of any genuine intention to acquire nuclear weapons, the Japanese government intensified its civilian nuclear activities in the early 1970s, presumably to develop a ‘virtual’ capability. In 1969, the Atomic Energy Commission Expert Committee determined that the development of a centrifuge program was a national priority. It thus allocated a billion yen ($12 million in 2008 dollars) to an underfunded group of nuclear scientists that were already attempting to manufacture their own designs. When this group achieved some preliminary success, it obtained a ten-fold increase in its budget. This windfall allowed them to quickly produce several machine cascades. These increases in both spending and

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22These conditions included the promotion of international nuclear disarmament; the provision of security guarantees for non-nuclear weapons states; and assurances that non-nuclear weapons states would have equal access to atomic energy for peaceful use.
23These machines experienced technical difficulties. For more on Japan’s incipient centrifuge program, see Kemp (2010, 63-66). Endicott (1975, 118-125) offers another, albeit dated, discussion of Japanese efforts to
activity in the nuclear sector preceded the global energy crisis that began in 1973. The ensuing energy shortages might have intensified the development of alternative fuel sources, but this expansion of the nuclear program was already in place.

Further reflecting the ambiguity that characterized Japan’s nuclear behavior was a report commissioned by Sato. Written by four non-governmental university scholars, this report was not an official government report. It appeared in two volumes. The first of which appeared in 1968 and assessed the costs and benefits of a Japanese nuclear weapons program at the technical, economic, and organizational levels. It made no judgment as to whether Japan should in fact pursue a nuclear weapons program. The second volume was published in 1970. Upon evaluating the strategic, political, and diplomatic implications of Japanese nuclear weaponization, this volume concluded that an independent nuclear deterrent was not in Japan’s interests. The lack of strategic depth and the costs associated with provoking both communist adversaries and the United States lowered the incentives for nuclear weapons development. This two-volume report saw very limited circulation within the Japanese government bureaucracy. Accordingly, its impact on actual decision-making is unclear. International security scholar Yuri Kase writes that the purpose of this report was to identify arguments that the Japanese government would use to allay international concerns over its nuclear intentions. Yet the production of this document demonstrated that the government was at least weighing the merits of such a program.

Even if the Japanese decision-makers might have privately found nuclear weapons undesirable (or even distasteful), it remained unclear what inferences international observers should draw regarding Japan’s practical stance towards nuclear weapons. Mixed messages abounded. For example, the Japanese government partly objected to ratifying the NPT on the grounds that the recommended safeguards were either inadequate to prevent industrial espionage so as to thwart progress on developing peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, develop centrifugal and enrichment technology during this period.

Kase (2001) offers a detailed description of the so-called 1968/70 Report on which I draw for this discussion.
as US diplomatic officials pointed out, the Japanese government itself could have put in place the safeguards they found appropriate through domestic legislation rather than international agreement. US officials, therefore, viewed the chief Japanese objection to NPT as masking a more fundamental issue. As one US embassy official wrote:

“Reading between the lines, with liberal application of imagination, I would surmise that there is a political problem for the GOJ concerning the NPT which is more basic than their objection to the safeguards article, and which is related to the attitudes of a small but influential minority who wish at least to keep Japan’s nuclear options open. I would guess that the Foreign Ministry and the LDP leadership, while aware of the broad consensus of feeling against nuclear armaments, nevertheless do not wish to antagonize this small influential minority by appearing to move too fast. Slow motion, excused by alleged difficulties with the safeguards article, would probably appear to the Japanese leadership in this situation as a suitable compromise.”

A conservative nationalist faction certainly delayed treaty ratification in the mid-1970s when the Japanese government finally introduced legislation for it. Yet the Japanese government had reservations about its own stated nuclear policy so as to preserve flexibility in international negotiations.

Consider Sato’s three non-nuclear principles. In 1969 he vowed to not manufacture, possess, or even allow the introduction of nuclear weapons in Japan – the latter of which

25 Memorandum of Conversation, October 3, 1967, folder: “DEF-18-4 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Press Comments, 1967,” Records Relating to Japanese Political Affairs 1960-1975, Box 3, RG 59, NARA. One US government report noted in early 1965 that the Japanese position towards nuclear weapons remained flexible and noted Japan’s refusal to make a binding commitment. That the Chinese detonated their own nuclear weapons meant that even more members of Japanese society were in favor of the bomb. Indeed, Sato was favorably pre-disposed towards nuclear weapons. The report declared that Japan could follow the French example, cautioning that assessments of US commitment would be critical in Japanese decisions to seek nuclear weapons. See Memorandum from Whitting to Fearey, February 12, 1965, folder: “DEF-12 Armaments Japan, 1965,” Records Relating to Japanese Political Affairs 1960-1975, Box 1, RG 59, NARA.

26 Ibid.
would compromise the US ability to supply nuclear extended deterrence in the region.\textsuperscript{27} The purpose of these principles was to internationally express a clear policy of nuclear denial. Following the announcement of the three principles, the JSP pushed for the passing of a ‘non-nuclear’ resolution in the Diet. This resolution posed a problem for Sato. Such a resolution threatened to tie his hands in his negotiations with the United States over the reversion of Okinawa.\textsuperscript{28} After all, the United States wished to retain basing access and rights to deploy conventional forces to Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam as well as keep nuclear weapons on the island.\textsuperscript{29} The United States got its wish: within a year of Sato’s proclamation of the three non-nuclear principles, the Japanese government violated the third principle by signing another secret agreement that gave the United States the ability to introduce (i.e., place and install) nuclear weapons on Japanese territory.

This policy inconsistency was obvious to Japanese decision-makers and, even before the Okinawa negotiations, palpable to members of Japanese society. Before meeting with Nixon to discuss Okinawa, Sato decried the three principles as “unnecessary” because it complicated his efforts to strike a balance between US strategic demands and the prejudices of Japanese society.\textsuperscript{30} By articulating them, Sato had originally wanted to “stimulate debate on how Japan should defend itself in the nuclear era, rather than to express his support for the principles.”\textsuperscript{31} Now he regretted them for their unintended inflexibility. Though members of Japanese society widely suspected that nuclear weapons were being stored and transported at Okinawa, the issue drew media attention when a sex scandal erupted in 1971 in which a journalist of the \textit{Mainichi Shimbun} seduced an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and acquired confidential documents pertaining to the secret accords. The Japanese

\textsuperscript{27}I treat the matter of the Okinawa reversion with greater depth below.

\textsuperscript{28}I thank Wakana Mukai for alerting me to this episode.

\textsuperscript{29}Japan had already secretly permitted the United States to introduce nuclear weapons into Japan under certain conditions during the treaty negotiations in 1960. See Description of Consultation Arrangements Under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with Japan, June 1960, Nuclear Vault; Summary of Unpublished Agreements, June 1960, Nuclear Vault; and Telegram from Tokyo to the Department of State, April 4, 1963, Nuclear Vault.

\textsuperscript{30}Quoted in Komine (2013, 826).

\textsuperscript{31}Hughes (2007, 86). Hughes is also skeptical of the constraints posed by the three nuclear principles.
government, or rather the LDP, denied the existence of such secret agreements. Put simply, despite lofty anti-nuclear proclamations, the Japanese government’s commitment to the three non-nuclear principles was already problematic from its own perspective and that of domestic and international audiences.

Two episodes, though occurring during Nixon’s presidency, further exemplify the perceived ambiguity of Japan. The first is an interpellation between Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka and members of the Diet that took place over a week in March 1970. On March 13, Tanaka asserted that “[n]uclear weapons are offensive weapons and against the Constitution.” The next day, however, the Japanese government issued a statement claiming that tactical nuclear weapons were consistent with the Constitution. Asked to clarify his original statement a few days later, Tanaka noted that “(1) [i]f within the scope of self-defense, nuclear weapons will not run counter to the Constitution, (2) however, since nuclear weapons are considered to be offensive weapons, generally, they run counter to the Constitution, and (3) the Government will firmly maintain the Three Non-Nuclear Principles and will not carry out nuclear weapons.” Yet even this statement cannot be taken as definitive. On March 20, Tanaka averred that “[w]e will firmly maintain the policy based on the three non-nuclear principles ... We will not be able to hold offensive nuclear weapons, but it does not mean that we will not hold nuclear weapons at all.”

The second is an exchange between Nixon and Japanese foreign minister Masayoshi Ohira. Following India’s ‘peaceful nuclear explosion’ in 1974, Nixon inquired as to how the Japanese government would react. After Ohira assured him that “Japan is in no way thinking of going nuclear,” Nixon responded vaguely that “I would not indicate what Japan should do, but I would just point out the increasing likelihood of nuclear war as more states acquire these devices. Of course, the answer is to look to working even harder to strengthen a structure

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32 It was not until the election of the new Democratic Party in the late 2000s that this issue was investigated and scrutinized publicly. David Jacobson, “Disgraced Mainichi Journalist Reopens 30-year-old Scandal Over Okinawa Reversion,” Japan Focus (July 12, 2005). Available online: http://www.japanfocus.org/-David-Jacobson/1983.

33 Endicott (1975, 42-43) recounts this interpellation.
of peace ... so that states will reject the option of force, nuclear or otherwise. It sounds idealistic but there is no other way to approach the problem.”

One implication of Nixon’s statement is that he was intimating his own uncertainty regarding Japan’s stance towards nuclear weapons acquisition. To be sure, the National Security Decision Memorandum 13 did not register as a goal of US foreign policy towards the clarification and credible renunciation of nuclear weapons by Japan. Still, Japan sent ambiguous signals regarding its own stance towards nuclear weapons that even Nixon noticed them.

US decision-makers were also aware that Japan’s posture was perceptibly ambiguous for other states. In his meeting with Kissinger ahead of Nixon’s visit to China, Zhou Enlai opined that:

“[d]espite this treaty, Japan with her present industrial capabilities is fully able to produce all the means of delivery. She is able to manufacture ground-to-air, ground-to-ground missiles, and sea-to-ground missiles. As for bombers, she is all the more capable of manufacturing them. The only thing lacking is the nuclear warhead. Japan’s output of nuclear power is increasing daily. The United States supply of enriched uranium to Japan is not enough for her requirement, and she is now importing enriched uranium from other countries. And so her nuclear weapons can be produced readily. She cannot be prevented from doing so merely by the treaty. You have helped her develop her economy to such a level. And she is bound to demand outward expansion.”

35 It is not entirely clear what else to infer from Nixon’s probing question and statement. At minimum, he was signaling that the United States did not tolerate nuclear proliferation. Yet he stopped short of asking for Japanese reassurances that the government would not develop its own independent nuclear capability. Below I explore more fully the reasons for why the United States did not mount such an active counterproliferation policy.
For Zhou, Japan’s “feathers have grown on its wings and it is about to take off,” meaning that Japan would soon convert its economic power into military power. Such statements, to be sure, prompted Kissinger to assuage Zhou’s concerns. Kissinger remarked that “we opposed a nuclear rearmed no matter what some officials might suggest to the contrary.” US decision-makers even knew of Japan’s use of nuclear blackmail against the Soviet Union. Specifically, Prime Minister Kakeui Tanaka informed Nixon that he “told Brezhnev that he should not give the Japanese too rough a time because they were quite capable of nuclear weapons.” In sum, other states interpreted Japan’s stance towards nuclear weapons as ambiguous and so did officials in the US government.

This persistent ambiguity bought the Japanese government enough time to develop a latent nuclear capability. The successes of the centrifuge program in the mid-1970s meant that the Japanese government had access to fissile materials – a necessary component for a nuclear bomb. Nevertheless, aside from the political challenges associated with the development of nuclear weapons, this so-called latent nuclear capability faces serious technical constraints. As Matake Kamiya writes, these constraints include having an insufficient stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium; lacking a ballistic missile deployment capability; and having to divert nuclear power activity towards military purposes despite being subject to IAEA regulation.

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38Kissinger recorded that “when Chou claimed that a nuclear umbrella tended to make Japan aggressive against others, I said that the alternative of Japan’s nuclear rearment was much more dangerous. There was no question that if we withdrew our umbrella they would very rapidly build nuclear weapons.” Kissinger to Nixon, “My October China Visit: Discussion of the Issues,” November 11, 1971, Negotiating US-Chinese Rapprochement, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 70, Available online: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB70/. In their exchanges with Chinese decision-makers, Nixon and Kissinger emphasized the threat posed by a Japan unfettered by an alliance with the United States. Playing the ‘Japan card’ was intended to sell the merits of the Security Treaty to China. See Komine (2009).


40See Kemp (2010).

41Kamiya (2010, 69-71). In 1990, a quarter of all IAEA inspections were conducted in Japan. Paul (2000, 57).
How the Japanese Government Learned to *Start* Worrying and Accept the Bomb

What explains Japan’s ambiguous nuclear posturing after 1964? To what extent did concerns regarding US extended deterrence drive Japanese nuclear behavior? To answer these questions, it is worth tracing the evolution of Japan’s perception of US alliance reliability since the signing of the Treaty of San Francisco and the Security Treaty.

During the 1950s, Japan accrued the benefits of being an archipelago state that faced no direct military threat, and so its decision-makers were unfazed by the diminished role of conventional military power that the New Look embodied. In fact, rather than being satisfied with the existing US military presence, Japanese leaders sought a reduction in US armed forces.\(^{42}\) This desire was manifest in Japanese efforts to revise the Security Treaty Between the United States and Japan signed in 1951. In its place, Japanese leaders sought a mutual defense treaty that contained provisions for limiting US use rights of bases located in Japan, stipulating the withdrawal of US ground forces, and seeking agreement on the withdrawal of US air and naval forces.\(^{43}\) One motivation behind these requests was to be on a more equal standing with the United States. After all, a prevailing view of the 1951 Security Treaty was that it was more asymmetrical than the other treaties that the United States later negotiated with South Korea and the Philippines. A new mutual defense treaty was, therefore, necessary to redress the inequality perceived in the existing treaty.\(^{44}\) Another reason lay in how the Japanese had a different understanding regarding the role of US ground forces. Members of Japanese society saw the US army mostly as an occupying force that had less efficacy as a ‘trip wire’ intended to deter potential adversaries. This view may be traced


\(^{43}\)Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State, July 28, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 79-80.

not only to the cultural distance between the two countries, but also how the very geography of Japan required a military presence to be primarily based on air and naval power.\textsuperscript{45}

Accordingly, the Radford Plan appears to have made little impression on Japanese decision-makers.\textsuperscript{46} Shortly after the US media reported on the alleged Radford Plan, a circular from the US embassy in Tokyo noted that:

“[r]ecent statements emanating from Washington tend to confirm the view that ground forces are becoming less important not only for Japan but for the United States as well. The idea of shifting to a greater dependence on modern weapons has received a tremendous amount of publicity, and the implications of this shift are not lost on the Japanese. The United States appears to the Japanese to have revised its own defense planning but still to be urging Japanese adherence to U.S. Force goals, which were determined five years or more ago, and which provide for what the Japanese no doubt think is an excessive emphasis on ground forces.”\textsuperscript{47}

Japanese decision-makers thus were not so disturbed by the ‘Radford Plan’ as their West German counterparts. In fact, they embraced such changes insofar as they were already requesting a reduction in the US military presence in Japan. The Secretary General of the LDP, and Japanese prime minister between 1957 and 1960, Nobusuke Kishi, noted that a “major source of friction” between the two countries “[arose] from the existence of numerous United States bases and the presence of large numbers of American troops in Japan.”\textsuperscript{48} However, willingness on the part of the Japanese to reduce US ground force levels

\textsuperscript{45}The Girard incident reinforced negative views of the US troop presence amongst many members of Japanese society. This fractious episode in US-Japanese relations began when a US soldier shot and killed a Japanese housewife while she was collecting scrap metal. The US government ultimately agreed to extradite the soldier to Japanese authorities. For more on Japanese attitudes towards the United States during the immediate postwar period, see Dower (1999).

\textsuperscript{46}LaFeber (1997, 316-317) argues that Japanese decision-makers were apprehensive of the New Look and the troop withdrawals it entailed. However, he does not cite primary documents to support this claim. Moreover, I do not find any corroborating evidence and the observable implications of LaFeber’s argument do not seem to have empirical support.

\textsuperscript{47}Despatch from the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, August 3, 1956, FRUS 1955-57 23: 194.

\textsuperscript{48}Memorandum of Conversation, August 31, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 107.
did not entail an equal willingness to reduce US force levels across all forms of military power. Befitting for an archipelago state, Japanese leaders valued the presence of US naval and air forces, presumably because these forces posed a more effective deterrent to external aggression. Reflecting this view, the Japanese proposal for a mutual defense treaty requested that the removal of US naval and air forces would take place “at the latest six years after completion of the withdrawal of the ground forces.”

Other factors likely shaped Japanese perceptions of US credibility in the region. To begin, US diplomatic conduct was replete with expressions of commitment to containing local communist ambitions. Just as the strategic situation facing Japan differed from that which confronted West Germany at this time, the United States found East Asia more volatile so as to require a more assertive presence. While one communist state – the Soviet Union – threatened US allies in Europe, East Asia featured the Soviet Union and China (in addition to North Korea). As Thomas J. Christensen notes, the regional presence of two communist states generated greater geopolitical conflict and hampered US-led containment efforts. Despite being both communist, however, leaders of these two states expressed significant ideological disagreements. Consequently, they competed to claim ideological leadership by engaging in aggressive foreign policy actions that they would have otherwise eschewed. These actions included continued territorial aggression such as when China bombarded the Quemoy and Matsu Islands and seized Yijangshan Islands in the Taiwan Straits in 1955. Despite the brinkmanship involved in these crises, they provided another opportunity for the United States to signal its resolve in defending its regional allies. Indeed, the United States even threatened to use nuclear weapons to force China to back down.

49 Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State, July 28, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 80. That Japanese decision-makers found New Look agreeable does not imply that members of Japanese society felt the same way. Matthew Jones shows that surveys of members of the Japanese public revealed an aversion towards the use of nuclear weapons in East Asia, especially in light of the historical precedent of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. See Jones (2010, 322-323).

50 For an extensive discussion of these security dynamics in East Asia during the early Cold War period, see Christensen (2011).

51 On the role of nuclear threats in the First and Second Taiwan Straits Crises, see Chang (1988), Foot (1988-1989), and Jones (2010).
Although US commitments in East Asia were interdependent, insofar as US support for Taiwan revealed US support for South Korea (and vice versa), they formed a segmented US alliance system in the region. Indeed, for US decision-makers, what rendered the security environment more precarious was that Japan was politically and economically isolated from potential allies in the region. Postwar reconciliation of the variety that marked Franco-German relations was absent amongst US security partners in East Asia. Historical grievances and distrust continued to strain Japanese-South Korean relations throughout the Cold War.\(^5^2\)

According to some US decision-makers, Japan was already in a “semi-isolated” position in the region.\(^5^3\) Whatever Japan’s own threat perceptions, US decision-makers viewed the security environment in East Asia as unstable and thus in need of a robust US response. As indicated above, they sought to obtain Japanese support for maintaining an indefinite presence. Even NSC 162/2 acknowledged this point in formulating the New Look. It offered different expectations about future levels of US military assistance to Western Europe and East Asia. In Western Europe, “the United States must continue to assist in creating and maintaining mutually agreed European forces, but should reduce such assistance as rapidly as United States interests permit.” By contrast, the United States “should maintain the security of the offshore island chain and continue to develop the defensive capacity of Korea and Southeast Asia in accordance with existing commitments.”\(^5^4\)

These concerns were likely manifest in the effects of the Korean War on local alliance perceptions. For US decision-makers, the possibility of another regional conflagration like the Korean War brought attention to the vulnerability of East Asian societies to communist depredations and influence. The conflict was also instructive, for the relatively industrialized North initiated it by invading the relatively impoverished South. As a result, because

\(^5^2\)For more on this issue, see Lind (2009).

\(^5^3\)As US Ambassador to Japan Douglas MacArthur noted, “Japan has had neither the leavening influence of close association with dependable free world neighbors which Germany has had nor Germany’s first hand exposure to Soviet brutality. The Japanese people have in fact been living largely in semi-isolation since 1941 and most are quite unaware of the nature of the world in which we live.” Letter from the Ambassador in Japan (MacArthur) to the Secretary of State, May 25, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 23: 326-327.

the baseline level of economic development in East Asia was much lower than in Western Europe, US decision-makers recognized that the US military presence would have to last longer. Even Japan’s economy exhibited uncertain growth during the 1950s. US decision-makers were at times hesitant about pressuring the Japanese into increasing their defense expenditures because of the very risks it would create for economic growth and political stability.\textsuperscript{55} Nevertheless, for Japanese decision-makers, the major military response undertaken chiefly by the United States displayed that country’s commitment to curbing the spread of communist in that region. It constituted a costly signal of reassurance that would endure in the years following the armistice. Furthermore, the US-led coalition did more than repel the North’s effort to reunify the peninsula under communist control. It also prevented communist forces from using territorial gains in the South to expand their ability to project military force against Japan. As indicated, neither the Soviet Union nor China had a significant navy or a conventional air force during the 1950s – a feature of the regional security environment that likely shaped Japan’s relatively mild threat perceptions at this time. Acquiring South Korea would have reduced the distance over which communist adversaries would be projecting their military power.\textsuperscript{56}

To be sure, fears of entrapment rather than fears of abandonment might have been more pervasive in the region instead. US behavior during the Taiwan Straits Crises might have exemplified US commitment to contain communism in the region, but the use of nuclear threats might have made local actors nervous that the United States would indeed follow through with Massive Retaliation. A National Intelligence Estimate produced in March 1955 asserted that:

\textquotedblleft[if] the US used nuclear weapons against Communist China, the predominant...\textquotedblright

\textsuperscript{55}Dulles himself noted that the United States “had tended to push the Japanese too hard” on the subject of their military budget. Memorandum of Discussion at the 244th Meeting of the National Security Council, April 7, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 44. See also Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, April 6, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 38-40.

\textsuperscript{56}I am indebted to Kazuto Suzuki for raising this point regarding the Korean War with me. Some of my interviewees in Tokyo indicated that the cultural tendency on the part of the Japanese to diminish the power of China might also explain differences in the threat assessments of US and Japanese decision-makers.
world reaction would be one of shock. These reactions would be particularly adverse if these weapons were used to defend the offshore islands or destroy military concentrations prior to an all-out Communist Chinese attempt to take the offshore islands. However, certain Asian and European allies might condone the US use of nuclear weapons to stop an actual invasion of Taiwan. The general reaction of non-Communist Asians would be emotional and would be extremely critical of the US. In the case of Japan, the Government would probably attempt to steer a more neutral course.”

The Estimate went on to add that “if the US succeeded in curbing Chinese Communist aggression in the Taiwan area without becoming involved in protracted, full-scale hostilities, and without employing nuclear weapons, US prestige and the confidence of the non-Communist world in US leadership would be enhanced.”

Eisenhower himself was unsure which course to take. On the one hand, Eisenhower would state that “if [a ‘small war’] grew to anything like Korea proportions, the action would become one for atomic weapons.” On the other hand, he noted that, with respect to South Korea and Taiwan, “this business of arguing that you are going to defend these countries through recourse to nuclear weapons isn’t very convincing. In point of fact, these countries do not wish to be defended by nuclear weapons. They all regard these weapons as essentially offensive in character, and our allies are absolutely scared to death that we will use such weapons.”

Even though the United States came to the defense of Taiwan against Chinese provocations, alarm over potential nuclear reuse against Asian peoples by the United States was pervasive amongst local audiences in the region. Public opinion in Japan, in particular, seemed even dismissive of Taiwan’s role in US strategy towards China.

\footnotemark[60]For an extended discussion of how the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis informed US strategic thinking and affected US alliances, see Jones (2010, 362-400).
If the foregoing demonstrations of anti-communist resolve were not enough, US officials even expressed commitment to Japan in very unambiguous terms. In fact, rather than Japanese decision-makers fearing US abandonment, US decision-makers feared Japanese abandonment. They were unclear as to whether Japan was sufficiently committed to the bilateral security partnership and whether it was capable or even willing to respond to regional communist threats over the long-term. That Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida articulated a foreign policy predicated on relying on US military protection seemed to matter little.61 After all, Japanese leaders continued to hotly debate the degree to which Japan should align itself with the United States and the extent to which the United States should be able to deploy certain military resources on Japanese power. Thus, while accepting Japanese requests for ground force withdrawals, US decision-makers wanted to maintain a general military presence in Japan “indefinitely.”62 For US decision-makers a strong connection existed between Japanese security and that of the entire region. In a conversation with British foreign secretary Harold Macmillan, Dulles noted that:

“[i]n earlier years the rivalries of Russia, China and Japan maintained an uneasy equilibrium of power in the Asian mainland. Now with Russia and China allied and Japan inert and lacking power, the United States had to maintain more military power in the Pacific area than it would otherwise choose. Were we to withdraw, one could look for a substantial expansion of Communist power throughout the Far East.”63

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61 The Yoshida Doctrine emphasizes economic development and reliance on US military protection. Because of the Yoshida Doctrine’s pacifist connotations, some might suspect that the postwar Japanese leadership was sufficiently dovish and would thus acquiesce to US military strategy so long as basic US military obligations remained in place. Katzenstein (1996, 107, 148) offers such an argument regarding Japanese foreign policy, though he emphasizes the role of cultural norms. These norms would have begun emerging during the period under review here. Yet this view of the Yoshida Doctrine is simplistic. Despite its apparently peaceful character, Richard Samuels cogently argues that its adoption and perseverance was rooted less in pacifist values and more in an objective, even realist, appraisal of Japanese capabilities and constraints. Samuels (2008).


63 Memorandum of a Conversation between Foreign Secretary Macmillan and Secretary of State Dulles,
Simply put, the United States had to remain in the region as long as the dual communist threat existed, and so US decision-makers beseeched their Japanese decision-makers to accept a US military presence. One administration official advised that the Japanese government should recognize that the “United States must retain air, naval, and ground-logistical bases in Japan on a long-term basis.” Such recognition would help stabilize the relationship between the two states and assure US decision-makers of Japan’s commitment to the security partnership despite two unfavorable trends.

First, Japanese domestic politics featured two factions whose policies risked making US security objectives more difficult to attain. On the one hand, there were Conservatives who were pro-American but internally divided and seemingly anxious for greater foreign policy independence. On the other hand, there were Socialists who were “essentially neutralist and to an extent anti-American.” US decision-makers thus sensed that their ability to influence their Japanese counterparts was rapidly diminishing. Second, US decision-makers believed that the Japanese were naively optimistic regarding the communist threat. This divergence is manifest in discussions of Japan’s commercial relationship with China. Specifically, US decision-makers were worried that Japanese trade would “substantially increase China’s war potential” because it would comprise such Japanese exports as machine tools and electronic equipment. Moreover, in advocating for US military withdrawal, Nobusuke Kishi claimed


64 Memorandum from the Acting Assistant of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Sebald) to the Secretary of State, August 26, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 88.


66 Following Thomas Berger, I noted earlier three categories of preferences that comprised the Japanese domestic political landscape. Still, US decision-makers often differentiated between two: Conservatives and Socialists.

67 Memorandum of a Conversation between Dulles and Kishi, June 20, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 23: 401. US aversion to Japanese trade with the Chinese is also apparent in Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Japan, January 10, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 5-6; Memorandum of Discussion at the 244th Meeting of the NSC, April 7, 1955 23: 46-47. Moreover, Japan also sought to expand trade with Southeast Asia, leading the government to adopt policy stances different from those than held by the United States at the Bandung Conference. LaFeber (1997, 313). Finally, it is important to note that Japanese policy towards China consisted of separating political issues from economic ones. This theme continued at least through the 1960s. Memorandum from Norred to Green, folder: “POL. Japan, Communist China (CHICOM), 1965,”
that the Soviet threat was not as severe as some officials in the Japanese government argued.\textsuperscript{68} As much as US decision-makers approved of Kishi, they were unsure that he would serve as a reliable ally should he become prime minister. One presidential adviser recommended to Dulles that Kishi be disabused of the “‘Alice-in-Wonderland Dream World’ frame of mind” by having Admiral Radford “[impress] Mr. Kishi with the exposed position which Japan would occupy if United States forces were to be entirely withdrawn at this time, leaving Japan a complete vacuum as far as military security were concerned.”\textsuperscript{69} The United States, therefore, appeared more anxious about Japanese alliance support than vice versa.

Unshared threat perceptions and domestic controversies regarding the security partnership shaped the context in which the United States and Japanese governments renegotiated their security treaty in the late 1950s. Unlike West German leaders, who demanded from their US counterparts a continuing military presence in Europe and greater say in military arrangements, Japanese leaders advocated the withdrawal of US ground forces. Hawkish and nationalist leaders like Ichiro Hatoyama and Nobusuke Kishi needed to be convinced that the continued presence of US air and naval force served their interests. These leaders also sought to redress alliance inequality through legal channels. Indeed, Japan sought a revision of its security treaty with the United States in part to obtain greater latitude in its foreign policy. Whereas the 1951 treaty did not specify the terms under which the United States could maintain its military presence and bases, the 1960 revision now constrained the United States to consult with the Japanese government over their use as well as any initiative to install nuclear weapons on Japanese territory. Another important feature of the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security was that it gave the Japanese government’s consent to the United States to use the island of Okinawa as a site for many of its military bases.\textsuperscript{70} Renegotiating this treaty proved deeply controversial. After all, Prime Minister Kishi had

\textsuperscript{68}Memorandum of a Conversation, August 31, 1955, FRUS 1955-57 23: 105.
\textsuperscript{69}Memorandum for the Record of a Meeting Between the Secretary of State and the President’s Special Consultant (Nash), June 5, 1957, FRUS 1955-57 23: 340.
\textsuperscript{70}For more on US base politics on Okinawa, see Sarantakes (2000) and Cooley (2008, 137-174).
to step down amidst violent demonstrations that rocked Tokyo and Eisenhower even had to cancel a state visit to Japan. For US decision-makers, the unpopularity of the treaty revisions offered proof that the Japanese left was strongly opposed to the bilateral security partnership.\textsuperscript{71}

These controversies soon subsided. During the Kennedy administration, Japanese leaders showed little concern over the direction of US foreign policy that could have prompted nuclear behavior. In fact, a relative tranquility characterized alliance relations during this period. Michael Schaller describes the first three years of the 1960s as “unusually convivial.”\textsuperscript{72} Roger Buckley notes that this decade was the “quietest decade of the postwar relationship,” adding that memoirs written by US government officials hardly mention Japan during the early 1960s.\textsuperscript{73} One reason for this quietude was that, following the specular crisis that erupted over the revisions of the security treaty, neither the United States nor Japan wanted to again disturb the alliance. For the LDP, the events of 1960 demonstrated that public debates over security policy were too divisive and even politically dangerous. For the United States, those events highlighted the risks of alliance adjustment. To convey US interest in fostering improved relations with its East Asian ally, Kennedy appointed renowned historian Edwin Reischauer as US Ambassador to Japan. Reischauer had already argued in a 1960 \textit{Foreign Affairs} essay that the relationship between the two countries needed to be repaired and be placed on more equal footing.\textsuperscript{74} Accordingly, both sides managed any intermittent disagreements over such issues as trade with the Chinese and Okinawa with little overt controversy. Simply put, security issues became a subject that became taboo for Japanese decision-makers to broach publicly. As Buckley notes, “[m]emories of 1960 acted as a powerful constraint from pressing matters too hard and too far.”\textsuperscript{75} Neither did pressing security need exist to revisit debates regarding security arrangements involving Japan. This

\textsuperscript{72}Schaller (1997, 163).
\textsuperscript{73}Buckley (1992, 100).
\textsuperscript{74}Reischauer (1960).
\textsuperscript{75}Buckley (1992, 99).
period of tranquility was possible because Japan continued to enjoy a favorable geopolitical position. The absence of a conventional military threat, like that which confronted West Germany in Central-Eastern Europe, enabled the “conviviality” that Michael Schaller described. Japanese decision-makers could avoid the difficult questions regarding their defense policy when their communist adversaries still lacked the means to project military power against Japanese territories.

This situation was to change, however. The Chinese detonation of a nuclear bomb on October 16, 1964 shattered the insouciance of both Japanese and US decision-makers. Japanese leaders had hitherto shared little sense of the threat that their US counterparts perceived as emanating from China. Indeed, as Michael Schaller argues, Japanese decision-makers did not heed US warnings about their alleged naïveté regarding China’s aggressive foreign policy. Following the nuclear detonation Japanese leaders reassessed their perceptions of the Chinese threat. If their public reaction appeared “muted”, to use the words of one security analyst, it was likely because they did not wish the event to draw attention away from the 1964 Summer Olympic Games that were being held in Tokyo between October 10 and 24. Privately, they were alarmed. A *Tokyo Shimbun* report published in February 2013 revealed that, upon becoming prime minister, Sato held closed cabinet-level discussions to determine the desirability of starting a nuclear weapons program. Consideration of nuclear weaponization did not yet progress beyond these discussions.

From the perspective of US government officials at least, anxieties over the direction of US foreign policy continued to be manifest amongst members of the Japanese government. Reischauer’s successor, U. Alexis Johnson, noted in 1967 that Sato was apprehensive over US-Soviet détente. Specifically, “they are concerned that relations between the two ‘super

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77 Schaller (1997, 174).
78 Kase (2001, 63). I thank Yoichi Funabashi for alerting me to this important yet often overlooked aspect of the detonation’s timing.
powers,’ the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., not ‘improve’ to the extent that we and the Soviets face Japan with fait accompli in matters concerning Japanese interests.”

Though Japanese leaders regarded the Soviet Union as the primary threat, Alexis Johnson also claimed that they did not want the United States to align itself too closely with China so as to reach agreements at Japan’s expense.

Following the Chinese nuclear detonation in October 1964, the Japanese government began undertaking positions that reflected their unease over the direction of US foreign policy. To begin, the Japanese government sought reassurances from the United States. Just as the United States was increasing its military involvement in Vietnam, Sato was probing US resolve to protect anticommmunist interests in East Asia. On January 12, 1965 he met with Johnson, the first meeting with a US president after the Chinese nuclear detonation. Sato expressed his support to the United States in Vietnam. The minutes of the meeting recounts that:

“[t]he Prime Minister said that the greatest problems center around Communist China and South Viet-Nam, and an exchange of views is needed on those issues ... The Prime Minister then asked the President to explain the position of the United States with reference to holding the 38th parallel in Korea and regarding the defense of Taiwan. He inquired whether the President could make a commitment not to withdraw from South Viet-Nam ... The Prime Minister said that the United States must hold out and be patient.”

After hearing Johnson’s expressions of resolve to fight in Vietnam, Sato responded that he “applauded the United States determination to maintain a firm stand in Viet-Nam and

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80 Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson, March 1, 1967, FRUS 1964-1968 29: 168.
81 Ibid., 166. Interestingly, US intelligence analysts discovered that even after 1964 Japan was exporting strategic electronic equipment to the Chinese. This equipment was a “a shocking contribution on Japan’s part to Peking’s sophistication of weaponry and other production of military import.” These exports declined by 1967, however. Memorandum from Alfred Jenkins of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Special Assistant (Rostow), June 18, 1968, FRUS 1964-1968 29: 288.
reiterated his desire that [the United States] hold out.”

When asked for his advice later that day on how the United States should proceed in Vietnam, Sato argued that “utmost patience and forbearance were required. Neither an advance north nor American withdrawal was desirable. The latter would provoke a ‘falling domino’ situation. The United States should hold on.”

In acquiring these assurances, to be sure, Sato offered his own to his US interlocutors. When Rusk asked Sato for his thoughts on the Chinese nuclear detonation, the Japanese prime minister noted his country’s anti-nuclear stance. However, exhibiting a murkiness that is typical of this case, he remarked to Johnson that “if the [Chinese communists] had nuclear weapons, the Japanese should have them.” Nevertheless, Johnson and Sato issued a communiqué that emphasized the commitment of each country to the other’s security.

Japanese pledges of support continued as the United States increased its military involvement in Vietnam. Still, whereas South Korea sent combat forces to take part in the actual waging of the war, the Japanese government did almost nothing.

Some observers claim that the intensification of the Vietnam War provoked fears of entrapment amongst Japanese leaders. Accordingly, the Japanese government was reluctant to provide military assistance despite repeated requests made by the United States. Instead, the Japanese government offered financial and medical aid. Yet at least one other interpretation of this behavior is possible. Sato, an avowed anti-communist who had once

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83 Ibid., 70.
85 Ibid., 76.
87 Article 8 of the Johnson-Sato Communiqué articulates the US commitment formally: “[t]he President and the Prime Minister reaffirmed their belief that it is essential for the stability and peace of Asia that there be no uncertainty about Japan’s security. From this viewpoint, the Prime Minister stated that Japan’s basic policy is to maintain firmly the United States-Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty arrangements, and the President reaffirmed the United States determination to abide by its commitment under the Treaty to defend Japan against any armed attack from the outside.” Johnson-Sato Communiqué, January 13, 1965.
88 The conventional historical view is that the Japanese government opposed the Vietnam War but was limited in its ability to criticize the US handling of it. Direct evidence of how Japanese decision-makers perceived the war is scant, though they did express disapproval of the US bombardment of North Vietnam in early 1965. See Logevall (1999). Yet, in the context of Sato’s statements quoted in this section, such disagreements seem to focus more on the tactical level than on the strategic level.
showed support for US military engagement in Vietnam, could have faced significant domestic constraints that prevented any overt military support. These constraints included not only Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, but also a major student movement that was strongly opposed to the war. It is also possible that these domestic constraints offered Sato the justification to free ride on US efforts to curb the spread of communism in the region.

This extrapolation of Sato’s attitudes seems valid in light of Japan’s reaction to US military failures in Vietnam. On March 31, 1968, following poor results in the New Hampshire Democratic primary, Johnson made two related announcements. First, he vowed to unilaterally de-escalate hostilities towards North Vietnam. Second, he declared that he would not run for re-election as President. The US ambassador to Japan noted that Johnson’s speech “has been widely misinterpreted here as admission of defeat and reversal of U.S. policy on Vietnam, foreshadowing U.S. withdrawal from Asia,” “as pulling rug out from Sato,” and portending closer alignment with China. Consequently, even the most pro-US members of the Japanese governments began recommending that Japan “loosen its ties with US including security relationship and adopt a more independent foreign policy.” The US ambassador also later reported that Johnson’s speech had political repercussions for Sato. The Japanese prime minister was now “under heavy attack not only by opposition but within his own party for having tied himself too closely to us and then allegedly being left out on a limb by ‘reversal’ of our policy in Vietnam.”

Johnson’s declarations deepened suspicions amongst members of the Japanese govern-

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90 Domestic opponents construed Sato’s visit to South Vietnam as support for the war. *Ibid.*.

91 My interpretation allows that members of the political opposition and domestic society may have feared entrapment whereas leading LDP officials did not. No direct evidence exists that support this hypothesis, yet this interpretation better fits the pattern of Sato’s support for the United States in Vietnam, lack of military support, and alarm over Johnson’s later announcement to de-escalate and not seek re-election. Sato wanted his cake and eat it, too, before experiencing shock when he realized that this strategy might not pay the desired dividends.


93 Johnson statements recorded in Editorial Note, FRUS 1964-1968 29: 270. Original documentary record is Telegram 7106 from Tokyo, April 3, 1968, National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL JAPAN-US.

ment regarding their country’s relationship with the United States. In April 1968, a member of the Foreign Office noted that Japan now had to increase its defense expenditures because “in view of worldwide U.S. commitments it is ‘dangerous to place excessive reliance on US assistance in the conventional area.” A telegram from the US embassy in Japan conveys the sense of dismay felt by members of the Japanese public and government:

“Japan’s views of the US and its role in world, which have in past provided baseline around which ups and downs in state of our relations have occurred, may have been unsettled by recent developments. In economic field, Arab-Israeli war, balance of payments difficulties, ‘protectionism’ scare, etc. are casting doubt on extent to which Japan can continue to count on us to carry its ball as well as our own in world economy, let alone expect special favors. In security field, though opinions have been divided on need for protection against threat, and though our military presence in Japan has increasingly become embarrassment rather than asset to Japanese politicians, Japan has at least seen our military containment posture as immutable part of landscape and have generally assumed it would be successful – at least over short run. Tet offensive and what was interpreted as abrupt shift into de-escalation and negotiations with Hanoi have thrown doubt on US firmness and invincibility. Racial violence and social unrest in America have roused concern over basic stability of American society, made American image a rather less positive political symbol. All this has combined with continuing long-run rise in nationalism and decline in conservative strength to make it possible that current worsening of perspective is not just because we are in political valley, but perhaps something more fundamental. I thus consider it quite possible that Japan is moving toward a serious reappraisal of our relationship, with much potential for harm to our interests as we have thus far defined them.”

96 Emphasis added. Telegram from the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, June 5, 1968, FRUS
If this appraisal of the Japanese government’s views on its relationship were accurate, then it would validate the thesis that perceptions of US reliability were feeding Japanese insecurity. That is, the United States was altering its strategic posture from one that engaged in active military containment of communism to one of retreat and retrenchment. To be sure, this statement refers to diverse indicators that observers could use to measure US reliability (e.g., the Six Day War and internal racial tensions).\textsuperscript{97} Still, even this document expressly linked the unilateral de-escalation of hostilities with US resolve and credibility.

Though it would also accord with my main argument, another interpretation of Japan’s reaction to Johnson’s speech is still possible. Johnson might have been a victim of his own rhetoric from the time before the conflict in Vietnam was Americanized. As Fredrik Logevall records, many US allies were at best ambivalent towards the claims advanced by the Johnson administration in the run-up to the landing of US marines on Da Nang. Yet Johnson was insistent that his options were limited to sustained military confrontation (or escalation) and withdrawal. In his view, as well as for many others in his administration, the latter option was wholly unattractive because it would signify not only the loss of South Vietnam but also major damage to US credibility in fighting communism.\textsuperscript{98} By linking any other option short of military escalation to surrender and retreat in the region, his March 1968 speech might suggest to attentive observers that complete withdrawal and disengagement were now forthcoming. This strategic myth that Johnson promoted and himself believed took a life on its own. Put differently, if you keep linking actions to your resolve, initially skeptical audiences might over time come to believe that such a connection exists, particularly if you are finally undertaking actions that you had explicitly used to associate with weakness.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{97}Jones highlights how poor race relations within the United States hampered US diplomacy towards East Asia and much of the developing world during the first part of the Cold War. See Jones (2010).

\textsuperscript{98}Logevall (1999) argues for the centrality of Johnson’s personality as a major causal factor in the Americanization of the Vietnam War. That allies refrained from major criticism and that the US public appeared largely disinterested provided permissive circumstances for Johnson to embark upon military escalation in Vietnam.

\textsuperscript{99}On strategic myths and blowback, see Snyder (1991). Important rejoinders to the view expressed here may be found in Mercer (1996) and Press (2005). Jonathan Mercer alleges that leaders might expect other
These concerns heightened when Richard Nixon became president. The Guam Doctrine and the subsequent troop withdrawals in East Asia amplified the unease. As Victor Cha recounts, North Korean provocations in the South – which predated Nixon – and China’s antagonism towards Japan over its Taiwan policy added significance to this announced direction in US foreign policy. It was unclear how Japan, with its constitutional constraints and domestic politics, could readily adjust to these evolving security dynamics. Foreign Minister Aichi wrote in a 1969 Foreign Affairs article that:

“[a] simple transfer of peacekeeping responsibilities in Asia from the United States to Japan is out of the question because of Japan’s constitutional limitation and the great disparity in both actual and potential military power between our two countries. Japanese public opinion is simply not prepared for such an undertaking; nor, I believe, would the other free nations of Asia welcome it ... It is reasonable to assume that for some time to come there will be no substitute for the continuing presence of American deterrent power to counter effectively any designs for large-scale military adventures in the area.”

Japanese observers, particularly those holding conservative beliefs, agreed with such sentiments. The conservative columnist Takeshi Muramatsu pointed to various actions and statements made by the US leadership as signifying declining credibility and reliability. For example, a statement by the former commander of the US Strategic Air Command that the leaders who backed down in a previous crisis to overcompensate and behave more firmly during the next crisis. Accordingly, the interdependence of commitments – if it were to exist – might mean that leaders cannot expect a specific instance of retreat to begin a pattern of retreat. Daryl Press finds that leaders infer credibility not on the basis of a state’s past actions but rather on the basis of its current interests and military power to support those interests. Although these analyses are compelling in their argument and evidence, it is unclear how they would explain perceptions of US incredibility and the resulting behavior of US allies following the declared draw-down of US hostilities in Vietnam.


Some readers might allege that I am privileging conservative views in this discussion. This allegation is true, but I believe this emphasis is justified because of the influence conservatives had on Japanese foreign policy-making during this period.

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United States might not always come to the military aid of Western Europe served as an omen for the alliance support that Japan could expect from the United States. In the early 1970s, public opinion polls found that respondents were reporting increasingly unfavorable – if not mixed – feelings towards the United States.

It was in this context that Sato’s government commissioned further studies regarding the feasibility and desirability of nuclear weapons before making a centrifuge program a national priority in 1969. Yet fears of US abandonment appeared to have motivated aspects of Japanese government’s response to Nixon’s East Asian troop withdrawals. Defense Agency Director-General Yasuhiro Nakasone advised his US interlocutors not to engage in troop withdrawals that were “undertaken drastically and in an all out fashion without coordination with the Japanese side.” Policy statements emanated from Tokyo that announced the need to reconsider Japanese foreign policy. The Japan Defense Agency, for example, released a Defense White Paper in October 1970 that announced the need for a reconsideration of Japan’s security relationship with the United States. Budgetary decisions accompanied such rhetoric: the 1970 budget included a 17.7% increase in defense spending. Japan was internally balancing in the face of possible US withdrawal. The reversion of Okinawa – partly intended to remove the last vestiges of US post-war occupation – was dealt in a manner to ensure that the United States would not be limited in its ability to provide extended deterrence in the region.

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103Endicott (1975, 6).
105Kemp (2010, 63-64).
107Komine (2013).
5.3 Ending Nuclear Behavior through Clarification

Despite the domestic unpopularity of nuclear weapons, the Japanese government made discreet but small movements towards nuclear weapons acquisition towards the late 1960s, beginning first with government probes and culminating in a national initiative to develop a centrifuge program. Though these actions were furtive, allies and adversaries alike were concerned with the Japanese government’s stance towards nuclear weapons. To be clear, there was no nuclear weapons program to shut down. Rather, Japan was still internationally ambiguous as to its stance towards nuclear weapons even if the government had no intentions at the time to acquire them. Clarifying this stance was important for the nascent nonproliferation regime.

I have already indicated how international observers were suspicious of Japanese nuclear intentions. It is worth adding that as much as US decision-makers were averse to Japanese nuclear behavior, they nevertheless practiced far more discretion in articulating their anti-proliferation views to their Japanese counterparts than to their West German counterparts. While the NPT was still being negotiated, Secretary of State Rusk advised that Japan express its “adherence” to the treaty.\footnote[108]{Memorandum from Secretary of State Rusk to President Johnson, September 4, 1967, FRUS 1964-1968 24: 207.} Indeed, during Sato’s January 1965 visit to Washington, D.C., Rusk sought Japanese reassurances regarding its commitment to abstain from nuclear weapons development. Nixon and Kissinger did not exhibit the same level of concern. Accordingly, they refrained from making overt requests for Japan to not acquire nuclear weapons development. Their lack of concern was support by members of the intelligence community. One Central Intelligence Agency report indicated that “Japan’s capability to develop and produce nuclear weapons and modest delivery systems is not questioned. The industrial and technological backup is available. But going nuclear would be a political decision; it would not be made on the basis of technological capability but on an
assessment of overriding national interests.” Nevertheless, other foreign policy observers in the United States did not share this seemingly laissez faire attitude. In the early 1970s, amidst widespread speculation in the US media regarding Japan’s nuclear intentions, US congressmen petitioned decision-makers to address Japan’s status regarding nuclear rearmament. One concerned member of a US study group on a safeguards agreement mentioned that when it came to the NPT and the IAEA, the United States should “not permit the Japanese to outwit us by using stalling tactics.”

Still, it is important not to overstate Nixon’s seeming lack of concern. Earlier I highlighted an exchange between him and Japanese foreign minister Masayoshi Ohira in which the US president asked of the Japanese government’s reaction to India’s ‘peaceful nuclear explosion.’ Ohira assured Nixon that Japan had no intention to acquire nuclear weapons. Nixon then remarked that “I would not indicate what Japan should do, but I would just point out the increasing likelihood of nuclear war as more states acquire these devices. Of course, the answer is to look to working even harder to strengthen a structure of peace ... so that states will reject the option of force, nuclear or otherwise. It sounds idealistic but there is no other way to approach the problem.” It is not entirely clear what to infer from Nixon’s probing question and statement. Yet he was signaling that the United States did not tolerate nuclear proliferation. Aversion to Japanese nuclear proliferation was private and tacit.

When Ford became US president, concerns still existed over the ambiguity characteriz-

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109 This report, produced at the request of Nixon, added that “a actual breakdown in major aspects of the international economic and political order – not presently foreseeable – could generate economic stress sufficient to cause dramatic shifts in Japan’s views on rearmament. With their country isolated in a hostile and strife-torn world, Japan’s leaders would probably see rearming as a prudent move, especially if a period of economic contention had so damaged US-Japanese relations as to make US guarantees of Japanese security appear less reliable ... Nevertheless, a rearmed Japan would be at best a second-class military power, unable to develop an assured deterrent, and aware that its ultimate security would still have to rest on alignment with one of the major powers.” Key Judgments from Research Study OPR-4 Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, May 1974, FRUS 1969-1974 E-12: 1-3.

110 Endicott (1975, 8-9).


ing Japan’s nuclear policy. One document is exemplary in conveying the uncertainties US
decision-makers had of Japan despite their doubts that the Japanese government had real
or contemporary interests in acquiring nuclear weapons. As one briefing memorandum pre-
pared for President Ford notes, “[m]ilitarily, Japan possesses enormous potential power, but
remains content to maintain only a modest defense establishment. The absence of immedi-
ate and palpable military threats and a host of political and diplomatic factors continue to
inhibit the Japanese from developing long-range conventional capabilities, deploying forces
overseas, extending military assistance, and exercising a ‘nuclear option.’” Nevertheless,
several pages later, the same memorandum includes the following statement:

“... the Indian nuclear test has been profoundly unsettling to the Japanese,
and if expanded international efforts to deal with the proliferation issues are not
undertaken, the Japanese toward a serious reassessment of their own non-nuclear
status. There are two issues for us. (1) What steps can we take to enhance the
prospects of early Japanese ratification of Non-Proliferation Treaty? (2) How
can we engage the Japanese in a broader multilateral non-proliferation strategy,
including the prospective conference of nuclear industrial states?”

Furthermore, Kissinger recognized that “the Japanese are preoccupied with reconsidering
their security policy in the fluid international environment of post-Vietnam.” Finally,
another memorandum prepared for Ford ahead of his meeting with Japanese prime minister
Miki notes that “[w]e privately told the Miki Government last spring that we hoped Japan
would ratify the NPT at an early date.”

How did Japan’s stance finally clarify so as to be unambiguous? What was the role
played by the United States? Because Japan has a bilateral alliance with the United States

113 Emphasis added. Memorandum for Major General Brent Scowcroft, August 26, 1974, folder: “Japan
(1),” National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 6, GRFL.
114 Memorandum for the President from Henry A. Kissinger, folder: “Japan (7),” National Security Adviser,
Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 7, GRFL.
115 Talking Points for Meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki, August 4, 1976, folder: “Japan
(7),” National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 7, GRFL.
and therefore dependent on the United States for its security needs, then Japan should be sensitive to US counterproliferation efforts. Though true, Japan became an economically powerful state that enjoyed important autonomy vis-à-vis the United States. This relative lack of dependence on the United States for economic needs enabled Japan to avoid making quick concessions that US leaders were seeking on issues relating to trade. The interaction between the alliance form and Japan’s growing economic power proved to make US counter-proliferation efforts difficult. The result of which was the Japan’s nuclear reversal ultimately reflected more of Japan’s security interests rather than US security interests. After all, the United States ideally would have wanted Japan to adopt an unambiguous stance as soon as possible. But such wishes were to remain unfulfilled. To be sure, Japan did rely on the US civilian nuclear industry. Yet Japanese domestic politics made it convenient for Japanese leaders to decouple US economic statecraft from their country’s nuclear policy. As a result, for fear of unsettling Japan’s domestic political environment and sparking new turmoil in alliance relations, US leaders had to be circumspect in their dealings with Japan regarding nuclear proliferation. Active bargaining between the two governments on security issues was muted in order to protect the greater interest of alliance stability.\footnote{In my interviews with regional experts and scholars in Tokyo, I asked whether and to what extent did the Japanese government use its ambiguous nuclear stance in the 1970s as a bargaining chip against the United States. Some of my interlocutors were quick to refute the notion, but others believed that developing a latent capacity for nuclear weapons served as a signal for what Japan could do in the event of US abandonment. These results are hardly conclusive and speak to the mysteriousness of this case.}

**Bilateralism, the Absence of Nuclear Sharing in East Asia, and Japan**

An alliance’s membership scope should influence the form of a counterproliferation effort undertaken by a patron, even if it primarily concerns clarification rather than the shut down of an active weapons program. Accordingly, an effort similar to the MLF in Western Europe should not appear in East Asia due to the bilateralism underpinning the US hub-and-spoke}
alliance system in the region. This expectation has empirical confirmation: no nuclear-sharing arrangement was proposed to US allies in East Asia. Nevertheless, documents reveal that at the time when the MLF initiative became dormant in Western Europe, some decision-makers inquired as to whether a similar nuclear-sharing arrangement would be appropriate for US allies in East Asia. The minutes of one meeting of the Committee of the Principals notes that Rusk wished to investigate the desirability and feasibility of a “US-supplied Far Eastern nuclear stockpile.”\[117\] In an internal memorandum, the Joint Chiefs of Staff noted:

“[s]hould pressures build up to the point that our Asian allies believe the development of a national nuclear capability to be clearly in their national interest, refusal to provide some form of nuclear assistance would put the United States in a position of denying to valued allies a nuclear capability possessed by the common enemy. The United States, therefore, should not rule out the possibility of increased nuclear support including some form of nuclear sharing with our allies in Asia when such is required in the US national interests.”\[118\]

Still, despite apparent interest by both the Department of State and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this policy idea did not progress beyond conception. Why was this the case?

The apparent absence of documents that directly bear on this issue suggests that this recommendation saw little active consideration by US decision-makers. This lack of discussion might be the result of the same factors that produced the hub-and-spoke system in the first place. Potential allies of Japan remained economically underdeveloped and politically unstable. Moreover, political tensions and historical grievances prevented any necessary reconciliation between the two leading allies of the United States in the region, South Korea and Japan. Indeed, the lack of self-driven alignment between Japan and South Korea also reflected the confidence felt by at least one of these two states in the direction of US for-

\[118\] Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara, January 16, 1965, FRUS 1964-1968 30: 145.

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eign policy. It is also likely that the failures attending MLF in Western Europe further dissuaded policy-makers from considering something similar in East Asia. Of course, the reasons for why the MLF failed in Western Europe were absent in East Asia. The region, for example, did not feature nuclear-armed allies such as France and Britain. Nuclear-sharing arrangements might have become intellectually discredited following their failure in Western Europe.

Another possibility is that US decision-makers might have had racialist beliefs and saw nuclear-sharing arrangements with non-European peoples as inconceivable. According to Christopher J. Hemmer and Peter Katzenstein, US decision-makers held highly racialized views of Asian peoples. They cite primary documents that show how US government officials held stereotypes of Asians as being ‘inferior.’ At the same time, these officials held a more egalitarian view of their European counterparts. Thus, multilateralism prevailed in trans-Atlantic relations whereas unilateralism and bilateralism characterized trans-Pacific relations. Consistent with this line of argument, it is likely that US decision-makers pursued a paternalistic policy in East Asia because they could not envision such racially subordinate groups attaining self-sufficiency and capable of participating in nuclear-sharing arrangements, at least not in the near future. A more likely explanation is that attitudes towards nuclear weapons in East Asia were more hostile, particularly because they were only

119 Cha (1999) observes that Japan and South Korea get along with each other best when they each get along worst with the United States. They tend to get along worst when their own bilateral relationships with the United States are strong.
120 Hemmer and Katzenstein (2002, 591-598). To be sure, they rely on an explicitly eclectic approach in explaining why an alliance such as NATO did not emerge in East Asia during the Cold War. Understandings of collective identity is only one variable in their multi-causal story. For more on racialized views of Asian peoples amongst US decision-makers, see Jones (2010).
121 This description of US decision-making in East Asia is consistent with some views expressed in the historical literature that the United States was coercive and heavy-handed in its post-war diplomacy towards Japan. For representative examples of such historiography, see Drifte (1983), Cumings (1993), Dower (1993), and Johnson (2000). I should state here that I present evidence that shows how US decision-makers did not take for granted Japanese alliance support and were more flexible in their diplomacy than some of the historiography on this subject suggests. The Japanese leadership openly expressed its preferences regarding the nature of its security relations with the United States, which US decision-makers took into account in formulating policy. My appraisal of US post-war diplomacy towards Japan is in line with the recent historical literature on the subject. For an excellent diplomatic history of US-Japanese relations in the 1950s, see Swenson-Wright (2005).
used in the Pacific front and not against Germany. Nuclear-sharing arrangements might have rebutted criticisms that nuclear weapons were weapons that white peoples would exclusively use at the expense of Asian populations. Nevertheless, this public aversion would have added to the difficulties of developing a political foundation for a nuclear-sharing arrangement that NATO seemed to have.

This explanation seems plausible in light of how the United States relied on secret bilateral agreements for the transit and storage of its nuclear weapons in Japan. The purpose underlying this secrecy was to avoid the domestic political backlash that disclosure of such arrangements would provoke. Though the Japanese government did not openly acknowledge the existence of these secret arrangements, members of the Japanese public suspected that the United States was storing and moving nuclear weapons across Japanese territory since the 1960s. Indeed, this observation points to another reason why an initiative like the MLF could not have taken place in East Asia. The MLF, after all, was a public initiative of which communist adversaries, voters, and domestic opposition groups were aware. It would have been difficult for the United States to implement an MLF-like arrangement under those conditions that existed in Japan and East Asia at the time.

Whatever the ultimate cause for the absence of a nuclear-sharing arrangement in East Asia, discussions between US and Japanese decision-makers on matters of nuclear policy occurred on a bilateral basis. The secret transit and storage agreements prove this rule. If the United States were able to obtain secret Japanese government support for these arrangements, then why did bilateralism not serve as an effective conduit for the US to pressure the Japanese into credibly renouncing nuclear weapons?
As the United States Economically Declines, Japan Economically Rises

Alliance compensation theory claims that the degrees of economic and security dependence that a defended ally has on its patron interact so as to shape the effectiveness of the patron’s counterproliferation efforts. Japan might have not been enmeshed in a multilateral alliance like West Germany, but nor was it economically vulnerable – as we will see in the next chapter – like South Korea. Though Japan’s security partnership with the United States was bilateral, and thus should be more pliable to major power coercion, its economic growth empowered Japan to obtain greater economic and technological independence from the United States by the late 1960s.

Consider the following attributes of Japan’s economy. Like West Germany, Japan had a balance-of-payments surplus with the United States of approximately $300 million in 1966, benefiting from an additional $300-350 million dollars of US military expenditures in its territory. Its accumulated growth also created dislocations within the US economy. Specifically, the US textiles industry suffered significant losses in market shares upon having to compete with Japanese imports. Already in 1961, when Japanese penetration of the US clothing market was negligible and US merchandise trade with Japan had a $782 million surplus, did unions demand stronger trade restrictions against Japanese firms. Partly due to the liberalization of US trade policy following the Dillon Round and Japan’s export-oriented industrial policy, deficits began characterizing US merchandise trade with Japan in 1965. Japan also benefited from the Vietnam War thanks to both direct and indirect

124 Ibid., 181. See also Johnson (1982) for a general discussion of Japan’s industrial and export strategies during this time period. Others note that Japan was slow in meeting US demands to liberalize its trade during the Kennedy Round multilateral trade negotiations in the early 1960s. Mochizuki (1995, 113). Indeed, documents show that US decision-makers were frustrated with the Japanese in negotiations over offset arrangements. However, they were attuned to the risk that too much pressure on the Japanese to increase military expenditures (as one means to redress the balance-of-payments problem) would be counterproductive. See, e.g., Memorandum of Conversation, December 8, 1962 and Position Paper: Military Offset Negotiations with Japan, December 3-5, 1962 in folder: “FN-12 Military Offsets (Buildup of Gilpatric
procurement by the United States and other Asian countries during the late 1960s. One result of these economic transactions was the growth in the volume of Japanese exports from $2.4 billion dollars in 1965 to over $9 billion dollars in 1972.

By contrast, the US economy was suffering stagflation when both the inflation rate and the unemployment rate become high as growth remains sluggish. Tight monetary policies were ineffective at curbing inflation and foreign competition posed a new but significant threat to the automobile, steel, and electronics industries. That Japan’s economy relied on exports mattered little. A member of the National Security Council observed that “[i]n bilateral negotiations with Japan, Japan is clearly vulnerable to the United States, as it exports eight times as much of its production to us as we export to it.” Yet he proceeded to argue that:

“This information, however, does not take us very far. We should not conclude from it that our interests are served by bludgeoning the Japanese with a threat to restrict their imports to the United States. Moreover, although percentages indicate that our reliance on trade is small in relative terms, our total exports are the largest in the world. They account for just under $50 billion and affect such key American industries as agriculture, computers, aircraft, and agricultural machinery. A substantial cut back in the production of these sectors would have disastrous economic and political effects. To fall into the intellectual argument that trade is less significant for us than others could lead to actions which, while disastrous to other nations, would have severe implications for us as well.”

Simply put, the synergies between the US and Japanese economies reflected an interdependence that would undermine any effort to use economic statecraft so as to extract

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{125} Goods procured from Japan included, \textit{inter alia}, rubber boots, synthetic fibers, foodstuffs, and watches. For a fuller discussion, see \textcite{Schaller1997}.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Ibid.}, 201.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{127} Memorandum from Robert Hormats of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), April 12, 1973, FRUS 1969-1976 E-12: 1.}
nuclear-related concessions.

Aside from being able to deter economic coercion, the strength of the Japanese economy discouraged the formation of a clear and rigorous counterproliferation strategy in another, more subtle way. Thanks to the strong Japanese economy, Nixon (and Kissinger) came to believe that Japan was now a great power. In his 1967 *Foreign Affairs* article, Nixon described Japan as “Asia’s principal industrial and economic power” that is “edging cautiously and discreetly toward a wider leadership role” and “a more conspicuously position of leadership.”

As President, Nixon articulated a vision of the global order that was multipolar rather than bipolar. In his State of the World message in 1971, Nixon claimed that “the rigid bipolar world of the 1940s and 1950s has given way to the fluidity of a new era of multilateral diplomacy.” Such rhetoric was consistent with Nixon’s *realpolitik* view of world politics whereby states were the primary actors in the international system and multilateral agreements mattered for very little.

Japan’s growing economic might was not the only basis for why the United States was reluctant exercise pressure through economic and technological channels. US sensitivity towards domestic backlash in Japan was another important factor. As early as February 1963, US government officials discussed the likelihood of Japan implementing measures to attenuate the US balance-of-payments deficit. As with West Germany, one solution was for the Japanese government to increase its defense expenditures, which, by extension, would have led to greater procurement of US military hardware. The problem was, however, two-fold. First, “[t]he increase in the Japanese defense budget to a level which would permit any large-scale purchasing of U.S. equipment will take a period of years because of the necessity for creating political support by the Japanese people for a sharp acceleration of its defense buildup.” Second, “even were the necessary funds available to the Japanese defense authorities, there may not be a sufficient amount of U.S. military hardware that the Japanese

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are likely to purchase to offset our total expenditures. Much of the materiel they need can be supplied out of indigenous production.”¹³⁰ The alternative measures put forward by the Deputy Secretary of Defense would have, by his own admission, either increased the US military budget or required undesirable changes in the US regional force posture.¹³¹ These discussions nevertheless lacked resolution, as gold losses and continuing balance-of-payments deficits continued to motivate discussions on how the US government should reduce its military expenditures and base presence in Japan.¹³² Still, the discussions that directly bore on the balance-of-payments deficit with Japan never reached the same level of intensity as they did with West Germany.

To be sure, the United States was able to extract trade concessions from Japan over textiles. In 1969, negotiations began when the United States demanded that Japan curbed its exports of cheap textiles. Within two years Japan finally relented and imposed export controls in 1971. Yet these negotiations were acrimonious. Secret accords to settle the dispute early went ignored or conveniently forgotten.¹³³ US incompetence was also to blame. Michael Schaller claims that Nixon and Kissinger were ignorant of international economic issues. Consequently, the White House gave its trade negotiators confusing and ill-conceived directions on how to proceed.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, Japan’s ultimate compliance with US demands was the exception that proved the rule.¹³⁵

The textiles case notwithstanding, Nixon was frustrated with Japanese intransigence

¹³⁰ All quotes found in Memorandum from the Deputy Secretary of Defense to President Kennedy, February 8, 1963, FRUS 1961-1963 22: 767.
¹³¹ Ibid., 568. Ambassador Reischauer echoed these sentiments. See Telegram from the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, November 1, 1963, FRUS 1961-1963 22: 797. McNamara was more optimistic than his Deputy Secretary, but still recognized the problems of obtaining a satisfactory Japanese response on the offset arrangements. See Letter from Secretary of Defense McNamara to Secretary of State Rusk, November 16, 1963, FRUS 1961-1963 22: 801-803.
¹³⁴ Schaller (1997, 212) claims that Nixon and Kissinger were ignorant of international economics. In addition, though frank of his initial ignorance regarding Japan, Kissinger’s memoirs betray a persistent thoughtlessness and lack of learning in his culturalist analysis of why the textile negotiations became a political disaster. See Kissinger (1979, 336-340).
¹³⁵ Mochizuki (1995) documents the slow pace of Japanese trade liberalization as per US pressure to do so.
regarding economic issues. In February 1973, in discussing international trade with his cabinet, Nixon opined that:

“But all this business of the diplomatic talk, and drinking sake, and whatever they’ll drink and so forth and so on, does not get away from the fundamental problem that Japan today, in terms of trade area, is not being a good partner, and, in fact, in terms as far as Tanaka is concerned, of our international responsibilities, is not being a good ally. Now, what do you do about this? Do you do it – just sort of brush it all over and toast the Emperor, and Tanaka and the rest? No, you have to find ways to get at that so that in our whole deliberations here, without getting to be jingoistic, do we regard the Japanese as protection in regard to the Europeans? We in this room have to understand that we’re in a tough-titty game with both Europe and Japan. Do you agree with that?”

Relations between the two allies had become strained. By Kissinger’s own admission, the trade deficit posed a “perennial problem.” Nixon also found the Japanese Prime Minister less congenial than his predecessor Sato. He noted to a former member of his cabinet that “Tanaka’s a very cocky, jingoistic type, and Sato is the old-line, friendly guy, helping the U.S. like Kishi.”

Ironically, the United States did have leverage over Japan in the area of energy policy. About ninety percent of its imports of uranium and enrichment services came from the US. According to John E. Endicott, “a [Japanese] nuclear weapons program could not be attempted by Japan without either (1) abrogation of existing US-Japanese Atomic Co-

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operation treaties or (2) full cooperation of the United States.” Admittedly, it is curious as to why US decision-makers refrained from exploiting this potential source of leverage. Several explanations are possible. First, US decision-makers might have been averse to coupling atomic cooperation with Japan’s centrifuge program and the attendant risks of nuclear proliferation. Such pressure might have been seen as cynical in light of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Taking the moral high-ground on nuclear matters might have been seen as inappropriate given the US resort to nuclear weapons on the same country in 1945. Though intuitively appealing, the weakness of this argument is that the United States denied Japan the ability to reprocess spent nuclear fuel until the late 1970s. Second, the threat to use this lever might have been incredible and so did not receive much consideration. Unilaterally suspending nuclear cooperation would have had a negative effect on the Japanese economy, which in turn would have adversely affected the US economy. Even though Japan relied on the US domestic market for its exports, the United States still needed an economically prosperous Japan so as to not further undermine an already weakened global economy.

5.4 A Japanese Nuclear Reversal: Biding Time and Preserving Alliance Stability

As with West Germany, the Johnson administration encouraged Japan to pledge its support to the NPT. Like West Germany, however, Japan resisted such demands and even raised its own objections to the treaty. Chief among them was the concern that the treaty sought to legitimize a new hierarchy in international politics. This hierarchy would consign non-nuclear powers to subordinate status even if they were economically superior. For Japan, this hierarchy was unacceptable. It was experiencing at this time a major economic resurgence while the United Kingdom and France – “countries which they considered no more prestigious

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140 Endicott (1975, 30).
141 Drifte (1989).
than themselves” – would retain their international privileges despite their decline.\footnote{Memorandum Prepared by Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council (Owen), July 12, 1966, FRUS 1964-1968 29: 153-154.} The Japanese government also shared the West German concern that abiding by the terms of the NPT would have damaging repercussions for its civilian nuclear industry.

That West Germany and Japan appeared united in their opposition against the NPT was not lost on US decision-makers. The US ambassador to Japan noted in a telegram (conveyed to President Johnson) that the Japanese government – like West Germany – did not want to see a bargain struck between the United States and the Soviet Union at its expense. The ambassador wrote in early 1967:

“The schizophrenia of Japan on the nuclear proliferation treaty is a good example. Military considerations, e.g., the fact that the NPT requires Japan to renounce its options while doing nothing to meet its immediate concerns, which are the Soviet Union and Communist China, are in my opinion only a part of the reason for Japan’s ambivalence on the NPT. Another important factor is the Japanese hypersensitivity to any suggestion that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are moving toward a kind of ‘super-powers’ club from which Japan will be forever excluded. The drive toward parity with the great powers has been one of the most consistent themes of Japan’s modern history. In spite of its present attitudes on military and nuclear affairs, an implied relegation of Japan to second-class status because of her non-possession of nuclear arms would ultimately constitute a powerful incentive to go after an independent nuclear capability. These attitudes are, of course, being nurtured by public statements coming from West Germany, probably communicating even more forcefully in Japanese-German consultations on the NPT. Thus, I tend to agree with Ambassador Takeuchi that while in the end Japan will probably have no choice but to sign the NPT on whatever terms the U.S. and Soviets are able to agree upon, we should not necessarily take Japan
The ‘schizophrenia’ characterizing Japan’s position on the NPT reflected the dilemma its government faced. The result of which was for Japan to ultimately take a different approach towards the treaty than West Germany.

The dilemma facing the Japanese government was as follows. To support the NPT meant recognizing two uncomfortable truths. First, it would lend legitimacy to the ability of a small club of states to retain a nuclear capability. Second, supporting the NPT would, by extension, signify Japan’s reliance on the extended nuclear deterrence that the United States provided. Such tacit approval weakened Japanese calls for international disarmament. Still, not supporting the NPT had costs as well. It weakened the nascent non-proliferation regime by withholding membership of a major industrial democracy that possessed a large civilian nuclear industry. Moreover, expressing opposition to the NPT risked raising questions over Japan’s intentions towards nuclear energy. Accordingly, Japan took the following approach: it signed the treaty in 1970, but it also stipulated that three conditions needed to be met before ratification could take place. These conditions included the promotion of nuclear disarmament; security guarantees for non-nuclear weapons states; and equality in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

The issue of NPT ratification became dormant for several years in Japanese politics as other events unfolded. In the years between 1970 and 1974, international observers and decision-makers raised intermittent concerns regarding Japan’s nuclear status; the Japanese government oversaw the dramatic expansion of its national centrifuge program; and at least one secret government working group overseen by right-wing politician Yasuhiro Nakasone explored the desirability and feasibility of an independent nuclear behavior. These ac-

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143 Telegram from the Embassy in Japan to the Department of State, March 1, 1967, FRUS 1964-1968 29: 168.
144 Interview with former Ambassador Hitoshi Tanaka, Tokyo, March 2013.
145 Endicott (1977, 277).
146 Interview with former Ambassador Yoichi Funabashi, Tokyo, March 2013.
tions took place in the context of a deteriorating security environment. The United States withdrew a troop division in South Korea, provoking fears of abandonment amongst that country’s elites.\textsuperscript{147} The Vietnam War was winding down as US leaders were striving to identify an appropriate manner for withdrawal. Moreover, Nixon traveled to China in 1972 so as to begin normalizing relations and reshape the global balance of power against the Soviet Union. When Japanese decision-makers first learned of Nixon’s overtures to the Chinese, they were apprehensive that the two major powers would strike an agreement at their expense. Indeed, Nixon’s trip to China constituted the second so-called ‘Nixon shock.’ In view of this unfavorable development, Japanese leaders decided to regain the initiative and improve diplomatic relations with the communist adversary. Eventually, the two countries established normalized relations in 1972. This change in diplomatic stance displeased Nixon and Kissinger because they hoped to use Japan as a counterweight against China.\textsuperscript{148} In 1973, following the Yom Kippur War, Arab countries punished Japan for its association with the United States by imposing an oil embargo. Japan shifted its stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict so as to reverse the suspension of oil shipments.\textsuperscript{149}

NPT ratification finally appeared on the Japanese Diet’s legislative agenda in December 1974 when Prime Minister Takeo Miki – having just replaced Tanaka – announced his intention to introduce a motion for treaty ratification. Nixon’s outreach to China and Arab oil embargo are likely have encouraged Miki’s decision to reopen debate on this issue. So as to solidify their efforts in normalizing relations with the Chinese, the NPT might have come to have the same value for Japan as it did for West Germany. Whereas Willy Brandt used the NPT to demonstrate his commitment to Ostpolitik, it is conceivable that the Japanese leaders believed that treaty ratification would reassure China of their intentions.\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{147}See Chapter Six.  
\textsuperscript{148}Komine (2009).  
\textsuperscript{149}Mochizuki (1995, 111).  
\textsuperscript{150}Admittedly, I cannot find evidence to support this hypothesis. Still, in the context of their ambiguous nuclear posturing, the similarity in timing of when these two US major allies normalized relations with communist adversaries is striking.
over, the oil embargo also exposed a major weakness in the Japanese economy. As with many Western countries, Japan suffered energy shortages as a result of this embargo, thus posing a threat to its ability to sustain economic growth. Its sensitivity and vulnerability to this oil shock gave additional impetus for Japan to develop its civilian nuclear industry and become more energy self-sufficient. After all, about three-fourths of its imported oil in the mid-1970s came from the Middle East.

At the time of Miki’s announcement, the LDP also enjoyed a comfortable majority of seats in the Diet’s lower house, but held a thin majority in the upper house. Given the factionalism that characterizes the LDP, these majorities did not necessarily enable the prime minister to undertake any desirable legislative reform without having sufficient internal party support. In fact, Miki’s own status as leader was tenuous while dissensus over the NPT still existed at the time of his announcement. Pro-ratification forces included his Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and more dovish elements of the LDP. Outside the party, the JSP and the centrist Komeito were favorable to the treaty’s ratification. The main source of opposition was the conservative nationalist faction (Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyuaki) with prominent critics being the LDP Vice President, the Executive Board Chairman, and several Upper House members such as the far-right Minoru Genda. The LDP Foreign Affairs Research Council and the Security Affairs Research Council also opposed treaty ratification. With this array of preferences in the Japanese Diet, the story of NPT ratification is that of domestic consensus-building and overcoming such opposition.

John E. Endicott offers a rich account of how the pro-ratification movement within the LDP acquired this consensus. According to Endicott, pro-ratification forces gained momen-

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152 Talking Points for Meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki, August 4, 1976, folder: “Japan (7),” National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 7, GRFL.
153 As one memorandum intended for Kissinger noted six months later, “Prime Minister Miki’s position in the LDP cannot be said to be very strong. This explains the difficulty Miki has had getting some of his major bills through the Diet.” Memorandum for Secretary Kissinger from Rodman, June 25, 1975, folder: “Japan (7),” National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 6, GRFL. Miki became Prime Minister after Tanaka resigned the position due to a series of corruption scandals.
tum at various junctures when they acquired the support from the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and concurrent Director of the Science and Technology, the chairman of the Japanese Atomic Industry Forum, and the civilian energy industry. The signing of the Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA in early 1975 allayed concerns over whether Japan would face undue restrictions on its peaceful use of atomic energy. With these negotiations satisfactorily completed and the high-level bureaucratic endorsements, Miki and other leading party members took personal initiative to rally other Diet members into ratifying the treaty. Again boosting their cause was the signing of a Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA in early 1975. In view of these developments, even former Prime Minister Sato declared that it was finally time to ratify the treaty.154

A major reason for why the NPT was so controversial within the LDP was the significance the treaty had for Japanese security. Specifically, ratifying the NPT entailed the strong affirmation of Japan’s security relationship with the United States. Accordingly, skeptics of the treaty expressed two contrasting reservations that turned on alliance politics. First, in their view, Japan should retain a “free hand on nuclear devices.” Perhaps the most vocal proponent of this view, Genda, contended that ratification would place Japan at the mercy of the US nuclear umbrella – a policy that was antithetical to Japanese national security.155 Miki dismissed such claims, arguing that maintaining a “free hand” contradicted the spirit of the three non-nuclear principles.

As much as Miki rejected these criticisms, his minister of foreign affairs Kiichi Miyazawa used his April 1975 trip to Washington, D.C. to obtain new security pledges from the United States.156 This trip was successful, as a three point statement released in the Japanese media

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155Endicott (1977, 281).
156Kissinger appears to recognize Miyazawa’s objectives when he alerted Ford that the purpose of the meeting was “to demonstrate the high importance we attach to our alliance with Japan” and “to reaffirm US determination to continue our vital role as regards the future peace and stability of Asia, particularly in light of the current Indochina crisis.” On this latter issue, Kissinger notified Ford that “we have had reports that our inability to react to recent events in Indochina has caused some second thoughts in Japan about ratifying the Non-Proliferation Treaty.” Note for Meeting with the Japanese Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, April 12, 1975, folder: “Japan (7),” National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for

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suggests:

“(1) Both Japan and the US are of the judgment that the maintenance of the Security Treaty will be in the interests, when viewed from a long-range standpoint; (2) US nuclear war potential is an important deterrent power toward aggression against Japan from the outside; (3) the US attaches importance to its treaty obligations that it will take charge of the defense of Japan in the case of its being attacked by nuclear or conventional weapons, and Japan will also continue to carry out its obligations based on the Treaty.”

Such reassurances, however, were insufficient for the pro-ratification forces to overcome the suspicions and reservations of more skeptical members of the Diet. The most hawkish members refused to change their attitudes and ultimately voted against the treaty’s ratification. Debate over NPT ratification would continue for about another year. That said, these reassurances helped solidify a general consensus that spurred further progress towards ratification. The Japanese Diet finally ratified the treaty on June 8, 1976.

The US April 1975 assurances notwithstanding, it bears mentioning that, as the debate over ratification unfolded in the Japanese Diet, the Nixon and Ford administrations generally stood on the sidelines. Neither administration insisted on the NPT as forcefully as the Johnson administration had with respect to West Germany. To the contrary, Nixon and Kissinger remained quiet and provided reassurances when asked for them. This subdued disposition reflected their own awareness that nuclear policy in Japan needed to be handled delicately. To avoid any misunderstanding over this issue, Japanese decision-makers even

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157 Ibid., 281.
158 See Memorandum for Major General Brent Scowcroft, August 26, 1974, folder: “Japan (1),” National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 6, GRFL; and Memorandum for the President from Henry A. Kissinger, folder: “Japan (7),” National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 7, GRFL.
insisted that their US counterparts be discreet. In a November 1974 meeting with Ford and Kissinger, Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka stated:

“[t]he [Government of Japan] firmly supports the [Mutual Security Treaty], which is important not just to the peace and security of Japan, but also Asia. There is one important problem, however, nuclear weapons. Japan and the United States began their discussions of this question originally in the context of strategic nuclear weapons, but now tactical nuclear weapons have proliferated, and perhaps we should discuss this matter from this new point of view. I can understand that the Americans and the Europeans think about this matter in terms of a different kind of perception, but the Japanese people have a special sensitivity to nuclear weapons, which is mobilized by certain political forces for their own political ends.”\textsuperscript{159}

Although Ford responded by saying that he understood the “special sensitivities of the Japanese people,” the Japanese foreign minister reiterated Tanaka’s request later in the conversation. Kissinger then affirmed that “we won’t refer to the nuclear question.”\textsuperscript{160}

5.5 Summary and Alternative Arguments

I have presented evidence that validate key aspects of my theory. Uncertainty over US commitments to Japanese security encouraged Japanese decision-makers to move towards nuclear weapons acquisition. US lacked leverage to compel a nuclear reversal, partly because the United States could not apply economic statecraft without exacting major cost to its own domestic economically. True to expectations, Japan ended its bout of nuclear behavior when its leaders felt it was in its interest to do so, independent of US interests and pressure.

\textsuperscript{159}Memorandum of Conversation, November 19, 1974, FRUS E-12: 11.
\textsuperscript{160}Ibid., 12. Recall that the Nixon administration also relaxed US pressure on West Germany to sign the NPT.
Specifically, the findings are as follows. Japanese leaders received signals from the United States that conveyed a strong sense of commitment to the region, particularly in the aftermath of the Korean War and the emergence of a second communist threat in China. After all, US decision-makers wanted to maintain an indefinite military presence on various Japanese islands and made known their wishes to the Japanese leadership. Interestingly, the Japanese government did request the United States to withdraw its ground forces, though they wanted to delay the withdrawal of other types of forces. As much as US ground forces were controversial as an occupying force, it bears noting that they serve a less useful function for deterring external aggression against Japan than naval and air forces. Not all good things last, however, and Japan ceased facing a favorable geopolitical environment once the Chinese detonated its first nuclear weapon in 1964. Consequently, Japanese decision-makers became more sensitive to the reliability of security guarantees they received from the United States. Though they began engaging in nuclear behavior sooner than my theory would expect, they did so while seeking assurances from the United States. Further confirming my thesis is that Japan ratcheted up its nuclear behavior in response to unfavorable developments pertaining to the US military involvement in the Vietnam War.

Alliance context mattered in shaping the trajectory of Japan’s nuclear behavior, even though the United States was hamstrung in its ability to compel the Japanese to fully renounce nuclear weapons. This conclusion reflects an irony that characterizes the renunciations undertaken by Japan as well as West Germany. These cases constitute both successes and failures of US counterproliferation policy. They are successes insofar as neither major ally acquired a nuclear capability. Yet they are also failures because West Germany and Japan reversed their nuclear behaviors in spite of US counterproliferation policy. This result may not be intuitive, but it is fact in keeping with the predictions of my theoretical framework. Indeed, one must consider the counterfactual (imperfect as it may be) in which these countries had a different type of economic relationship with the United States. Suppose Japan were more like South Korea: industrializing but still small and dependent on
access to US trade and goods. As Chapter Six shows, once US decision-makers learned of South Korea’s nuclear program, they were able to exert sufficient pressure to force the South Korean government to abandon the program and agree to the NPT. In stark contrast, US decision-makers lacked the wherewithal to mount an equally effective counterproliferation effort to curb Japanese nuclear behavior. They were reluctant to use elements of statecraft so as to get Japan to simply clarify its nuclear weapons stance. Thus, the longer the episode of nuclear behavior, even at its lower levels, the more that the counterproliferation resolution (should it occur) would resemble the strategic interest of the ally independent of satisfying major power preferences Japan cleared up its stance once it had finally made important strides in its civilian nuclear capabilities. Its leaders had free rein to decide for themselves at what they should bring NPT ratification to the Japanese Diet. By the time they had done so, Japan had developed a centrifuge capability.

To be sure, I refer to other variables that influence either the timing or the form of Japanese nuclear behavior we observe. In the following discussion, I evaluate the relative value of threat-based and domestic politics explanations. To what extent did Japanese nuclear behavior covary with the dangers presented by its regional adversaries? To what extent can we rely solely on an account of Japanese domestic politics? I take each of these two sets of explanations in turn. Table 3 summarizes the findings of the case study.

**Balance-of-Threat Explanations**

Threat-based explanations have some validity in accounting for the pattern of Japanese nuclear behavior. Neither the Soviet Union nor the Chinese had the maritime or aerial capability to pose a direct military threat to Japanese territory during the first half of the Cold War. It was when the Chinese detonated its nuclear weapon in 1964 that Japan’s relatively comfortable geostrategic position was rocked. A threat-centered explanation also seems to plausibly explain the end of the case. That is, the Japanese Diet ratified the NPT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Evidence/Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alliance Compensation Theory:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onset</strong></td>
<td>Japan is unconcerned with New Look and does not engage in nuclear behavior. It becomes more attentive to US security guarantees after the 1964 Chinese nuclear detonation and develops apprehensions following US military difficulties in Vietnam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Termination</strong></td>
<td>Bilateral alliance membership and low dependence on the United States entails ineffective and prolonged counterproliferation effort. The United States had limited economic leverage over Japan given interdependent relationship. Bilateralism arrangement obviated nuclear-sharing arrangement and produced tacit understandings between the allied governments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance-of-Threat Theory</strong></td>
<td>Japan would begin and terminate their nuclear behavior as a function of the direct military threat posed by adversaries, the Soviet Union and China. Chinese nuclear detonation triggers alliance concern. Causal relationship between normalization with China and clarification of nuclear policy unclear. Soviet threat dramatically increases after NPT ratification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (1): Onset</strong></td>
<td>LDP politicians, particularly those drawn from economically liberal factions, would not undertake nuclear behavior. Mixed. LDP politicians, however, do not engage in nuclear behavior. Nationalist leaders such as Hatoyama still did not undertake nuclear behavior. Pro-nuclear LDP politicians (e.g., Sato), however, do engage in nuclear behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (1): Termination</strong></td>
<td>Ascendance of more economically-liberal or left-of-center ruling political coalitions (i.e. liberal factions within the LDP) lead to an end of nuclear behavior. Mixed. High correlation exists but causal relationship is unclear. Salience of antinuclear attitudes and contested alliance policies in Japan discouraged a strong US counterproliferation policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics (2)</strong></td>
<td>The Japanese public is becoming increasingly anti-militarist, so its leaders should turn away from nuclear weapons. Mixed. It can explain Japan very well due to emergence of anti-nuclear movement following Daigo Fukuryu Maru incident. It cannot explain Japanese onset of nuclear behavior in the mid-1960s. It can explain secrecy and opaqueness surrounding Japan's nuclear policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: Summary of empirical support for each systematic argument.
following diplomatic normalization with the Chinese.

Yet this type of explanation is unable to account for other important aspects of the case. First, debates over the NPT ratification had less to do with China and more to do with the role of Japan within a US-led security system in East Asia. Conservative opponents of the treaty articulated their concerns not on the basis of retaining flexibility vis-à-vis China but rather on the basis of uncertain and problematic US support. Indeed, conservative groups that opposed the NPT would have rather had Japan retain its security autonomy, in general. Second, and more importantly, Japan’s normalization with the Chinese followed on the heels of Nixon’s visit to China. Japan’s diplomatic activity must be understood in this context, for Nixon’s trip demonstrated that the US was willing to make major abrupt changes to its foreign policy at the expense of its allies. By normalizing relations with China, Japan was softening the blow exacted by Nixon. Similarly to what Brandt’s signature of the NPT did for Ostpolitik, the choice to finally renounce nuclear weapons through NPT ratification may be connected to the need to demonstrate sincerity regarding normalization.

Another problem for a threat-based explanation is the irony that threats to Japan increased after NPT ratification. Shortly after Japan ratified the NPT, the Soviet threat grew in severity. The Soviet Union not only renewed its claims of sovereignty over the disputed Northern Territories – a group of islands that the Soviet Union annexed in the wake of Japan’s surrender in the Second World War. It also bolstered its claim to the Northern Territories by declaring that it would extend its territorial waters to 200 miles. Soviet unease with China and the United States also motivated a massive military build-up in its far east. This buildup comprised 31 troop divisions, over 2000 warplanes, and about 750 military vessels – 50 of which were nuclear-powered submarines.161 It continued into 1978 with the added deployment of supersonic, long-range bombers, an aircraft carrier, and the construction of a new port and major airstrip. Diplomatic provocations accompanied this buildup. Border transgressions became more frequent and the Soviet Union garrisoned marines on

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161 Ha and Guinasso (1980, 250).
the Northern Territories. The Soviet Union even practiced military maneuvers that included a mocked island invasion just 125 kilometers north of the Japanese island of Hokkaido. It was as if the Soviet Union used the NPT ratification as an opportunity for such aggression now that Japan’s military options were more limited. Japanese leaders might not have anticipated these Soviet provocations when they ratified the NPT in 1976. Nevertheless, an argument that emphasizes the subsiding of threat to account for nuclear reversal has to then explain why Japan did not resume nuclear behavior when the Soviet military threat intensified.

**Domestic Politics Explanations**

Throughout the analysis of Japanese foreign policy, domestic political factors are at play in addition to alliance considerations. Although I have shown how fears of abandonment influence the pattern of Japanese nuclear behavior, I will use this section to treat domestic politics more systematically and centrally so as to understand their relative importance in this case. The basic argument that I will weave together in this section is that alliance circumstances defined the timing and even the trajectory of Japan’s movements towards nuclear weapons, but domestic political considerations determined the substance of these movements.

Consider first the experiences of Prime Ministers Yoshida, Hatoyama, and Kishi. Yoshida’s preference for Japan’s national identity should center on “merchant nation” would not have been difficult to uphold in the absence of an alignment with the United States. To quote Thomas Berger at length:

> “Yoshida’s definition of the national identity, like the Left’s vision of Japan as a ‘peace nation’, appealed to the powerful pacifist mood of the times and was in keeping with the demilitarizing impulse the American occupation had sought

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162 Ibid., 260.
to impart. The image of Japan as a merchant nation was also intrinsically pro-
capitalist, and left the door for alignment with the United States. Yoshida’s
new conceptualization of the national identity was well designed to appeal to a
broad spectrum of centrist opinion in Japan, which was profoundly weary of war
and suspicious of the military, though at the same time, skeptical of the Left’s
socialist programs and neutralist pacifism.”

Indeed, the economic development program put forward by Yoshida relied upon the
security provided by the United States. Even Yoshida’s direct successor, the hawkish
and even anti-American Hatoyama, experienced the constraints of alliance politics. In his
pursuit of greater foreign policy independence from the United States, Hatoyama sought to
normalize relations with the Soviet Union and China. His inability to rally necessary support
from both his cabinet and the Diet to pursue such aims was partly due to the United States
playing the role of a pivot player in these foreign policy debates.

Most would be sympathetic to the general claim that the security relationship with the
United States shaped Japanese post-war foreign policy behavior, yet two specific arguments
in favor of domestic politics explanations can be made with regards to Japanese foreign
policy conduct in the 1950s. These explanations vary in their empirical validity. One, put
forward by Walter LaFeber, is that political survival motivated Kiishi’s decision to negotiate
the security treaty with the United States. After all, the stationing of US ground forces
on Japanese territory provoked concerns over US domination and became a source of major
resentment amongst members of the public. Seeking the removal of US ground forces would
correspondingly enhance Kiishi’s, and the recently-formed LDP’s, domestic popularity.

According to this view, it had little to do with confidence in US protection and more to

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164 Samuels (2008).
165 Schaller (1997, 113-121). Swenson-Wright (2005) challenges the conventional view that the United States coerced the Japanese leadership to abandon its normalization efforts with the Soviet Union and China. Rather, opposing factions were successful in enlisting US support to further their efforts in defeating Hatoyama.
166 LaFeber (1997). 316-7?
do with domestic politics. Yet this argument mistakes the relationship between these two independent variables. Because US decision-makers strongly signaled their desire to maintain an indefinite military presence, Kiishi might have believed that he had room to maneuver and was able to manipulate the United States into offering a more favorable security arrangement that suited the interests of his leadership. Had there instead been greater uncertainty of US military commitments, the treaty revisions might have taken a different form, if made at all. For example, the Japanese would not have sought relatively short time-lines on the withdrawal of US forces in their earlier proposals. Moreover, the US leadership would have not sought explicit assurances to secure basing rights in Okinawa and other locations – issues that ironically generated such domestic backlash that Kiishi resigned as Prime Minister upon surviving an assassination attempt.

Another and more compelling domestic politics argument looks at the role of public opinion. That is, domestic politics mattered in shaping the scope or expression of policy disagreement between the US and Japanese governments. The violent controversy surrounding the 1960 Security Treaty demonstrated that many members of Japanese society held values that opposed the alliance with the United States. This movement had roots in domestic controversies that erupted during the previous decade. A burgeoning anti-nuclear movement began to express its opposition to nuclear weapons and the US reliance on them. Partly because of censorship during the US occupation, the experience of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings provided little impetus for the emergence of the anti-nuclear movement. Rather, the catalyst was the exposure of several Japanese fisherman to radiation fallout from a US nuclear weapons test near Bikini Atoll in 1954. The Daigo Fukuryu Maru incident, and the initial US efforts to cover it up, stoked fears regarding food contamination and provoked backlash against US nuclear tests in the Pacific Ocean.

These growing anxieties found artistic expression that same year with the release of the campy film Godzilla. This film featured a pre-historic dinosaur that had mutated because of nuclear radiation that a weapons test likely produced. The eponymous creature emerges
from Tokyo Bay and launches a devastating attack on the Japanese capital before descending back into Tokyo Bay. It is politically significant that the monster’s main weapon is its atomic breath and that both its appearance and disappearance take place in Tokyo. After all, these tropes centered on US nuclear policy and its influence on Japanese security and public health and safety. Though it is important not to overstate the impact of this film, *Godzilla*’s popularity may have reflected emerging norms and attitudes towards the alliance and US nuclear policy. Indeed, after 1954, the anti-nuclear movement in Japan started to organize large protests whenever a US nuclear-powered submarine or aircraft would dock at a Japanese port.\(^{167}\) Anti-nuclear attitudes would harden. Polling done in 1969 in Japan revealed that 69% percent of respondents responded ‘no’ to the question “Do you want Japan to possess nuclear weapons?” By the early 1980s, that figure rose to 82% percent.\(^{168}\)

International relations scholars Thomas Berger and Peter Katzenstein thus correctly regard the 1950s as a time when anti-militarist values were beginning to take root in Japanese society.\(^{169}\) The extent to which domestic popular sentiments affected Japanese decision-making during the 1950s is unclear. After all, Kishi and other senior officials did not shy away from discussing the constitutionality of Japanese nuclear weapons in the late 1950s. Nor did they retreat from their controversial initiative to negotiate the 1960 Security Treaty despite public pressure to do so. That said, a norms-based explanation still passes the congruency test when it comes to the lack of Japanese nuclear behavior.

The problem with norm-based explanations is their inability to explain changes over time. In the case of Japanese nuclear behavior, this type of explanation would have trouble to account for Prime Minister Sato’s repeated considerations of nuclear weapons that began in 1964. Nor would it be able to account for the development of a centrifuge program – a move that would add to Japan’s latent capability to burnish itself with a nuclear weapons arsenal. A preference-based argument fares better on this score. Sato was a conservative politician

\(^{167}\)On the anti-nuclear movement in Japan between 1957 and 1965, see Wittner (1993, 41-61 and 241-264).  
\(^{168}\)Poll results reported in Kamiya (2010, 66).  
within the LDP who had already expressed pro-nuclear sentiments. Yet this explanation alone remains insufficient. It does not account for the discreetness of Japanese nuclear posturing nor does it explain its timing. The role of domestic norms fills the first gap whereas an alliance-based explanation fills the second.

Domestic norms mattered in yet another way. The backlash surrounding the 1960 Security Treaty negotiations exposed the limits in the extent to which the Japanese governments could even convey a distrust for the United States. I noted above that the difficult experience of the 1960 treaty revisions discouraged any effort by both governments to foment overt diplomatic discord and stir controversy. In the context of the latter half of the 1960s, these constraints became more pronounced as the Vietnam War provoked large student protests in Japan. For the Japanese government to criticize the United States, either through open diplomatic exchange or action, would have granted credence to the rhetoric and policy objectives of various opposition groups (e.g., the JSP and the JCP).¹⁷⁰ Victor Cha recognizes this dynamic, too, when he writes: “if Tokyo fervently expressed concerns about the Guam Doctrine, this would focus the public and political agenda on the defense buildup issues as a means of coping with this fear. This, in turn, would fuel antirearmament forces in Japan and reignite popular support for Japanese neutralism, resulting in an environment hardly conducive to easy renewal of the [US-Japan security] treaty.”¹⁷¹ The circumspection and discretion practiced by Japanese leaders during this period highlights the importance of domestic political considerations for which my theory neither would expect nor could explain.

Japanese decision-makers even demanded the same circumspection from their US counterparts. As indicated above, when the NPT was being considered for ratification in the Japanese Diet, Tanaka and his foreign minister beseeched Ford and Kissinger to not publicly address the debate so as to avoid inflaming conservative opposition. US counterproliferation

¹⁷⁰Interview with Hitoshi Tanaka, Tokyo, Japan, March 20, 1963.
¹⁷¹Cha (1999, 72).
efforts towards Japan were muted, especially after 1968. By contrast, the United States made numerous interventions on the very public debate in West Germany regarding rearma-
ment and nuclear weapons. This same circumspection likely resulted in the disavowal of any overt (or even covert) forms of pressure on the Japanese government to force ratification of the NPT and credibly renounce nuclear weapons. The United States did not want to stoke anti-alliance opposition by wading into these debates, particularly when its decision-makers feared Japanese neutralism.\textsuperscript{172}

\section*{Wrapping Up}

Alternative arguments have varying levels of empirical validity in accounting for this case. The strategic environment determined whether adversarial threats were manifest enough for fears of abandonment to even exist. The domestic political environment posed significant constraints on the ability of the Japanese government to make controversial nuclear-related decisions and even tolerate open controversy in its alliance relations with the United States. Under these conditions Japanese decision-makers still behaved in a way that is consistent with my argument.

Some readers might still have reservations about the thesis that US credibility in East Asia suffered in the latter years of the 1960s and the 1970s to such an extent as to cause changes in the behavior of regional allies. For such doubters, two additional data points are worth considering: Taiwan and South Korea. Taiwan also made movements towards nuclear weapons acquisition following the Chinese 1964 nuclear detonation. These efforts were more substantial given the relative lack of domestic constraints that President Chiang Kai-shek faced.\textsuperscript{173} South Korea did not react to events in 1964 the same way as Japan and Taiwan, but its leaders were especially responsive to their own assessments of US credibility during

\textsuperscript{172}The same considerations for wanting to remain aloof on these matters were likely at play in the US desire to maintain Japanese agreement on nuclear storage and transit.

\textsuperscript{173}For a detailed discussion of Taiwan’s nuclear activities, see Albright and Gay (1998).
the late 1960s and the 1970s. It is to the case of South Korea that we now turn.
Chapter 6


Though it relies extensively on atomic power as a civilian source of energy, South Korea’s use of the atom has not always been peaceful. Scholars surmise that South Korean nuclear behavior began in 1970 when the government in Seoul initiated feasibility studies to explore nuclear weapons development. Two years later, South Korea began to devote resources to develop nuclear weapons. This program lasted only several years before its cancellation in 1975 and the accompanying decision to ratify the NPT. These actions, however, did not signify a complete end to South Korea’s nuclear behavior. Suspicions of a nuclear program re-emerged in the late 1970s when a major domestic debate erupted briefly in South Korea over its foreign policy and the need for an independent nuclear capability.

The record of South Korean nuclear behavior, as summarized in Table 1, raises several questions. First, what prompted the South Korean government to consider the acquisition of nuclear weapons in 1970? Second, why did South Korea all of a sudden not only reverse course, but also become a full member of the NPT in 1975? Third, what explains the sporadic instances of South Korean nuclear behavior after 1975? Indeed, that South Korea
both started and stopped a nuclear weapons program within a relatively short time frame constitutes an important empirical puzzle. As the case study will demonstrate below, many of the factors that previous scholars emphasize to explain the beginning of a nuclear weapons program remained present when the South Korean government terminated it. Existing theories of nuclear proliferation have difficulty in accounting for these patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summary of South Korea’s Nuclear Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Feasibility studies on desirability of nuclear weapons program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Initiation of nuclear weapons development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Cancellation of nuclear weapons program; ratification of NPT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-79</td>
<td>Domestic debate over nuclear weapons development; possible centrifuge program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Timeline of South Korea’s nuclear behavior.

Alliance compensation theory explains South Korea’s nuclear behavior better than the leading alternative explanations. Park Chung-hee, the South Korean President, first explored whether to acquire nuclear weapons in response to Nixon’s sudden announcement to withdraw about a third of US forces from the Korean peninsula. This announcement came at a time when the United States was seeking to curtail its military commitments in East Asia due to mounting economic difficulties at home and its military failure in Vietnam. Park ultimately decided to ratchet up his country’s nuclear program within a few years. Indeed, doubts over US alliance reliability remained even though Nixon made no further troop withdrawals. Thus, South Korean nuclear ambitions continued unabated until the program’s discovery in 1974. Shortly thereafter the United States used a variety of levers to coerce the dismantlement of the program and force the South Korean government to ratify the NPT. I show that the United States was able to coerce a favorable counterproliferation settlement because South Korea was uniquely dependent on the United States for its security and economic needs. Still, South Korean leaders intimated that they would reconstitute their nuclear program when US President Jimmy Carter tried (unsuccessfully) to fully withdraw
US troops from South Korea.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 1 describes the strategic and domestic context facing South Korean decision-makers as well as competing predictions for South Korea’s behavior. Section 2 reviews the history of the US-South Korean alliance prior to 1968. The purpose of this section is to highlight how concerns over alliance abandonment and entrapment were sometimes manifest. Section 3 tracks changes in US strategy in East Asia when President Richard Nixon came to office. It analyzes the conditions that led the South Korean government to explore the nuclear weapons option in the early 1970s. Section 4 determines the connection between shifts in US strategic posture that President Nixon initiated and South Korea’s nuclear behavior. Section 5 describes the successful counter-proliferation strategy implemented by the Ford administration and then evaluates the ability of the competing theories to account for it. Section 6 investigates how President Jimmy Carter’s policy towards South Korea might have sparked renewed interest in South Korea to develop nuclear weapons. Section 7 summarizes the empirical findings of the chapter and raises several key themes that emerge from the analysis.

6.1 Empirical Predictions

In this section I describe the strategic and domestic context that South Korean decision-makers faced in the 1960s and the 1970s. Accordingly, I specify the rival explanations that center on threat perceptions, domestic politics, and US force posture.

The Strategic Context

With an armistice ending the active stage of the Korean War signed in July 1953, the United States pledged its commitments to the South Korean government by signing a new alliance treaty and establishing a large troop presence in the country. Despite some concerns within
the Eisenhower administration regarding the wisdom of the treaty, it satisfied South Korean President Syngman Rhee’s demands for US defense commitments and placate his “genuine, however exaggerated, fear of abandonment by the US.” After all, Rhee let known to his US interlocutors that the withdrawal of US troops precipitated the invasion, reminding them of the dangers of uncertain commitments by referring to pre-war statements that declared South Korea as being outside the US defense perimeter in East Asia.

The armistice still left South Korea in a precarious economic condition that over time would be addressed. Relative to the North, it was poor, agrarian, and lacking in industry. Recognizing this disparity, US policy-makers understood the importance of alleviating the impoverished status of South Korea. Consequently, the United States coupled military support with economic aid and programs. Nevertheless, the South Korean government did not rely exclusively on US aid. Shortly after taking power through a coup in 1961 Park used his military dictatorship to commit South Korea to a statist, export-oriented economic strategy that generated rapid economic and growth industrialization. As a result, South Korea’s industrial capacity increased severalfold by the end of the 1960s.

Despite the alliance with the United States and the armistice, South Korea’s geopolitical situation was still highly threatening. The Chinese occupation force remained on North Korean territory until 1958, during which time the North Korean leadership led reconstruction efforts to repair the devastation wrought by the war. North Korea maintained a threatening

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1The US Department of Defense was particularly vocal in its opposition to a bilateral defense pact. Memorandum by the Assistant Secretaries of State for United Nations Affairs (Hickerson) and Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, June 8, 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS) 1952-54, 7: 1155; Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), June 17, 1953, FRUS 1952-54, 7: 1190; Memorandum of Conversation, August 1, 1953, FRUS 1952-54, 8: 1462. The quote about Rhee is found in The President of the Republic of Korea (Rhee) to President Truman, March 21, 1952 FRUS 1952-54, 15: 114-116; Memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, April 8, 1953 FRUS 1952-54, 15: 896.

2See, e.g., Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President, April 30, 1952, FRUS 1952-54 15: 185; Memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for United Nations Affairs (Sandifer) to the Secretary of State, FRUS 1952-54, 7: 1191.

3The Department of the Army to the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command (Hull), FRUS 1952-54, 9: 1877-1878.

posture after the withdrawal of the Chinese military presence. Though Kim Il-song initially
aligned himself with the Soviet Union, he ultimately chose to side with China during the
Sino-Soviet split. This realignment was significant because China’s behavior in East Asia
was more incendiary than that of the Soviet Union. After all, China’s leader Mao Tse-tung
denounced Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis and ad-
vocated for a more confrontational and unyielding stance with the United States and other
capitalist states. In fact, while endorsing aggressive communist action during the Cuban
Missile Crisis, China engaged in a border war with India.\textsuperscript{5} It also sought a nuclear capabil-
ity – a desire that was kindled following continuing confrontations with the United States
over Taiwan and growing skepticism over Soviet support.\textsuperscript{6} As we learned in chapter five,
China first detonated a nuclear weapon in October 1964.

Within several years of China’s acquisition of nuclear weapons, North Korea resumed an
aggressive foreign policy directed against US and South Korean interests. Hoping to under-
mine the South Korean-American alliance and incite an insurgency in the South, the North
Korean government initiated irregular warfare in the area around the Korean Demilitarized
Zone (DMZ) in 1968. The pursuit of this strategy led to a series of skirmishes between the
two states that would last three years. Several actions were especially provocative. First,
the North Korean government attempted to assassinate Park in an incident called the Blue
House Raid on January 17, 1968. Second, just a week after this assassination attempt, North
Korean patrol boats captured the \textit{USS} Pueblo and its US crew in international waters. De-
spite the close timing of these actions, members of the Johnson administration appeared
to believe that North Korea did not want war, preferring instead to harass US forces and
challenge the US military presence in East Asia.\textsuperscript{7} However, when North Korean fighter jets
shot down an EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft, some members of the Nixon administration be-
\textsuperscript{5}Prozumenschikov (1996/1997, 253).
\textsuperscript{6}Goldstein (2000).
\textsuperscript{7}Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Helms to Secretary Defense McNamara, January
29: 469-474.
lieved that retaliatory use of force was finally necessary. Though the United States decided against a military response, key US decision-makers took note of South Korea’s heightened threat perceptions. Following the shooting down of the reconnaissance flight, Nixon noted that the mood in South Korea was “very jittery.” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Earl Wheeler commented that “they are apprehensive we won’t do anything.”

These North Korean provocations took place against the backdrop of the Vietnam War. Hoping to curb the spread of communism in the region, the United States devoted an increasing amount of manpower and resources to assist South Vietnam in defeating and rolling back North Vietnamese efforts at reunifying the country under communist control. South Korea provided significant military assistance to the United States in the Vietnam War. At the height of its involvement in the conflict, South Korea had as many as fifty thousand troops in Vietnam. Several reasons explain the magnitude of South Korea’s military contributions. First, unlike his predecessor, President Johnson wanted South Korea to provide support to the conflict by playing a military role in Vietnam, thereby sharing the burden of fighting the war. Second, in exchange for these contributions, South Korea benefited from considerable increases in US economic and military assistance. Economist Keuhno Park argues that Vietnam-related procurements spurred greater economic growth in South Korea. South Korea also extracted greater assurances of US security commitments. Third, Park shared the concerns of US policy-makers that the fate of East Asian states in the struggle against transnational communism were linked. US success in Vietnam would, after all, strengthen the anti-communist coalition in the region. That Park had material incentives for articulating these values should not obscure the plausibility of these beliefs when one takes into account South Korea’s threat environment.

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8 Memorandum From the President’s Military Adviser (Haig) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), April 16, 1969, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 26-27.
10 Hong (2011, 484).
12 Park (2003, 376).
Still, a major reason for why the Johnson administration offered a very limited response to North Korean provocations is because it wanted to avoid the development of a second military front in East Asia. Johnson’s inaction created new tensions in the alliance with South Korea. These tensions became apparent during a meeting between former deputy secretary of defense Cyrus Vance and President Park. In a memorandum to Johnson, Vance noted:

“Highly emotional volatile, frustrated and introspective, Park wanted to obtain from me a pledge for the United States to join his Government in instant, punitive, and retaliatory actions against North Korea in the event of another Blue House raid or comparable attack on some other important South Korean economic, governmental, or military facility. He wanted my assurance of an ‘automatic’ US response in the event of another serious raid against the ROK. I refused to give any such assurances.”

Park even laid partial blame on the United States for the Blue House Raid itself. After all, North Korean forces had to sneak behind the US forces that were positioned along the DMZ. Despite articulating these criticisms, Vance and Park reiterated their countries’ Vietnam War and alliance commitments, respectively.

Because the North was still the most powerful of the two Koreas, the US military presence was significant for improving the local conventional balance of power in the South’s favor. Reducing that military presence would have meant a weakening of South Korea’s position vis-à-vis the North. In addition to the US conventional military presence on the Korean peninsula, US tactical nuclear weapons were stationed so as to bolster nuclear extended deterrence. Nevertheless, my main independent variable is a shift in the strategic

16These missiles remained on the peninsula until their withdrawal by US President George H.W. Bush with the approval of the South Korean government.
posture undertaken by the United States that removes (or threatens to remove) conventional military resources away from the Korean peninsula. For a shift in the US strategic posture to generate fears of abandonment and thereby encourage nuclear behavior, it should be either unanticipated or unilateral (that is, without the consent of the ally).

The Domestic Context

Domestic politics explanations offer the most compelling set of alternative hypotheses. These explanations attach importance to either the role of economic preferences or the political institutions or norms that prevail in domestic society. Some variation exists in the domestic institutions and economic strategies found in South Korea. For much of the Cold War, South Korea was authoritarian. The form of authoritarianism changed with the country’s leadership, beginning with Rhee’s brutal authoritarianism to Parks repressive rule and ending with Chun Doo-hwan’s military dictatorship. In the late-1980s South Korea undertook democratic reforms and has remained a democratic state ever since.

Figure 6.1: South Korea's Industrial Capability. Source: Singer (1987).
Despite these changes in its political system, the South Korean state adopted an economic strategy that emphasized the regulatory powers and macroeconomic management of the state. This so-called ‘developmental’ state assumes an active role in promoting economic growth by forging alliances with labor and industry, protecting fledgling export industries, and establishing a large government bureaucracy to oversee the private sector. Though Chalmers Johnson describes neighboring Japan as an archetypal of the developmental state, other observers have extended the label to South Korea.\(^1\) As indicated earlier, this ‘Asian Tiger’ maintained high growth rates between the 1960s and the 1990s largely by strengthening those industries that produced export goods intended for rich, already industrialized states.\(^2\) Figure 1 highlights the growth evinced by the South Korean economy between 1950 and 2000. To measure economic capacity, I draw data from Jo and Gartzke’s foundational quantitative study on the determinants of nuclear proliferation. They use the average of energy consumption and iron or steel production in a given year to calculate values for this index variable.\(^3\) In light of these trends, South Korea should not engage in nuclear behavior at all so as not to compromise such economic strategies. Still, it is possible that these political economic variables influenced South Korea’s termination of nuclear behavior.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the discussion regarding the strategic context confronting South Korean decision-makers towards the late 1960s. First, the threat environment in which South Korea found itself was highly threatening. North Korea, under the patronage of a now nuclear-armed China, initiated an aggressive foreign policy against South Korea. The intensity of these threats created further incentive for South Korean leaders to uncover ways to neutralize North Korean coercive diplomacy and deter military aggression. Second, the conventional military superiority of the North meant that the South relied on the United States for its protection. Yet the strength of the US conventional military presence on the peninsula would weaken. During the 1970s, two adverse shifts took place in the US strategic

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\(^1\) Evans (1995); Johnson (1982).


\(^3\) Jo and Gartzke (2007).
posture that directly affected South Korea. Only one of these announcements – the one made by Nixon in 1970 – materialized in a partial troop withdrawal. This reduction of one troop division took place after the articulation of the Guam Doctrine. This foreign policy statement declared that US allies in East Asia should bear a larger share of conventional defense in the region. 1968 marked the highest level of US troops in South Korea ever since 1960. After that year, a notable drop occurred at about 1970 before stabilizing at just over 40,000 troops. This number appears to stabilize until a minor dip at the end of the Cold War.\footnote{Some readers might allege that it should not matter whether the major power patron stations 80,000 or 100,000 military personnel on its ally’s territory. In other words, the difference between these two quantities should not have important consequences for the robustness of the ‘trip wire’ that the troop presence embodies. After all, the costs of aggression are still high for the adversary because it would involve the participation of the major power patron regardless of the actual size of its troop deployments. Though this critique is important, it neglects the psychological effects associated with partial troop withdrawals. My theory emphasizes that even partial troop withdrawals can generate concerns over the medium- to long-term intentions of the major power to credibly offer extended deterrence. That is, partial troop withdrawals might lead allies to anticipate even more troop withdrawals, thus prompting greater unease about the durability of the security commitments they receive from their patrons. These beliefs are reasonable if the patron is undertaking additional troop redeployments in the ally’s own region.}

Summary

To test the competing claims summarized in Table 2, I use process-tracing evidence to explain the pattern of South Korean nuclear behavior for the years between 1968 and 1980.

6.2 Explaining the Onset of South Korean Nuclear Behavior

In this section, I show that South Korea began its nuclear behavior out of fear of US abandonment. These anxieties regarding US alliance reliability became salient when Nixon announced the withdrawal of one troop division, thereby the reducing the size of the US conventional military presence on the Korean peninsula by a third. Ideally, documents would expressly
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<td>Park Chung-hee should not initiate nuclear behavior due to export-oriented growth strategy; conditional on initiating, Park should not cancel the program so not to appear weak under foreign pressure</td>
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Table 6.2: Summary of theoretical explanations, observable implications, and predictions for South Korea’s nuclear behavior.
show how South Korean decision-makers tied decisions to engage in nuclear behavior with
their apprehensions regarding US security commitments. Such ‘smoking gun’ evidence is
absent, however.\textsuperscript{21} Instead, we have to consider the sum total of circumstantial evidence
that reveals South Korean apprehensions regarding the credibility of US nuclear security
guarantees.

**Government Reorganization, Then Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons**

South Korea’s nuclear behavior began with the creation of new governmental agencies. In
August 1970, the South Korean government founded two new defense agencies, the Agency
for Defense Development (ADD) and the Weapons Exploitation Committee (WEC), to ex-
plain the development of an indigenous nuclear weapons program. Shortly thereafter, under
the aegis of Park, the WEC reached a unanimous decision to pursue nuclear weapons devel-
opment.

To be sure, by this time, South Korea had already a very nascent civilian nuclear program.
Throughout the 1960s South Korea’s access to nuclear materials was severely limited. As a
beneficiary of the ‘Atoms for Peace’ initiative spearheaded by President Dwight Eisenhower,
the South Korean government acquired a small nuclear reactor in 1956. This reactor could
not be used to generate civilian energy, let alone process materials necessary to produce
a nuclear weapon. Instead, the South Korean government used the reactor for peaceful
scientific research and creating radioisotopes for medical and agricultural purposes. Access
to this technology also raised hopes for the future acquisition of civilian nuclear power.\textsuperscript{22}

To make further progress in nuclear research, the South Korean government decided in the

\textsuperscript{21}Historian Seung-Young Kim cites a quotation of Park’s own daughter that draws this connection ex-

plicitly, stating that her father’s decision to acquire nuclear weapons was “to safeguard national security

when American commitment became uncertain while China and the Soviet Union continued to provide the

alliance support to North Korea.” Park Geun-hye quoted in Kim (2001, 57). This explanation, gleaned from

a 2001 interview with the historian, might seem like a post hoc rationalization of events, but is nevertheless

consistent with statements made in the mid-1970s by South Korean leaders regarding the strength of US

security guarantees.

\textsuperscript{22}Jasanoff and Kim (2009, 132).
late 1960s to undertake a major initiative directed at creating its own nuclear fuel cycle. Its aim was to construct a 500-megawatt electric nuclear power plant (the Kori 1) and study nuclear fuel fabrication and reprocessing by 1976. Yet the purpose of such initiatives was arguably to address South Korea’s increasing energy needs to support its rapid industrial growth. The activities of the newly created WEC, however, suggest a dramatic change in South Korea’s intended use of atomic energy.

Within two years South Korean government started mobilizing military, academic, and industrial resources towards the production of a nuclear weapon. However, the program soon encountered several technical challenges. One problem facing the program was South Korea’s limited access to the sensitive nuclear materials needed to produce a weapon. For much of South Korea’s history of nuclear research up until this date, the United States was a major source of nuclear technology and fuel. Because of expected US opposition to this new initiative, the South Korean government had to find alternative suppliers to acquire a reprocessing capability. To this end, South Korea sent the minister of science and technology to enlist the technical cooperation of France and United Kingdom in building a reprocessing facility. In addition, the South Korean government sent representatives to other nuclear capable western countries such as Canada and Israel. These initiatives were successful in procuring foreign assistance. By 1974 South Korea signed a contract with the French company Saint Gobain Technique Nouvelle to acquire the design of a reprocessing facility and another contract with the Belgium company Belgonucléaire. South Korean scientists were also able to secure the import of the NRX experiment reactor from Canada and France. Having this type of reactor enabled South Korea to produce weapon-grade plutonium.

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23Kang and Feiveson (2001, 54). Wonjaryokchong, *Hanguk Wonjaryok Samsipnyonsa* [Thirty Year History of Korean Nuclear Energy] (Daeduk:Wonjaryok-yonguso, 1990), 55-142 and 170. This Korean language secondary source argues that South Korea planned to acquire a reprocessing capability. Kim (2001, 54) cites this source to allege that the purpose was to acquire a reprocessing capability because of a lack of supply on the international market. The original source, however, does not make such an observation.


To be sure, South Korean nuclear behavior is puzzling for its seeming lack of sophistication. First, despite the reduction in US manpower on the peninsula, US tactical nuclear weapons (i.e. the nuclear sword) remained. Second, it is not clear what South Korea intended to do with its nuclear weapons. Nor was its leadership clear on the conditions under which it would reveal the program. After all, much like the doomsday device in film-maker Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove*, the utility of the arsenal would have been at best limited if adversaries were ignorant of it. Third, with Seoul located so close to the DMZ, South Korea lacks strategic depth and therefore would have not absorbed a nuclear strike by North Korea’s patron, China. If North Korea were to have matched South Korean nuclear efforts, then the South Korean nuclear threat would lose credibility. Indeed, it is not entirely what strategic calculus motivated South Korean decision-making.\textsuperscript{26} The desire to redress an unfavorable conventional military balance of power vis-à-vis the North might have been a sufficient strategic rationale in light of US abandonment. Yet it is worth pointing out that ‘fear of abandonment’ implies some degree of an emotional response. In this light, fearful decision-makers might undertake logical and reasonable actions, but not all actions would be thoroughly logical under such conditions of duress.

**South Korean Anxieties as Motivation**

Much of South Korea’s behavior had to do with concerns relating to the changes that US political leaders making to their country’s global strategic posture at the end of the 1960s. At this time, the situation facing the United States in Vietnam appeared increasingly futile. The attritional warfare produced high casualties for both sides of the conflict. Partly because the military relied on conscription to support the campaign, members of the US public became increasingly critical of the US involvement in the war. Taking advantage of these sentiments, a signature aspect of Nixon’s successful Presidential election campaign in 1968 was his pledge to end the Vietnam War. As President, Nixon believed that US withdrawal

\textsuperscript{26}My interviews in South Korea with regional experts in March 2013 confirmed this observation.
from Vietnam could only be achieved if there were a workable arrangement that guaranteed South Vietnam’s security.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, January 19, 1969, FRUS 1969-76, 6: 2-3; Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, March 10, 1969 FRUS 1969-76, 6: 100.} Amidst faltering negotiations with the North Vietnamese and domestic demands for pulling out of Vietnam, Nixon initiated a strategy of phased troop withdrawals and increased reliance on Vietnamese troops.\footnote{National Security Study Memorandum 36, April 10, 1969, FRUS 1969-1976, 6: 195-196; Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam, November 3, 1969.}

This policy, known either as ‘Vietnamization’ or the Guam Doctrine, was the cornerstone of a general theme of Nixon’s first term of office. In a speech delivered at Guam on July 25, 1969, Nixon announced that although the United States will maintain its treaty commitments and continue to provide nuclear umbrellas, the United States would ask its allies to contribute more to satisfy their own security needs. Specifically, Nixon stated, “we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.”\footnote{Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard Nixon: 1969 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971): 544-548.} Transferring military responsibilities to South Vietnamese forces was one aspect of this policy, but the Nixon administration also sought to implement similar changes of policy in East Asia.

To clarify these policy changes Nixon communicated with key decision-makers in the region.\footnote{For an extensive discussion on the Guam Doctrine and its impact on South Korea, see Nam (1986). I agree with Nam’s assessment of the underlying conditions that led to both the Guam Doctrine and changes in South Korean behavior.} On August 21, 1969, Nixon met with President Park in San Francisco to discuss the US-South Korean relationship and “elaborate on my new policy toward Asia.” Nixon told Park that “we will not retreat from the Pacific area and we will not reduce commitments.” He noted, however, that South Korean “efforts toward military and economic self-reliance are the correct road to take.” Park reminded Nixon that the US troop presence deterred Kim Il-sung from invading the South and argued that Kim Il-sung was provoking the United
States to reduce its military presence. When Park asked about troop withdrawals from Korea, his remarks elicited no direct response from Nixon. Indeed, Nixon knew he was vague and imprecise in his conversation with Park. At one point he admitted to Park that his comment about US military commitments was a “general statement.”

Still, within several months Nixon alerted National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger that “the time has come to reduce our Korean presence” by “half.” Nixon desired this change in policy for some time, but he had to wait some time after the shooting down of the EC-121. A National Security Decision Memorandum in March 1970 noted the need to remove one of the two infantry divisions from the Korean peninsula by the middle of 1971.

I code this declared change in the US strategic posture as unfavorable to South Korean leaders. After all, South Korea still faced a dangerous strategic situation that fears of US abandonment would amplify. To review, North Korea intensified its provocations in the late 1960s. China, North Korea’s patron, also exhibited aggressive behavior throughout the decade, including border clashes with India and the 1964 detonation of its own nuclear weapon. Although South Korea was just beginning to benefit from rapid industrialization, it

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31 Memorandum of Conversation, August 21, 1969, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 96-100. In a private conversation with Kissinger, the South Korean Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil later referred to this exchange to reproach the Nixon administration for its misleading assurances in the past. Kissinger did not dispute the substance of Park and Nixon’s conversation, but added that no decision was made at the time to reduce US forces. Memorandum of Conversation, December 2, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 213-216.

32 Memorandum From President Nixon to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), November 24, 1969, FRUS 1969-72 19: 117. It is important not to overstate Nixon’s role in effecting troop withdrawals from South Korea. Johnson had already commissioned an internal report to re-evaluate the US relationship with South Korea. One suggestion mooted by the report emphasized the need to reduce the US presence by one division by 1973. Paper Prepared by the Policy Planning Council of the Department of State, June 15, 1968, FRUS 1964-68 29: 435. Interestingly, a 1962 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) notes the harmful effects of any US troop reductions in South Korea. These effects included “considerable apprehension that the military reductions were a prelude to the withdrawal of US protection” if improperly handled. Special NIE 42-62, ‘The Outlook for South Korea,’ April 4, 1962, p. 8. Folder: “South Korea (42),” Box 6, National Intelligence Estimates, National Security File, LBJL. The 1965 NIE similarly observes that “[the ROK Government] will also, like all its predecessors, oppose any withdrawals of US forces from the ROK, both because of the impact on South Korean morale, and because in recent years the ROK has earned some $50 million annually from expenditures by US forces.” NIE 42/14.2-65, ‘The Korean Problem,’ January 22, 1965, p. 8. Folder: “South Korea (42),” Box 6, National Intelligence Estimates, National Security File, LBJL.

faced a severely unfavorable conventional military balance of power with either communist adversary. The combination of the Guam Doctrine and Nixon’s announced troop withdrawal stoked fears of abandonment in the face of these threats, thereby encouraging the South Korean leadership to undertake nuclear behavior.

Additional evidence shows that the South Korean leadership did exhibit concerns over the implications of US partial withdrawal. Ahead of implementing this policy the Nixon administration made a number of consultations with the South Korean government. When Wheeler mooted the possibility of these cuts to Park, the South Korean president expressed “concern at the prospect of a pull-out or substantial reduction in American troops in Korea” and commented that war would be “inevitable” following the withdrawal of American troops. Yet Wheeler noted that Park was also “contradictory” when the South Korean president further added that South Korea would have to provide its own deterrent and defense capability.

Interestingly, an examination of the discussions between representatives of the two governments reveal that South Korean leaders did not expect any troop withdrawals from South Korea.

That the United States sent mixed signals is one possible reason for the South Korean government’s apparent lack of foresight. That is, South Korean officials were not emotionally prepared for the troop withdrawal because they had received some indications that none were forthcoming. On the one hand, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird noted to his South Korean interlocutors that “pressures for reduction of our forces in Korea are increasing”, adding that “[South Korean] forces should be modernized before we withdraw any of our forces.” The

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34 Cha (1999, 64-67) also uncovers evidence that the South Korean leadership feared US abandonment in light of these changes in the US strategic posture in East Asia.

35 Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon, November 25, 1969, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 117-118.

36 In his description of the dialogue held between Nixon and Park in August 1969, Chae-jin Lee agrees with this view. According to Lee (2006, 68), “Park left San Francisco with the belief that Nixon, despite his plan for Vietnamization, would not withdraw US troops from South Korea so long as South Korean troops remained in Vietnam and that if he eventually decided to do so, it would only take place after full consultation with South Korea in advance.” To provide evidentiary support for this claim, he cites the recollections of the South Korean ambassador to the United States during the summit meeting.
domestic pressures to which Laird referred emphasized the magnitude of the financial costs associated with maintaining such a large troop presence. On the other hand, Laird did not say that “decisions [about troop withdrawals] had been made or that there would be any immediate US troop withdrawals.”

The confused nature of these exchanges helps explain why the South Korean government reacted harshly when Nixon finally announced the withdrawal of one combat division. With a timetable set for June 1971, the withdrawal would effectively cut the number of American troops on the peninsula from 61,000 to 40,000. Park protested and claimed that this announcement came as a “profound shock.” To assuage concerns over US security guarantees to South Korea, Nixon wrote a personal letter to Park, promising to obtain Congressional approval for greater military assistance to South Korea and its efforts to modernize its army. Park, however, suggested to the US ambassador to South Korea that without knowing the “nature and extent of modernization he cannot agree to any withdrawals.” Park further added that the uncertainty induced by even a partial withdrawal and the lack of a viable modernization program would weaken his domestic position. He then asked for the United States to delay its decision for another five years.

Park continued this line of argument in the months ahead with other American officials.

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37 See Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Korea, January 29, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 121-122.
38 Secretary of State William Rogers stated that he, Laird, and others in the Nixon administration made hints regarding future US troop withdrawals that Park chose to ignore. Telegram from the Department of State, April 23, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 150-151.
39 Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, May 29, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 154-155. Next month, in a letter intended for Nixon, Park reiterated the domestic difficulties of accepting the troop reductions: “On my part, it would be impossible to persuade the Korean people to accept the partial withdrawal by the end of June 1971, as mentioned in your letter, because of the unexpected shock it would give to them and the shortness of time involved.” Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, June 15, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 161. The so-called Brown Memorandum of 1966 assured South Korean leaders that US modernization assistance program was forthcoming. A Korean language source notes that “President Park felt great distrust when the result of the Brown Memorandum produced no significant outcome despite of the fact that South Korea dispatched more than two infantry divisions to Vietnam. To make things worse, it was at this time, in July 1970, the United States notified to pull out one of two remaining infantry divisions from South Korea, known as the “Guam Doctrine” ... and he (President Park) strongly protested against it.” This secondary source corroborates my analysis. See Oh Won-Chul, Pakjonghi-wa Kimilsung-ui Ogissaum [The Contest of Guts between Park Chung-hee and Kim Il-sung], ShinDongA (June 1996), 482. Translation thanks to research assistance.
Some of these officials disliked his “hard line resistance” and his “lack of sensitivity to American domestic problems bearing on this matter.” Yet these officials also expressed a lack of understanding of the South Korean position. During one high-level meeting, Park argued that the troop withdrawal appeared inconsistent with earlier American assurances over South Korean security. The US Ambassador to South Korea William Porter responded that “from our point of view [the South Korean government] seems to lack confidence in US intentions and our statements, and we do not understand why.” Even worse, some efforts to allay South Korean concerns backfired. In a press conference held in Seoul in August 1970, Vice President Spiro Agnew deepened the uncertainty when he declared the US intention to withdrawal all American troops from the peninsula within five years. Thus, in December 1970, South Korean Prime Minister Jong Pil Kim told Kissinger that “everyone in Korea understood [the withdrawal] meant a detachment of the US commitment to support [South] Korea and in effect the re-establishment of an Asian defense system.”

I should note that the US partial withdrawal was not the sole source of South Korean apprehensions regarding US security guarantees. First, the United States was scaling down its military presence all across East Asia in light of its military failure in Indochina. Second, US efforts at pursuing rapprochement with China created further unease over US actions in East Asia. Due to growing cleavages over communist doctrine and foreign policy interests, relations between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated to the point where Mao saw the United States as a lesser threat than its erstwhile ally. The Sino-Soviet split afforded the

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40 Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, June 1, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 158.
41 Telegram from the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, August 4, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 174-179.
43 Memorandum of Conversation, December 2, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 216. This uneasiness reflects Park’s views on the origins of the Korean War. In his memoirs, first published in 1963, he wrote: “our relationship with the US can be traced back since the dawn of our independence. We share a common ground of upholding democratic values, military tradition, and principles of economy. We are also bonded by a common fate, that is the Korean War, and needless to say, how the victors of the WWII are responsible for it.” Translation thanks to research assistance. Park Chung-hee, Kukga-wa Hyokmyung-gwa Na [State, Revolution and Me] (Seoul: Chiguchon, 1997, originally published by Hyangmunsa, 1963), 227-31.
United States an opportunity to further tilt the balance of power against the Soviet Union. Nixon recognized the growing need to reach out to the Chinese in a 1967 *Foreign Affairs* piece that he had written as a Presidential candidate.\(^{44}\) Shortly after becoming President, Nixon used secure diplomatic channels to advance this initiative.\(^{45}\) Though a pragmatic change in policy for the United States, South Korean leaders felt threatened by the prospect of US *rapprochement* with China. Specifically, they were worried that the United States would grant the Chinese greater leeway in East Asia and accept its request for US withdrawal from Korea.\(^{46}\) Indeed, the US partial withdrawal likely magnified South Korean unease over US efforts *rapprochement* with China.\(^{47}\)

In case some readers remain unsatisfied of the connection between US partial withdrawals and South Korean nuclear behavior, other aspects of South Korean foreign policy at this time are worth considering. An observable implication of alliance compensation theory is that the ally should respond to unfavorable shifts of their patron’s strategic posture with actions that suggest fears of abandonment. These actions could even entail policies intended to make the patron ‘pay’ for its strategic shifts through retaliation or presenting new hurdles for the patron to meet its security objectives. I argue that the South Korean government did embrace new policies or positions consistent with fears of abandonment.

\(^{44}\)Nixon (1967).

\(^{45}\)Memorandum From President Nixon to his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), February 1, 1969, FRUS 1969-72, 27: 7.


\(^{47}\)A Korean language secondary source makes the following observation: “[o]n the surface, South Korean government reacted positively towards the rapprochement negotiation between the United States and China and expressed its hope for easing of tension in the Korean peninsula, but internally, many were concerned that the Taiwan issue, China’s request for the withdrawal of the US forces in Korea, and negotiation regarding the Vietnam war would be brought up during the discussion. This concern was exemplified when the US did not inform the schedule of the meeting with the Chinese to the South Korean government.” See Kim Yong-Sik, Huimang-gwa Tojon-Kim Yong-sik Oegyohoegeorok [Hope and Challenge – Memoir of Kim Yong-sik Diplomacy] (Seoul: Dong-A Ilbo sa, 1987), 246. Translation thanks to research assistance.
To begin, the documentary record is replete with examples of the South Korean leadership seeking new reassurances from the United States. These requests were particularly salient when officials representing South Korea and the United States discussed modernization programs for the South Korean military. Specifically, it desired greater US support for the modernization of the South Korean military and stronger assurances regarding US commitments to its security. Oftentimes these goals were explicitly linked: Park wanted the US deployments to remain unchanged until the South Korean military was sufficiently modernized.48 Yet these demands elicited a mixed response from the United States. In addition to the finality of the troop withdrawal plans, US decision-makers sent mixed signals about expanding military assistance to South Korea. For example, in a letter to Park intended to placate the South Korean leader’s concerns about US security commitments, Nixon wrote of the significant domestic pressure he faced to increase burden-sharing with allies. He noted that “the level of military assistance for Korea provided by the Congress (sic) under the last military assistance appropriation has been less than we considered desirable.” This explanation did not deter Nixon from adding that “[s]ubject to Congressional approval, I propose to provide substantially higher military assistance over the period 1971-75 for Korean modernization. Moreover provided your Government assumes a larger defense burden we are also prepared to consider some increased economic assistance.”49 In effect, Nixon was promising more of something he already had trouble obtaining. Thus, it is not surprising that Park later asked Ambassador to South Korea William J. Porter for greater clarification regarding the “nature and extent of modernization” of South Korean military forces.50 Park even threatened non-cooperation in reduction talks should negotiations over South Korean military modernization prove to be unsatisfactory.51 The desire for stronger

48 Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, June 15, 1970. FRUS 1969-72, 19: 159-161. See also Telegram from the Commander in Chief, Pacific (McCain) to the Department of State, July 23, 1970, FRUS 1969-1972, 19: 170-173.
51 Park told Ambassador Porter that “[i]f United States (sic) proceeds to reduce he will not object but he will not cooperate ... Perhaps it would be said that [the South Korean government] is uncooperative.
assurances constituted a major theme in South Korea’s diplomacy towards the United States just as it began considering nuclear weapons research.

The South Korean government’s anxious desire for stronger assurances persisted throughout the year. Yet its diplomacy softened shortly after the establishment of ADD and WEC in August 1970. The most palatable change took place in early November when, following a presentation by Porter on the status of troop withdrawals and the military modernization package, Park appeared “acquiescent.” He even “abandon[ed] efforts to obtain diplomatic assurances regarding US troop reductions.” Rogers thus observed that “[h]e has probably realized that there is no chance that we will reconsider our positions and that further adamancy on his part could cost him heavily with both our Congress and the Korean electorate. Whatever the reasons for Park’s apparent acquiescence, the result is entirely favorable.” The explanations put forward by members of the Department of State seem plausible, but it is also likely that Park recognized US resolve to proceed with these troop withdrawals. Exploring the nuclear weapons option might have been a first step for Park towards acquiring insurance against foreign threats.

This new understanding that the South Korean and US governments reached, however, did not ease their relations. As the date for implementing the troop withdrawals approached in early 1971, US government officials complained of the South Korean government’s “delaying tactics” in deploying replacement troops along the DMZ. Ironically, the South Korean government began to implement its own troop withdrawals from South Vietnam. This

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52 At the very least, documents show a change in the tenor of South Korea’s démarche. See, e.g., Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Korea, August 4, 1970. FRUS 1969-72, 19: 174-179.
53 Porter advanced the hypothesis that domestic opposition and Congressional pressure might have generated this change in behavior. Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, November 7, 1970. FRUS 1969-72, 19: 193-194.
54 Memorandum from Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon, November 10, 1970. FRUS 1969-72, 19: 197-198.
55 Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, February 2, 1971. FRUS 1969-72, 19: 224.
56 South Korean decision-makers previously believed that their participation in the Vietnam War would
action frustrated US officials for some of the same reasons expressed by the South Korean government in 1970. Ambassador Phillip C. Habib stated he “requested [the South Korean government] not move suddenly with decisions or announcements of further withdrawals. [Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Yun Sok-Hon] said that they had no intention of making known their plans at this time. I reminded him I had already seen articles in newspapers, sourced to officials, that his government was planning withdrawals in '72 and mentioning [the South Vietnamese government’s] request for their retention. It struck me this kind of loose talk was not helpful. He agreed but did not leave with any assurance it would cease.”

Furthermore, the South Korean government resumed its efforts to extract even more assurances from the United States. Despite Park’s alleged acquiescence in the fall of 1970, his government remained a troublesome ally.

6.3 Reversing South Korea’s Nuclear Behavior

South Korea’s covert nuclear weapons program only lasted a few years. By 1975 the South Korean government dismantled the program and even ratified the NPT. What explains this rapid reversal?

Changes in South Korea’s threat environment cannot account for South Korea’s deproliferation. In fact, the threat environment facing South Korea does not appear to have waned ensure a sustained US military presence on the Korean peninsula. As one Korean language source argues, “the government (of South Korea) was aware of the effects of Guam Doctrine, and calculated that any discussions leading to downsizing of the US troops would happen after the end of the Vietnam War ... The government thought by committing more than two infantry divisions to Vietnam (about the same size as the US forces in Korea), withdrawal of the US troops from South Korea would not occur.” Kim Jung-ryum, Hangukgyongjeonsol 30 nyonsa: Kim Jongryom Hoegorok [History of Korean Economic Construction for Thirty Years: Memoir] (Seoul: Joongang Ilbosa, 1995), p. 316.

57 Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, November 3, 1971, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 290-293. Ultimately, the South Korean government agreed to postpone its withdrawals. Memorandum From John H. Holdridge of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig), February 5, 1972, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 315-316.

in intensity. Direct evidence of how South Korean leaders understood the regional security environment is difficult to ascertain so as to fully evaluate this theory. Still, enough reasons exist to doubt the validity of this hypothesis. First, the South Koreans were still anxious over the broader repercussions of communist successes in Indochina. The subsequent US withdrawal might even embolden regional adversaries. Second, North Korea retained an aggressive posture and even made preparations for war. Kim Il-sung even toured China and Eastern Europe to make weapons and fuel purchases. Accordingly, “President Park believed that war could break out at any time.”

Second, South Korea’s diplomatic relations with Japanese were seriously strained after a North Korean sympathizer attempted to assassinate Park in August 1974, fatally injuring the South Korean president’s wife in the process. Because the would-be assassin was Japanese and entered South Korea on a Japanese passport, Park demanded an apology and the disbandment of a pro-North Korean residents’ association. Insensitive to anti-Japanese sentiments in South Korea, the Japanese foreign minister further antagonized the South Korean leadership by refusing to accept any responsibility for the attack. Though these governments eventually settled this controversy, the strain on their diplomatic relations added to an already conflictual regional environment. Put together, tensions in the region remained sufficiently high to warrant the continuation of a nuclear weapons program, thus discounting the empirical validity of this hypothesis.

If the threat environment did not lower the incentives for the South Korean to develop nuclear weapons, then what did? In this section I explore the extent to which alliance politics led to the termination of South Korea’s nuclear behavior. Alliance compensation theory predicts that South Korea’s bilateral security and economic relationship facilitated

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59Kim (2001, 64).
60Oberdorfer (2001, 52-54). As Lind (2009, 538-540) reports, the South Korean government still felt threatened by their erstwhile imperial rulers. This threat perception was based not only on an assessment of Japanese capabilities, but also on the Japanese government’s reluctance to satisfactorily atone for its historical crimes and abuses against Korean society. For more on the Cold War relationship between South Korea and Japan, see Cha (1999).
the use of an effective counterproliferation strategy. In other words, because the alliance was bilateral and South Korea was economically and technologically very dependent on its patron, the United States could mount a rapid counterproliferation effort to reverse South Korea’s nuclear behavior. Upon determining the empirical validity of this argument, I then assess the relative impact of other possible factors that alternative explanations for nuclear reversal would identify as important.

The US Reaction to the South Korean Program

It is unclear as to what extent the Nixon administration knew of the earlier phases of South Korea’s nuclear behavior. Many of the archival materials that pertain to both South Korea and nuclear weapons remain closed. No documents contained in the FRUS series from the years between 1969 and 1972 suggest US knowledge of South Korea’s exploration and pursuit of nuclear weapons in the early 1970s. One possibility that cannot be dismissed is that Nixon tacitly approved of South Korea’s nuclear weapons program. He might have understood that nuclear weapons offered South Korea its own deterrent capability such that the United States could justifiably lessen its conventional military presence on the peninsula. Moreover, Nixon and Kissinger did feel that counter-proliferation efforts directed at allies sometimes risked being counterproductive. Thus, the Nixon administration and the South Korean government may have maintained a code of silence regarding South Korean efforts at developing nuclear weapons.

Despite uncertainty over this issue, it is clear that United States became cognizant of the program by the end of 1974. The US government was already aware in November 1974 that South Korea was acquiring a type of Canadian nuclear reactor that “was most vulnerable to

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62FRUS has not yet released Part 2 of the Korea series for the years 1973-1976.
63Gavin (2008, 28). That Nixon tacitly agreed to a South Korean nuclear program seems very unlikely. It would require a character reversal insofar as a nuclear-armed South Korea would be more difficult for the Nixon administration to control.
clandestine diversion.” Yet a NSC memorandum expressed satisfaction over the safeguards implemented on American and Canadian supplied nuclear facilities to South Korea.64 Indeed, an internal Department of State memorandum circulated in October 1974 on South Korea made no mention of a nuclear weapons program.65 However, a telegram sent two months later from the US embassy in Seoul alerted the Secretary of State of South Korea’s nuclear activities.66 According to this document, “evidence accumulated that the [South] Korean [government] has decided to proceed with the initial phases of a nuclear weapons program.” By February 28, 1975, the NSC was in basic agreement with the embassy’s assessment and shared the view that South Korea’s nuclear behavior would have a “major destabilizing effect on the region.”67

With knowledge of South Korea’s nuclear behavior, the Ford administration directed a counterproliferation effort against its East Asian ally.68 The US strategy towards South Korea focused on achieving four basic objectives. The first objective was to force the termination of the South Korean nuclear program “through unilateral US action and through the development of common supplier nation policies.”69 The second objective was to resolve

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64 The same memorandum did warn of a loophole in American agreements with Korea on civilian nuclear assistance. The recency of the Indian ‘peaceful nuclear explosion’ (PNE) drew concerns that the South Korean government would divert plutonium “specifically for PNE use.” National Security Council Memorandum for General Scowcroft, “Sale of Canadian Nuclear Reactor to South Korea,” November 18, 1974, Box 5, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL. These documents reveal that Drezner (1999) is incorrect in supposing that the Indian PNE motivated the US United States to begin counter-proliferation efforts against South Korea. Drezner’s mistake, however, is a function of having to rely on newspaper sources due to the lack of documentary materials available to him at the time.

65 Memorandum for Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, October 19, 1974, folder: “Korea (4),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.

66 Department of State Telegram, “ROK Plans to Develop Nuclear Weapons and Missiles,” December 1974, folder: “Korea (1),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.

67 Memorandum for Secretary Kissinger, February 28, 1975, folder: “Korea (4),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.

68 Memoirs and recent biographies of President Gerald R. Ford offer very little mention of South Korea and no mentioning of South Korea’s nuclear weapons activities (e.g., Mieczkowski 2005). Ford (1979, 212-213) only indicates that he assured Park that “our troops would stay where they were” in a meeting held in November 1974. He then describes how he encouraged Park to improve his human rights record. Kissinger says nothing about the South Korean nuclear weapons program in White House Years, Years of Upheaval, and Years of Renewal. This silence is likely due to the timing of the publication of these memoirs.

69 Ibid.
informational issues and force South Korea to become more transparent in its uses of nuclear material. Greater transparency helped to advance a third objective: ensuring that South Korea could not restart its nuclear weapons program at a future date when the current controversy subsided. The fourth objective concerned the very issue that prompted South Korea’s nuclear behavior in the first place. The United States had to allay skepticism over the reliability of its security commitments.\footnote{See also Telegram 2685 From the Embassy in the Republic of Korea to the Department of State, April 18, 1975, FRUS 1973-76 E-12.}

**Implementing the Counterproliferation Strategy**

The Ford administration succeeded in fulfilling the four objectives outlined earlier and getting South Korea to renounce nuclear weapons. To obtain the first objective, the Ford administration threatened to cut off financing for the *Kori 2* nuclear power plant and other planned nuclear facilities through the Export-Import Bank, the US export credit agency. Sneider reported that he had asked a South Korean official as to “whether Korea (is) prepared (to) jeopardize availability of technology and largest financing capability which only US could offer, as well as vital partnership with US, not only in nuclear and scientific areas but in broad political and security areas.”\footnote{Quoted in Oberdorfer (2001, 72).} Furthermore, the US government applied pressure on third party states to stop them from lending sensitive nuclear assistance to South Korea. The Canadian government was attuned to the risk of proliferation following India’s PNE and had already faced severe criticism for supplying a repressive state with nuclear technology. After some wrangling, France also agreed to withdraw its assistance to South Korea’s efforts in obtaining a reprocessing capability. Belgonucléaire terminated its contract with the South Korean government in November 1977.\footnote{Kim (2001, 66).}

As for the second objective, the US government pressured South Korea to take part in a multilateral initiative that would enable East Asian states to reprocess spent fuel from

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\begin{itemize}
  \item See also Telegram 2685 From the Embassy in the Republic of Korea to the Department of State, April 18, 1975, FRUS 1973-76 E-12.
  \item Quoted in Oberdorfer (2001, 72).
  \item Kim (2001, 66).
\end{itemize}
a shared regional facility. For the third (and related) objective, getting the South Korean government to ratify the NPT was a significant step in addressing this issue of making a credible commitment to eschew nuclear weapons acquisition.\textsuperscript{73} South Korea was in fact an original signatory to the NPT, but its ratification in the Korean legislature did not yet take place. This lack of commitment added uncertainty over South Korea’s intentions and was a source of discussion in US exchanges with South Korean government officials. By April 1975, however, South Korea ratified the NPT and agreed to inspections and monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency. To get South Korea to finally ratify the treaty, the US government used a variety of levers. Congress suspended a $79 million dollar loan and $157 million loan guarantee to intended to finance a civilian nuclear power plant.\textsuperscript{74}

Finally, with respect to the fourth objective, members of the Ford administration displayed greater sensitivity over South Korean perceptions of US security guarantees. The Department of State recognized that South Korea’s “nuclear weapon effort has been in part reflection of lessened [South Korean government’s] confidence in US security commitments.”\textsuperscript{75} The Department of Defense agreed with this assessment, stating that “President Park’s fears of isolation and the possible withdrawal of US forces have led him to embark on a secret program to develop nuclear weapons.”\textsuperscript{76} Indeed, the US embassy in Seoul noted the importance of South Korean perceptions of US security commitments ahead of a visit by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller:

“Existing danger to [South Korea] has been greatly increased by communist successes in sea. [South Korean] security rests heavily on deterrent effect US force presence and military assistance provide. Any indication of lessening of

\textsuperscript{73}Memorandum for Secretary Kissinger, February 28, 1975, folder: “Korea (4),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.  
\textsuperscript{74}Drezner (1999, 258).  
\textsuperscript{75}Draft Department of State Cable, “ROK Plans to Develop Nuclear Weapons and Missiles,” February 24, 1975, folder: “Korea (4),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.  
\textsuperscript{76}Study Prepared by the Office of International Security Affairs in the Department of Defense, undated, FRUS 1973-76 E-12.
US commitment will encourage already dangerous North Korean belligerence. Decline of military assistance below levels earlier agreed and criticism in US on [South Korea] have already created concern over US intentions towards its commitments.”

NSC member William R. Smyser even circulated an old internal memorandum to Kissinger that outlined the decision-making behind the 1949 US troop withdrawal from South Korea. In the letter explaining this document, Smyser noted that “it is worth reflecting on this, for the obvious reason that we might not have had the Korean War if we had not pulled all of our forces out.”

This sensitivity over troop withdrawals now informed US policy-making towards the region. Indeed, it shaped how the Ford administration confronted certain policy recommendations during this phase of negotiations with the South Korean government. For example, the Department of Defense considered additional restructuring of troop deployments on the Korean peninsula. Yet members of the Department of State and the Ford administration resisted the Department of Defense’s policy recommendations. In a memorandum to Ford, Kissinger advised that “this is the wrong time to make any of these changes, or even to continue planning already underway with [South Korea] for such changes. To proceed would give the wrong signal to both Seoul and Pyongyang.” Ford apparently agreed. In a note addressed to the Secretary of Defense, Kissinger stated that proposed changes to US force deployments and structure in South Korea were presently “inadvisable.”

77 Department of State Telegram, “Vice President’s Meeting with ROK Prime Minister Kim Chong-Pil”, April 1975, folder: “Korea - State Department Telegrams: From SECSTATE to NODIS (3),” Box 11, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.
78 Memorandum for Secretary Kissinger, March 5, 1975, folder: “Korea (5),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.
79 Memorandum for President Ford, April, 1975?, folder: “Korea (6),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.
80 Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, undated, folder: “Korea (6),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL. It is worth noting here that some officials suggested new troop withdrawals in the Nixon administration after 1971. Kissinger vetoed these suggestions. Airgram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, December 10, 1972, FRUS 1969-72 19: 436-445; Memorandum From Richard Kennedy of the National Security Council Staff
The US counterproliferation effort succeeded in curtailing South Korea’s nuclear behavior. One reason for its success was the economic asymmetry between the United States and South Korea. As political scientist Etel Solingen notes, almost all of the foreign direct investment in South Korea came from the United States and Japan. The United States accounted for a majority of South Korea’s debt and trade. However, it was arguably less the application of economic statecraft that mattered as it was the specific targeting of South Korea’s nascent civilian nuclear industry. South Korean energy dependency and the structure of the international nuclear industry at the time were other reasons for the rapid success of US counterproliferation efforts. Due to the quick pace of its industrialization, existing energy sources available to South Korea were increasingly unable to meet demand (see figure 2). South Korean coal imports and petroleum imports both grew twenty-fold between 1960 and 1975. Accordingly, South Korea’s dependence on imported energy grew from less than ten percent to over fifty percent by the early 1970s. Nuclear energy provided a remedy for this situation. Still, the United States exercised a dominant role in the international nuclear industry. Its nuclear reactors were the most appropriate and cost efficient in light of South Korean needs. Because these reactors required low-enriched uranium, the United States supplied the vast majority of uranium on the world market, especially if one were to exclude the Soviet Union and China. This dependency meant that South Korea was extraordinarily sensitive to the possibility that its access to peaceful US nuclear technology during the 1970s. Simply put, South Korea was vulnerable to US pressure.

In compelling South Korea to behave more favorably, the United States still had to offer some concessions. After all, even though South Korea succumbed to US pressure to ratify to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), January 16, 1973, FRUS 1973-76 E-12. That US decision-makers themselves saw the linkage between troop redeployments and South Korea’s nuclear behavior also builds confidence for alliance compensation theory. They may be relying on private insights drawn from information that remains unavailable in the documentary record. Still, decision-makers’ recognition of these linkages does not provide decisive proof for my theory because of the uncertainty over which pieces of evidence they are using.

82 Ha (1983, 234).
the NPT, its leadership made plain that its future nuclear behavior would be a function of the strength of US security commitments. Such statements imply that South Korea was willing to compromise on its economic objectives if its security needs would not be met satisfactorily. Thus, as already discussed, the Ford administration refrained from opening any discussions of further troop withdrawals. Key officials verbally communicated their commitment to South Korean security as well as offer sophisticated military hardware to strengthen the South Korean military.\footnote{Memorandum of Conversation, August 26, 1975, folder: “Korea (12),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL. Meeting with Korean National Assemblymen, June 25, 1975, folder: “Korea (10),” Box 9, National Security Adviser, Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, GRFL.}

To be sure, US decision-makers expressed such reassurances at a time when US reputation in the region was at its nadir. On April 12, 1975, the US airlifted US nationals and members of the US-supported military-led government out of Cambodia. This action paved the way for the communist Khmer Rouge to obtain control of Cambodia and thus end the Cambodian

Figure 6.2: South Korea’s energy dependency. Source: Ha (1983, 100).
Civil War. At the very end of the month, the People’s Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front captured Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. The capture of Saigon not only prompted the evacuation of most US civilian and military personnel from the city, but also enabled the Provisional Revolutionary Government to gain nominal authority in South Vietnam. US losses in the region did not stop there: communist forces also began acquiring significant control in Laos, another country whose government was supported by the United States. With these losses occurring in rapid succession, US decision-makers, such as Kissinger and Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, recognized that the international stature and reputation for resolve of the United States had now diminished.\textsuperscript{85}

Finally, several US decision-makers did in fact threaten complete abandonment should South Korea proceed with a nuclear weapons program. In March 1975, Kissinger threatened to terminate all US security guarantees to the East Asian ally unless it credible commitments not to proliferate. Such threats did not disappear even after South Korea’s acquiescence to US demands. Over a year later Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told the South Korean Minister of Defense that there might be a “review of the entire spectrum of its relations with the ROK.”\textsuperscript{86} These statements might pose a problem for my theory of intra-alliance nuclear behavior. If concerns about abandonment prompted South Korea to engage in nuclear behavior in the first place, then explicit US threats to completely abandon the alliance should have added to South Korea’s inclination to develop nuclear weapons. Still, the execution of these threats was contingent on South Korea’s behavior. \textit{Ceteris paribus}, states would prefer to maintain major power patronage than lose it, especially if that patronage still entails troop support. If South Korea were to have been hedging its bets with the nuclear program, these threats in fact resolved uncertainty over the US security commitments by stating unambiguously the terms by which they would be lost.

\textsuperscript{85}Indeed, such concerns likely motivated the forceful response undertaken by the United States to rescue the SS \textit{Mayaguez} and its American crew from Khmer Rouge forces. \textit{New York Times}, May 16, 1975, at. 1, col. 6.

\textsuperscript{86}Oberdorfer (2001, 72-73).
That the United States both provided reassurances and threatened alliance abrogation could not have been possible if the alliance were multilateral. In a multilateral setting, the threat of alliance termination would have created wider discord with other allies by giving them additional reason to fear abandonment. The prospective loss of an ally would weaken the integrity of the alliance as well as reduce the aggregation of military capability. Exacerbating the situation was that South Korea also faced a dearth of outside options with which to replace the United States. Japan was one likely source of alternative alliance support, yet Japan’s limited defense policy and legacy of a former colonizer precluded this option. South Korea’s reliance on the United States for its own security was extensive.


Emerging developments in US politics threatened the Ford administration’s successful resolution of South Korea’s nuclear behavior. The economic crisis and continuing fallout from the Watergate scandal doomed Ford’s presidential bid in the 1976 election. His Democratic replacement, Jimmy Carter, entered the White House with a new vision for foreign policy that centered on human rights advocacy. Consistent with this approach, Carter found US support for a repressive regime like Park’s South Korea distasteful.87 At one point during the Democratic primary campaign, Carter even promised the complete withdrawal of all US military forces from the Korean peninsula. Such early campaign rhetoric turned out to reflect Carter’s true intentions for South Korea.88 39,000 US troops still remained in South Korea.

87 Carter was certainly not alone in these sentiments. Strom Thurmond led a petition of about one-hundred Congressmen that renounced human rights violations in South Korea during the Ford presidency. Indeed, Koreagate – a Congressional effort at critically probing the US-South Korean alliance – added further strain to the relationship between the two countries. For a summary of these Congressional debates, see Sungjoo (1980).

88 Gleysteen (1999, 17). Other reasons account for Carter’s proposed withdrawal policy. As Niksch (1981, 25-27) notes, the Carter administration sought to shift its foreign policy orientation away from East Asia and towards Europe instead. The legacy of the Vietnam War informed much of this shift in strategic posture.
in 1977, but Carter sought to reduce that number to zero shortly after assuming the presidency. He directed the NSC to produce a feasibility report regarding the implementation of a complete troop withdrawal from South Korea. As evidence of its commitment to this initiative, the White House did not even wish for an analysis of its probable consequences.89

This planned troop redeployment quickly ran into opposition from both administration and international sources. Carter’s position provoked a backlash amongst leading officials in the military, the NSC, and the Department of State. The chief of staff of the UN Command in Seoul even spoke publicly against Carter’s proposal. Though less open about their own attitudes, the senior American commander in South Korea and the US ambassador in Seoul also opposed further troop withdrawals. An official privy to these internal debates later wrote that the NSC sought to persuade Carter to modify his position. Apparently, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown privately expressed support for recommending a softer policy position. These efforts came to naught as Carter elected to ignore the advice of other senior decision-makers and proceeded to issue Presidential Decision 12 on May 5, 1977. This statement called for the complete withdrawal of all troops by 1982, starting with one brigade of the second division (at least 6,000 troops) to be removed from Korea by the end of 1978.90

International opposition towards the planned troop withdrawal grew during the summer of 1977. The Chinese Vice Foreign Minister cryptically told Australian government officials that “there will be war” after the US troop withdrawal. Though this statement was most likely not a reflection of the official Chinese position, it nevertheless communicated their unease over the larger geopolitical implications of this change in US military posture in East Asia.91 After all, China saw the US military presence in East Asia as a desirable offset to Soviet encirclement, despite being forced to call for troop withdrawals as part of its ideological

90For a detailed discussion of this discord within the Carter administration, see Gleysteen (1999, 24).
91Memorandum, July 20, 1977, folder: “(2),” Box 3, Brzezinski Material: President’s Daily Report File, JCL.
competition with the Soviet Union. US allies in the region also seemed concerned about
the implications of the withdrawal for the “wellsprings of US foreign policy.” NSC staff
member Mark Armacost noted from his trip to Asia that “[s]ince no concessions are being
sought from [North Korea], most Asians conclude that diplomatic considerations got short
shrift.” If military reasons did not account for the new US policy, then only US “domestic
politics” seemed to be the last remaining explanation that made sense for US allies.

If the international and administration reaction was so negative, then what was the
response of the South Korean government? South Korea’s actions following the partial troop
withdrawal undertaken suggests an even harsher reaction in view of a complete withdrawal.
Yet the content and success of the Ford administration’s counterproliferation policy placed
new limits on what South Korea could achieve. The purpose of the following discussion is
to determine whether Carter’s announced troop withdrawal generated any changes in South
Korea’s behavior.

South Korean Nuclear Behavior Redux?

Though Carter’s plans for a complete withdrawal never came into fruition, his strong intent
to implement his desired policy might have prompted South Korea to at least engage in
lower levels of nuclear behavior. According to Jonathan Pollack and Mitchell Reiss, South
Korea worked on managing the nuclear fuel cycle during this time. Scott Kemp provides

\footnote{At least, such was the assessment of US intelligence officials. See Intelligence Memorandum: The Value of the United States to China’s National Security, March 1977, folder: “3”, Box 54, Staff Material: Far East, JCL.}

\footnote{Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, June 10, 1977, folder: “8”, Box 125, Brzezinski Material: Brzezinski Office File, JCL. In an interesting exchange, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser gave Carter historical context for Southeast Asian concerns regarding US security commitments in the region. He remarked that: “[t]he British withdrawal from the area ‘east of Suez’ was marked by frequent assurances of British steadfastness which were regularly broken. This has generated a certain measure of skepticism toward some US professions of continuing interest in the Asia area ... From the standpoint of stability, confidence in the United States is a very important though intangible factor.” Fraser concluded his observation on a gloomy note, stating that “I’m afraid, Mr. President, I have merely posed a problem; I have no answer to offer.” Memorandum of Conversation, June 22, 1977, folder: “6/11-27/77”, Box 2, National Security Affairs, Staff Material: Far East, JCL.}

\footnote{Pollack and Reiss (2004, 263).}
evidence that South Korea even started a nuclear centrifuge program. though any such weapons research and development would have been highly secret, the the vice-premier and foreign minister mooted the possibility of South Korea pursuing its own nuclear capability. Indeed, the minister of science and technology – with the likely sanctioning of President Park – proclaimed the expansion of South Korea’s nuclear industry so to domestically produce a fuel supply. One source claims that Park announced in January 1977 his intention for South Korea not to go nuclear. Still, at a legislative committee meeting convened to discuss Carter’s troop withdrawals, the South Korean Foreign Minister remarked that “[w]e have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and thus our basic position is that we do not intend to develop nuclear weapons by ourselves. But if it is necessary for national security interests and people’s safety, it is possible for Korea as a sovereign state to make its own judgment on the matter.” Uncertainty over the precise nature of South Korea’s nuclear activities suggests that the congruence test cannot be assessed definitively.

Carter’s plans for complete withdrawal renewed fears of US abandonment among the South Korean leadership. Interestingly, US government officials anticipated such a response as they were aware of Park’s desire for maintaining the status quo. As one telegram observed, “convinced of the necessity for a credible expression of continuing US support as a deterrent to the North, [Park] has told us directly he wants close relations with the US, high-lighted by continuation of present US ground and other force levels.” Nevertheless, within a few months, Ambassador Sneider reported that Park and his government were “reconciled to ground troop withdrawal.” The challenge, however, concerned the question of how “to prepare its public.” Sneider repeated this view two weeks later, adding that Park is
“almost isolated” and “will press for satisfactory compensatory actions particularly on timing and availability of weapons.” He “will not resist ground force withdrawal despite his grave misgivings.” Still, the ambassador now recognized that many members of the South Korean government did not share Park’s attitudes. Sneider noted that “to many, the ground force withdrawal connotes loss of US tripwire and with it loss of US military support in event of North Korean attack following withdrawal which is now broadly expected.”

The announced troop withdrawal did provoke new concerns over the incentives for South Korea to acquire nuclear weapons. The Carter administration had already decided that South Korean nuclear proliferation was so unacceptable that it would “terminate” the US alliance with South Korea in the event it would occur. Yet South Korean attitudes towards the bomb were difficult to gauge. To the surprise of US diplomats, one concern expressed by their South Korean interlocutors touched on whether their country would still enjoy the benefits of a US nuclear umbrella. As Sneider related,

“In response to these suggestions of embracing Korea under US nuclear umbrella, I pointed out that in fact Korea, as any ally, would be covered by US nuclear umbrella and I was surprised that there was any misunderstanding on that point. Both Korean sources pointed out that Koreans have considered assumed (sic) stationing of nuclear weapons in Korea as providing them with nuclear protection. US in past has not talked specifically of placing Korea under nuclear umbrella but this was not considered necessary. However, with possibility of withdrawal of at least ground force nuclear weapons, Koreans suggested that we take some public posture vis-à-vis Korea as we do Japan with respect to nuclear umbrella.”

101 Telegram from Embassy in Seoul to the Department of State, April 19, 1977, folder: “(2)”, Box 2, Brzezinski Material: Cables File, JCL.
102 Carter recommended that “Park should be told that any move to produce nuclear weapons would terminate our security relationship.” Memorandum of Conversation, May 21, 1977, folder: “5/16-23/77”, National Security Affairs, Staff Material: Far East, JCL.
103 Telegram from Embassy in Seoul to the Department of State, June 13, 1977, folder: “(2)”, Box 11, Brzezinski Material: Cables File, JCL.
The US embassy in South Korea thus became acutely aware of the need to reassure South Korea of the US nuclear umbrella. Sneider anticipated that South Korea would search for independent means of preserving its own security. Indeed, he noted that “one specific evidence of this concern is a continuing dialogue and heightened interest in the possibility of [South Korean] acquisition, as a means of bolstering [South Korean] self-reliance.”¹⁰⁴ That the South Korean government signed the NPT just two years before did not seem to allay fears over nuclear proliferation.

As already indicated, the Carter administration eventually decided to cancel the troop withdrawals. Yet the damage associated with this controversial policy was already complete. Leading Democratic Congressmen such as Robert Byrd, Sam Nunn, and Tip O’Neill reproached the Carter administration for its handling of the planned troop withdrawals.¹⁰⁵ Sam Nunn was particular vocal in his arguments regarding the inappropriate timing of the withdrawal when the North Korean military forces appeared to be gathering strength.¹⁰⁶ The US military, too, had expressed sharp reservations over the troop withdrawal. To the dismay of the NSC, the Department of Defense leaked politically sensitive Joint Chiefs of Staff cables to the US Congress in June 1977. The purpose of this action was likely to bolster Congressional opposition to Carter’s initiative.¹⁰⁷ The probable actions of the South Korean government during this period also suggest a deep-seated unease over US foreign policy under Carter’s direction. At the very least, South Korea became a more difficult ally. When Carter explored the possibility of having a trilateral meeting with the two Korea, NSC member Nicholas Platt cautioned that “Park would not go along. There is little in such a meeting for him, unless we agreed to stop troop withdrawals entirely.”¹⁰⁸ Even the Japanese

¹⁰⁴Telegraph from Embassy in Seoul to the Department of State, October 21, 1977, folder: “9”, Box 144, National Security Affairs, Staff Material: Office, JCL.
¹⁰⁵Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, July 19, 1978, folder: “(25)”, Box 13, Jimmy Carter Presidential, President’s Files, Staff Secretary’s File, JCL.
¹⁰⁶Memorandum of Conversation, January 23, 1979, folder: “(2)”, Box 37, Brzezinski Material: Subject File, JCL.
¹⁰⁷Memorandum from Mike Armacost to Zbigniew Brzezinski, June 29, 1977, folder: “6/28-30/77”, Box 2, National Security Affairs, Staff Material: Far East, JCL.
¹⁰⁸Memorandum for Brzezinski, May 7, 1979, folder: “5/16-31/79”, Box 67, National Security Affairs, Staff
government seemed relieved and reassured when the issue was finally resolved.  

If South Korea did engage in nuclear behavior in the late 1970s, then it is highly plausible that Carter’s stated intentions for US troops in the country had much to do with it. Park’s earlier warnings about the consequences of a removal of the US nuclear umbrella cast a shadow over this episode. Gleysteen’s account of bureaucratic infighting within the Carter administration over these planned troop withdrawals highlights how a number of American officials understood the implications of such an action for the US alliance with South Korea and regional stability in East Asia.

6.5 Summary and Alternative Explanations

The analysis of South Korea’s record of nuclear behavior demonstrates the primacy of alliance politics. The Guam Doctrine entailed some shift of US conventional military resources away from East Asia. The impact of this declared change in US military policy on South Korean security interests towards the region became manifest with Nixon’s announced withdrawal of a troop division from the Korean peninsula. Documents show that the South Korean government reacted harshly to this change in the strategic posture of the United States. South Korean leaders, especially Park, responded by adopting a set of measures: he repeatedly sought verbal reassurances from his US interlocutors, he threatened to unilaterally withdraw South Korean troops from Vietnam, he engaged in foot-dragging to slow US redeployment in the region, and, more importantly, he established WEC and ADD to oversee the eventual development of a nuclear weapons program. Alliance politics also played an important role in the demise of the program. Had it not been for US pressure on South Korea and international suppliers of nuclear assistance, South Korea might not have terminated its program when and how it did. Finally, despite uncertainty over the exact nature

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109 Memorandum for Brzezinski, October 9, 1979, folder: “(3)”, Box 24, Brzezinski Material, Staff Evening Reports, JCL.
of South Korea’s nuclear activities in the late 1970s, the evidence at least shows that the South Korean government reacted negatively to Carter’s plans for complete withdrawal.

Some readers may remark that bargaining did not take place between the two governments. The nuclear weapons program was covert, and the United States quickly shut down the program without much resistance. This observation is correct, but it accords insufficient weight to the precedent set by this illicit activity. Several years later, when Carter was mulling a complete troop withdrawal from South Korea, the South Korean Foreign Minister threatened that “if it is necessary for national security interests and people’s safety, it is possible for Korea as a sovereign state to make its own judgment on the matter.”\textsuperscript{110} Indeed, US decision-makers were aware of the risks that Carter’s actions created for South Korean nuclear policy, and so Carter’s foreign policy establishment revolted over his handling of South Korea. Such concerns over South Korean nuclear proliferation still shape US crisis behavior in the region to this day.\textsuperscript{111}

The evidence strongly favors my theory, yet it is important to assess the relative weight of alternative explanations: those that emphasize the sufficiency of external threats and those that emphasize domestic politics. Table 3 summarizes this chapter’s findings and highlights the impact of the alternative explanations. I more fully examine these alternative explanations below.

**Balance-of-Threat Theory**

Some readers might claim that South Korean leaders responded primarily to the threat posed by external adversaries rather than unfavorable changes to the level of protection provided by the US. North Korea certainly intensified its provocations in the late 1960s. However, it had long maintained a threatening posture under Kim Il-sung’s leadership. China, North Korea’s patron, also exhibited aggressive behavior throughout the decade, including border clashes

\textsuperscript{110}Ha (1978, 1142).

\textsuperscript{111}See Chapter Nine for more on this issue.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Predictions for South Korea</th>
<th>Level of Empirical Support Received (High/Mixed/Low)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alliance Compensation Theory:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onset</strong></td>
<td>Nixon’s 1970 troop withdrawals in light of changes in US posture in East Asia should lead South Korea to adopt nuclear behavior; Carter’s plan for total troop withdrawal should restart South Korean nuclear behavior in late 1970s</td>
<td>High. South Korea begins nuclear behavior after Nixon’s troop withdrawals. Suggestive evidence for the program’s resumption during the Carter years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Termination</strong></td>
<td>South Korean security and economic dependence on the US should imply quick counterproliferation effort in both instances.</td>
<td>High. South Korea was highly responsive to US pressure. It agreed to shut down its nuclear weapons program and ratify the NPT within months of US discovery of its covert activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance-of-Threat Theory</strong></td>
<td>South Korean nuclear behavior is a function of the threat environment. The greater the external threat, the more likely South Korea would engage in nuclear behavior</td>
<td>Mixed. Necessary but insufficient to explain South Korean interest in nuclear weapons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics: Onset</strong></td>
<td>Park should not initiate nuclear behavior due to his export-oriented growth strategy</td>
<td>Low. His uncertainty over alliance commitments overwhelms any considerations regarding the viability of his growth strategy. He might not have wanted to compromise his growth strategy, but he appeared willing to do so in the face of Carter’s threats to completely withdraw US forces from Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic Politics: Termination</strong></td>
<td>Park should not cancel the program so not to appear weak under foreign pressure; no nuclear behavior after democratization.</td>
<td>Low. Park buckled to US pressure quickly, asserting that the program would be constituted should new doubts over US alliance commitments would re-emerge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: Summary of empirical support for each systematic argument.
with India and the 1964 detonation of its own nuclear weapon. Instead, they were necessary conditions for South Korea’s nuclear behavior. The salience of regional threats made the announcement of US troop withdrawals even more alarming. Fears of being abandoned, rather than the threats alone, led South Korea to engage in nuclear behavior. Finally, for reasons mentioned earlier, the threat environment remained a menace to South Korean security interests at the time of the nuclear program’s shut down.

Ironically, the conventional deterrence failures of the United States regarding North Korean provocations in the late 1960s (e.g., the Blue House Raid) were insufficient for Park that the US security guarantee was flawed. US alliance unreliability and US failures in successfully providing conventional deterrence, in other words, did not push Park Chung-hee to reorganize his government so as to seek nuclear weapons. Even though the presence of US tactical nuclear weapons remained on the Korean peninsula, the withdrawal of a troop division was what provoked Park to desire nuclear weapons at last. This observation suggests that something peculiar exists regarding conventional military deployments as a means to infer the reliability of the received security guarantee.

**Domestic Politics Explanations**

Domestic politics explanations look to either South Korea’s economic model of development or its domestic institutions to account for its nuclear behavior. The statist form of development implemented under the Park regime suggests that South Korea chose not to integrate with the global economy. As a result, the South Korean leadership would find nuclear weapons especially attractive for enhancing their prospects of attaining national self-sufficiency. Furthermore, because authoritarian regimes are likely to rely on nationalism

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112 Moreover, North Korea moderated its diplomacy towards South Korea during the years between 1970 and 1972. Nevertheless, the problem of troop withdrawals is that they might offer a ‘window of opportunity’ for an adversary to exploit. Still, some domestic opponents of Park, most notably Kim Dae-jung, argued that the South Korean president deliberately exaggerated the threat to bolster his political legitimacy. Memorandum of Conversation, February 1, 1972, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 313-315.
as a basis of their legitimacy, they would be tempted to demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding national integrity. Some evidence provides a basis for these claims. According to Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim, South Korea’s nuclear projects in the late 1960s and 1970s were rooted in government initiatives for “the modernization of the fatherland” and a “self-reliant economy.” In addition, they point to the nationalist rhetoric that extolled the achievements of scientists and engineers working on nuclear energy.113

One weakness with these political economic arguments is that the South Korean government did not wean itself away from the global economy. To the contrary, it sought to develop export industries. Self-reliance meant less of the economic self-sufficiency implied by the term ‘autarchy’ and more of technological advancement.114 Statist economic management affected South Korea’s nuclear behavior insofar as it facilitated the implementation of the nuclear weapons program. With the establishment of ADD and WEC, the Korean state’s management of the economy and its ties to industry facilitated efforts to marshal national resources towards the production of nuclear weapons.

The argument that the South Korean government’s own nationalism motivated its nuclear behavior places the cart before the horse for two reasons. First, South Korea’s nationalist rhetoric did not focus on defense matters until after North Korean provocations and Nixon’s announcement of troop withdrawals from the peninsula. During much of the 1960s, the government’s nationalist rhetoric centered on economic mobilization. According to Seung-Young Kim, Park promoted self-reliance in defense “to defend South Korea and to keep national dignity in the face of American meddling in South Korea’s domestic affairs.”115

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114 Accordingly, Park declared: “[t]he first step in accomplishing nationalistic democracy is to stand on our own feet. Self-reliance is the foundation of every democracies, and through self-reliance, we can retain our national identity. Without self-reliance, democracy and national identity mean nothing.” On nationalism, he wrote: “[w]hat came from the outside – knowledge, ideology, political system –we must mend them to fit our unique environment and characteristics. This is what I call ‘nationalism.’” Put differently, nationalism required the adaptation of externally generated ideas, institutions, and goods to serve the purposes of state and domestic society. It did not entail closure to the outside world. Translated quote from Shim Yoong-Taek, Jarip-e-ui uiju: Pak jonghi Daetongryong orok [The Will for Self-Reliance: The Words of President Park Chung-hee] (Seoul: Hanlim Ch’ulpansa, 1972), 228-34 Translation thanks to research assistance.
115 Kim (2001, 57)
Still, Nixon’s troop withdrawal arguably compromised Park’s stated objectives for national self-reliance. As Ambassador to South Korea Philip Habbib noted:

“Park’s view of self-reliance, paradoxically, includes a desire and an expressed need for the U.S. presence and assistance to continue – at least in the short run. His concern that we will reduce our aid program, withdraw our troops sooner than he would like, and his doubt over the firmness of our treaty commitment, come to the surface from time to time. Generally speaking, he wishes to hold on to these elements of strength for as long as he can, expecting they will diminish as time goes on.”

Moreover, Park preferred a more pragmatic approach to foreign policy and was not intent on pursuing Gaullist ambitions of nationalist grandeur.

Second, if Park’s correspondence with US officials were to be believed, the sudden announcement of troop withdrawals from South Korea increased the risks to his political survival. The wavering of US security commitments during a period of high regional tensions stoked domestic turmoil, prompting the regime to use nationalism as a guiding principle in its defense policy.

I argue that alliance politics had a significant role in the demise of the South Korean nuclear weapons program. Still, some scholars who have written on South Korea’s nuclear program dispute the causal importance of alliance politics, claiming that Park capitulated to US demands in order to preserve domestic economic development. I argue, by contrast,

116 Airgram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, December 10, 1972, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 436-445. This view appears to have support. In an exchange with Habbib’s predecessor in August 1970, Park “went on rapidly, saying that time has come for Korea to develop her economy and her defense self-reliance, and he fully intended that his country would stand on her own feet but only thing required is our understanding that this could not be done in day or two.” Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State, August 4, 1970, FRUS 1969-72, 19: 174-179. Park continued this line of argument with President Gerald Ford, asserting that “[o]f course, we do not expect the U.S. presence to remain indefinitely, given the mounting U.S. public opinion and pressure in Congress. However, Korean self-reliance must be insured before U.S. troop reductions take place.” Memorandum of Conversation, November 22, 1974, Box 7, National Security Adviser, Memoranda of Conversation, GRFL.
that such explanations, focusing as they do on domestic politics, fails to explain important aspects of the South Korean case.

Solingen argues that Park was confronted with the stark choice between economic development and a nuclear weapon capability. Because economic development more directly affected his political survival, Park renounced the nuclear weapons project openly and made nonproliferation commitments. After all, as Solingen argues, “suspicions about South Korea’s nuclear intentions had to be put to rest if the export-led growth strategy was to have any chance.”117 The alliance with the United States did matter, but largely insofar as it provided the locus of South Korea’s strategy for economic development.

This argument has serious weaknesses. I should state at the onset that I agree with Solingen that, for a state dependent on the United States for its economic success, South Korea was very sensitive to positive and negative economic inducements. US economic statecraft succeeded because South Korea depended on its economic relationship with the United States to satisfy its developmental objectives. The problem with her account is that at times Park was willing to compromise his own preferred model of economic development when alliance commitments appeared uncertain. Indeed, if Park valued economic development so much, it is not clear why he risked compromising it by engaging in nuclear behavior in the first place. As much as the program was secret, its usefulness as a deterrent required that the South Korean government would eventually become more open about its nuclear posture.

Furthermore, Solingen provides little evidence to show that the returns of his strategy for economy development motivated Park more than alliance concerns. One specific claim she makes is that Park renounced nuclear weapons so not to undermine the country’s economic development. To support this assertion, she cites a quote by Park in which he argues in favor of “doing away with those activities that tend to drain or waste our natural resources in a broad sense.”118 She then goes on to argue that “even after North Korea assassinated

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Park’s wife in 1974, he continued to focus on the synergies between South Korea’s economic vitality, regional stability, and a positive ‘recognition in the world community’.”

These passages are problematic for several reasons. The problem with the first statement by Park is that it is unclear to which specific “activities” he is referring. Wasteful activities could conceivably encompass anything from bureaucratic red-tape to inefficient production. Moreover, even if it did refer to the nuclear weapons program, the statement might be an example of post facto rationalization. In marshaling various sectors of the economy towards nuclear research, Park’s nuclear behavior suggests that for several years he did not regard such activity as a ‘waste’. The problem with the second statement regarding Park’s behavior following his wife’s murder is that the historical record does not support it. The assassination by a North Korean sympathizer from Japan intensified existing tensions between South Korea and Japan. Park even mobilized large anti-Japanese protests in Seoul to demonstrate his country’s dissatisfaction with the Japanese position on the incident. These actions hardly were consistent with any stated desire to advance regional stability and obtain positive international recognition.

Other possible counterarguments that emphasize domestic politics would expect that leaders would resist, or even manipulate, foreign pressure to cement their nationalist legitimacy. As the leader of a repressive regime, Park had incentives to place blame on the United States and rally anti-foreign sentiment to boost his government’s national security policies. In reality, Park was more circumspect in publicly outlining his security objectives. Following the withdrawal of the US troop division, Park emphasized the urgency of obtaining national self-reliance in defense. At least publicly, these declarations did not explicitly iterate the need for an indigenous nuclear capability when South Korea first explored and then later pursued the nuclear weapons option. This ambiguity is reflected in the US government’s seeming lack of knowledge of the program before Ford assumed the presidency in August.

\[^{119}\text{This passage, drawn from Solingen (2007, 93), includes a quote by Park.}\]
\[^{120}\text{Oberdorfer (2001, 52-54).}\]
When faced with US pressure to halt the nuclear program, Park did not stoke domestic nationalist sentiment against the United States. Rather, he yielded to American pressure relatively quickly. Within six months of the original State Department telegram, South Korea renounced its nuclear program and ratified the NPT. He did emphasize, however, the need for the United States to provide South Korea with a strong security commitment. He declared that “if the US nuclear umbrella were to be removed, we have to start developing our nuclear capability to save ourselves.” Park later added that “there were and still are quite a number of Koreans doubting the commitment of United States.” These statements suggest that Park raised the specter of nationalist motives to build the bomb to admonish the United States for compromising on its security guarantees.

Moving Forward

So far I have analyzed the nuclear behavior of three of the most important allies the United States had in the Cold War: West Germany, Japan, and South Korea. Yet one question that emerges from this body of evidence concerns the generalizability of my findings. To address this issue of external validity, my approach is two-fold. I first undertake a statistical analysis of US alliances and nuclear behavior in chapter seven. I then go beyond US alliances and discuss nuclear behavior among Soviet alliances in chapter eight.

\[121\] Reiss (1988, 85-86, 93-94).
Chapter 7

Hold On, We’re Going Home: The Correlates of Nuclear Behavior

This chapter statistically evaluates a critical aspect of alliance compensation theory. This theory asserts that allies will resort to nuclear behavior when their patrons undertake actions that impair the credibility of their nuclear security guarantees. Specifically, my main hypothesis attaches importance to changes in the major power’s conventional military commitments (e.g., patterns in extraterritorial troop deployment) as a driver of nuclear behavior. Alternative hypotheses for why allies would engage in nuclear behavior emphasize such independent variables as the ally’s industrial capacity, economic openness, regime type, and the threat environment it faces (independent of its patron’s security guarantees). To adjudicate between these hypotheses, I assemble a data set to analyze the proclivity of allies to engage in nuclear behavior for the period between 1950 and 2000. I find support for my claim that declining conventional military commitments increase the likelihood of nuclear behavior. I uncover mixed support for alternative hypotheses. I also run tests to determine whether declining conventional military commitments encourage states to increase their own conventional military expenditures. The results are, however, mixed and model-dependent.
I build on the existing quantitative literature on nuclear proliferation by bringing alliance politics back in. Sonali Singh and Christopher Way argue that threat environment, level of economic development, and a low level of global economic integration are strongly associated with nuclear weapons proliferation.\textsuperscript{1} In another major study, Dong-Joon Jo and Erik Gartzke also emphasize economic capacity and threat environments in shaping proliferation choices.\textsuperscript{2} Each of these studies only include an alliance with a nuclear-armed major power as a control variable. By contrast, my study demonstrates that these unit-level characteristics are not as important as these analyses suggest if we consider the recipients of security guarantees as a separate class of states. More recent statistical studies have begun to show the importance of security guarantees as a disincentive for nuclear proliferation.\textsuperscript{3} However, I show that troop redeployments have an important statistical association with allies’ decisions to engage in nuclear behavior.

I organize this chapter as follows. Section 1 describes my main hypothesis regarding nuclear behavior as well as alternative hypotheses. Section 2 outlines the research design. Section 3 analyzes the statistical results to understand the effects of troop redeployment on both nuclear behavior and allies’ conventional military expenditures. Section 4 concludes.

7.1 Hypotheses on Nuclear Behavior

Diverse hypotheses purport to explain nuclear behavior. To begin, alliance compensation theory predicts that allies will respond to indications that their major power patron is reducing its conventional military commitments abroad. In particular, allies will be attuned to their major power patron’s efforts to pull its forces away from their territory. These changes signify a perceived reduction in the reliability of the received nuclear security guarantee. Of course, conventional military deployments do not affect the nuclear security guarantee per

\textsuperscript{1} Singh and Way (2004).
\textsuperscript{2} Jo and Gartzke (2007).
\textsuperscript{3} Reiter (2013) and Bleek and Lorder (2014).
Nuclear doctrine, operational planning, and forward missile deployments instead bear directly on the efficacy and reliability of the nuclear umbrella. Yet conventional military deployments matter because they convey the extent to which the major power is willing to tie its own manpower to the security of its ally. With troops garrisoned on the ally’s territory, the major power would be implicated if an armed crisis were to take place between its ally and the adversary. Finally, given the complexity of the technologies and doctrines that directly affect the nuclear umbrella, troop deployments provide a heuristic that an ally leadership would use to judge the strength of their received security guarantee. I argue that these perceptions of whether the major power patron credibly provides extended deterrence influences the ally’s likelihood to engage in nuclear behavior. When nuclear behavior is covert, the ally is seeking to develop its own nuclear capability that it will one day reveal to deter adversaries. When nuclear behavior is overt, the ally is not only seeking insurance, but it is also in effect bargaining with its patron over the terms of the security provided.

I will test two related hypotheses that follow this discussion:

**Hypothesis 6. Troop Numbers:** If the ally is home to more (less) of the major power’s troops, then it will be less (more) likely to engage in nuclear behavior.

**Hypothesis 7. Personnel Decline:** If the superpower’s level of troops deployed on the ally’s territory decreases, then the ally will be more likely to engage in nuclear behavior.

I draw on the nuclear proliferation literature to identify hypotheses from alternative explanations of nuclear behavior. A simple rendering of realist theory emphasizes material capabilities and the intensity of the external threat environment (i.e. balance-of-threat theory).\(^5\) After all, states require advanced industrial expertise and inputs for the production

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\(^4\)Says Thomas Schelling with respect to US troop deployments in West Berlin, “[t]he reasoning was probably that, whether we wished to be or not, we could not fail to be involved if we had more troops being run over by the Soviet Army than we could afford to see defeated.” Schelling (1966, 47). Reiter (2013) shows how patron troop deployments reduce the probability of nuclear proliferation.

\(^5\)Walt (1987). On realism and rendering it theoretically distinct from other approaches, see Legro and
of nuclear weapons. Moreover, a hostile threat environment generates incentives for states to
develop their own deterrent capability so as to block the coercion attempts of other states.
These foregoing statements form the basis of two hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 8. Balance-of-Threat**: An ally facing an intense external threat envi-
ronment is more likely to engage in nuclear behavior.

**Hypothesis 9. Capabilities**: An ally state is more likely to engage in nuclear be-
havior as its industrial capacity increases.

Another competing explanation for nuclear behavior centers on domestic politics. This
view contends that democratic and economically open states will not engage in nuclear
behavior. Unlike their non-democratic counterparts, democratic leaders do not appeal to
nationalist rhetoric. They do not have to undertake nuclear behavior in order to rally do-
mestic support and maintain their hold on power. Even in the face of declining commitments,
they prefer to negotiate with their allies peacefully rather than undertake aggressive foreign
policies. Economic openness also discourages nuclear behavior. Simply put, such actions are
regionally destabilizing, inimical to attracting investment, and damaging for the integrity of
commercial relations with neighboring states and the major power patron. By compromising
the performance of a relatively open economy, the incumbent political leadership risks losing
office, whether through electoral losses or extralegal means.⁶

**Hypothesis 10. Democracy**: With the increasing (decreasing) presence of demo-
ocratic institutions within the ally, the less (more) likely it will en-
gage in nuclear behavior.

**Hypothesis 11. Economic Openness**: As the ally depends more (less) on interna-
tional trade, the less (more) likely it will engage in nuclear behavior.

Moravcsik (1999). To be sure, the severity of the threat environment might be endogenous to underlying
preferences and ideology – independent variables emphasized by liberal international relations theory. See
Haas (2005). For the sake of simplicity, I side-step these deeper theoretical issues in this analysis and proceed
here with the view that states might be balancing against threats, whatever their source.

⁶Solingen (2007) expresses this domestic politics argument, though she writes that these incentive struc-
tures became especially prominent after the NPT came into force in 1970.
Two notes with respect to these six hypotheses deserve mention. First, these hypotheses make predictions regarding the engagement in nuclear behavior rather than the onset and termination of nuclear behavior. This approach is consistent with other existing quantitative studies of nuclear proliferation. After all, too few unique cases exist for a reliable statistical study of onset and termination.

The subtle difference in this dependent variable, however, remains compatible with my theory. The independent variables highlighted above can be understood as drivers of nuclear behavior. In the case of conventional military deployments, I argued above that allies have incentive to maintain their engagement in nuclear behavior if uncertainties of their patron’s alliance commitments persist. If the patron were to withdraw its conventional military assets from its ally’s territories over a sustained period of time, then the ally might resort to nuclear behavior either to hedge against abandonment or signal its willingness to adopt countermeasures that the patron would deem as undesirable. Second, it would be a mistake to view these hypotheses as mutually exclusive. Indeed, it would be surprising (and probably wrong) if any of the factors above have zero real effect on state behavior. Rather, the purpose is to evaluate their relative importance, both substantively and significantly, given the data I use here. The next section proceeds to discuss the research design and highlight its strengths and weaknesses.

7.2 Research Design

To test these hypotheses, I assembled an original nuclear behavior data set that contains yearly information on Western European, South Asian, and East Asian states for the period between 1950 and 2000. Unfortunately, one weakness of the approach undertaken here is the omission of observations from the communist bloc. Unreliable data on Soviet conventional military deployment and intra-bloc bilateral relations require me to exclude Soviet alliances.
How would this omission bias my statistical estimates? After all, many communist states were members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and were hosts to large numbers of Soviet troops at the beginning of the Cold War. A major purpose of these extensive deployments was to ensure control over the internal and foreign policies of these satellite states. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, however, implemented a series of major troop reductions in Central-Eastern Europe during the 1950s. It is unclear what were the exact quantities of troop cuts from each individual Soviet satellite state. All communist states were also autocratic and highly centralized regimes. Economically, many of these states had relatively closed economies. Much of their trade was concentrated within the communist bloc and subject to severe market distortions.\footnote{Stone (1996).} They only sought economic links with Western countries when pre-existing economic models of development failed and imperiled their political survival. Finally, the Soviet allies that did engage in nuclear behavior were China, North Korea, and Romania. None of them hosted Soviet troops when they began their nuclear programs. Yet, as I will show in the Chapter Eight, perceptions of Soviet unreliability motivated their decisions to engage in nuclear behavior.

These observations bear several implications for the data analysis. The exclusion of cases of states that hosted large numbers of troops and yet undertook no nuclear behavior induces an upward bias on the Personnel variable. Furthermore, although omitting Soviet troop reductions biases the coefficients on the Personnel Decline upwards, I argue in the next chapter that conventional military deployments had a different meaning in Soviet alliances in Central-Eastern Europe than in US alliances in both Western Europe and East Asia. Even if we had quantifiable results from both alliance contexts, the numbers may not be directly comparable. Satellite leaders might have had little reason to view such actions as an omen for complete withdrawal and Soviet abandonment. Finally, the exclusion of many observations of (relatively) economically closed authoritarian states that did not engage in nuclear behavior makes the test of the Democracy and Economic Openness hypotheses
harder. The proportion of democratic and economically open states of all states under analysis increases in the absence of communist states, reducing the observed variation on those variables.

Other states in the international system are absent in my analysis. Recall that my theory is only applicable to a situation in which the major power offers protection to an ally in the face of a nuclear-armed adversary (e.g., the Soviet Union or China). To be consistent with these scope conditions the data set contains observations of states largely from Western Europe, South Asia, and East Asia.\footnote{8} As a result, I exclude other US security partners and aligned states found in other regions of the world. Specifically, I omit states such as Argentina, Brazil, and Chile (which implemented their own nuclear programs) from the data set because they do not properly satisfy the scope conditions. The threat of transnational communism, as projected by the Soviet Union and China, was episodic and, therefore, non-systematic in South America due to the region’s distance from the main theaters of the Cold War. Thus, the level of perceived threat to the region exhibited greater variance than that of Western Europe, South Asia, and East Asia.

I include Sweden and Switzerland in the regression analysis. Both states engaged in nuclear behavior, yet their neutrality in the Cold War meant that they did not receive any security guarantees from the United States. I justify their inclusion because they still benefited from the positive security externalities associated with their geographical proximity to US allies in Western Europe. Furthermore, in contrast to neutral Yugoslavia, their political and economic systems were similar to those that characterized US regional allies. On the basis of geographic proximity and these institutional affinities, they might still be attuned to

\footnote{8}I include post-communist states in Central-Eastern Europe for the years between 1990 and 2000 because they benefited from American security assurances, presumably to assuage their concerns of Russia. Countries included in the data set are Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Monaco, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Spain, Andorra, Portugal, (West) Germany, post-communist Poland, Austria, post-communist Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Italy, San Marino, Malta, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia, Slovenia, Greece, Cyprus, post-communist Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, post-Cold War Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Turkey, post-Cold War Mongolia, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Pakistan, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Palau, Micronesia, and Samoa.
shifts in US strategic posture. Yet including Sweden and Switzerland makes the test of my theory more difficult. Because they hosted little to no US military personnel, incorporating them in the analysis induces a downward bias on the coefficients of those variables relevant to my theory.⁹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Alliance Relationship</th>
<th>Years of Nuclear Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>US Defense Ally</td>
<td>1956-1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>US Defense Ally</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>US Defense Ally</td>
<td>1946-Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (West)</td>
<td>US Defense Ally</td>
<td>1957-1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel*</td>
<td>US Friend</td>
<td>1955-Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>US Defense Ally</td>
<td>1957-1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>US Defense Ally</td>
<td>1951-1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa*</td>
<td>US Friend</td>
<td>1969-1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1954-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1946-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>US Ally/Friend</td>
<td>1967-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>US Defense Ally</td>
<td>1945-Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: States, Alignments, and Nuclear Behavior Years, 1945-2005

Table 7.1: Countries marked with an (*) are not included in regression analysis. Sweden and Switzerland were neutral, but still benefited positive security externalities from being surrounded by US allies. Note that the data analysis is for the years between 1950 and 2000. Accordingly, Canada’s nuclear behavior does not enter into the analysis. Dates are found in Singh and Way (2004) and Mueller and Schmidt (2010).

The dichotomous dependent variable is *Nuclear Behavior*. It measures whether a state engaged in any level of nuclear behavior in a given year. Appendix A lists all the instances of states that engaged in nuclear behavior and provides sources to validate the coding of this dependent variable. Uncertainty exists over the precise dates of some programs. Yet transparency in how I chose these dates is intended to allay concerns that I massaged the coding of the dependent variable to influence the statistical results. Because my dependent variable is dichotomous, I use logistic regression to model nuclear behavior. To be sure, I described nuclear behavior in chapter 2 as encompassing a variety of activities of increasing intensity: ambiguous posturing, the exploration of a nuclear weapons program’s desirabil-

⁹I thank Matthew Fuhrmann and Todd Sechser for providing code to ensure that the troop deployment figures I use in my analysis reflect trip-wires instead of other operations (e.g., disaster relief and war).
ity and feasibility, and the attempted production of nuclear weapons. Dichotomizing the measure admittedly reduces the variation we observe in the intensity of nuclear behavior across space and time. Nevertheless, having a dichotomous measure in lieu of an ordinal one simplifies the analysis and renders the coefficients easier to interpret.

To test Hypotheses 1 and 2, I use data compiled by the Heritage Foundation on US overseas troop deployment. Values are normalized to one for the highest country value in 1995. To generate a new variable (*Personnel Decline*) that indicates reductions in troop numbers, I lag the original variable and create a dichotomous variable that equals to 1 if the difference between the original and the new lagged military personnel variable is greater or equal to the loss of a large brigade (1000 military personnel). Admittedly, this variable is crude because it does not discriminate between different types of military personnel. It measures the total sum of military advisers and ground, naval, and aerial personnel. Yet the case study of West Germany and Japan show that a country’s strategic environment affects which types of conventional military deployment would be used as an indicator of major power reliability. Thus, an indiscriminate measure such as the one I use here induces a downward bias on the coefficients because it treats all personnel as the same and accordingly overstates the number of troop redeployment relevant to my theory.

In order to evaluate Hypothesis 3, I use data from Singh’s and Way’s study of nuclear proliferation that track a state’s level of economic development and industrial capacity. Compiled originally by Kristian Gleditsch, I include the variables *Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita* and *GDPpc*. Though I do not hypothesize explicitly that GDP should have a curvilinear relationship with the dependent variable, its inclusion in the model as a control variable is useful if “additional increments of wealth are unlikely to increase the

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12 Gleditsch (2002).
temptation” to engage in nuclear behavior.\textsuperscript{13} I also borrow Singh and Way’s two dichotomous variables that track \textit{Industrial Capacity}. These indicators differ on their threshold level and are based on a range of indicators such as per capita energy consumption, electricity production, and steel production.\textsuperscript{14}

Hypothesis 4 emphasizes the level of threat facing the state. Though I consider threat to be a background variable, I hold the presence of a nuclear-armed adversary as a source of constant threat in my theoretical setup. However, one might argue that more nuanced measures of threat perception drive states’ nuclear behavior. Accordingly, I include an indicator for whether the state was frequently involved in a militarized interstate dispute. Following Singh and Way, I use a five-year moving average of the number of militarized interstate disputes in which a given state was involved.\textsuperscript{15} Because states might feel threatened even in the absence of militarized interstate disputes, I add a variable that captures whether the state has an enduring rivalry with another state.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 are drawn from domestic politics explanations. To assess the effect of regime type \textit{Polity}, I use the twenty-one point scale from the Polity IV data set that ranges from $-10$ to $+10$.\textsuperscript{16} Using this scale I also create a new dichotomous variable called \textit{Democracy} that equals to 1 when the observed country-year has a Regime Type score of 7 or greater. The reason for this dummy variable is to directly determine whether democratic regimes are less likely to engage in nuclear behavior, thereby facilitating interpretation of the regression coefficient.

I offer descriptive statistics in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 displays summary statistics for the variables described above. Table 3 provides the correlation matrix of the dependent variable and most of the independent variables. Aside from space constraints, $GDP^6$ and \textit{Democracy} are omitted because they are highly correlated with the variables from which

\textsuperscript{13}Singh and Way (2004, 868).
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 868-869.
\textsuperscript{15}Singh and Way (2004); Ghosn and Palmer (2003).
Table 2: Summary Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Behavior</td>
<td>1703</td>
<td>.109219</td>
<td>.3120054</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDPpc</td>
<td>1643</td>
<td>11189.82</td>
<td>6987.199</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>44048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>1736</td>
<td>.5195853</td>
<td>.4997602</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disputes</td>
<td>1725</td>
<td>.5971304</td>
<td>.8527536</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivalry</td>
<td>1736</td>
<td>.2836594</td>
<td>.4509032</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polity</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>6.785445</td>
<td>5.709499</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>.7815642</td>
<td>.4133001</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>1629</td>
<td>65.36147</td>
<td>55.26226</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>439.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>log(Personnel)</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>5.552437</td>
<td>3.577539</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.6973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Decline</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>.0921788</td>
<td>.289359</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>.7210999</td>
<td>.4485842</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

they were generated. Unsurprisingly, *Regime Type* has moderate and positive correlations with *GDP Per Capita* and *Industrial Capacity*. It has a negative moderate association with the frequency of dispute involvement. *Openness* and *GDP Per Capita* are also moderately and positively correlated. Aside from these moderate correlations, associations between the variables are generally weak.

### 7.3 Statistical Analysis of Nuclear Behavior

Table 4 presents results gleaned from the regression analysis. The first three models utilize rare events logistic regression with errors clustered by the country whereas the latter three models are run with logistic regression with country fixed-effects.\(^\text{17}\) I include country fixed-effects because it is possible that unobserved heterogeneity at the country-level influences international patterns of nuclear behavior. The first model of each set includes only those variables identified by alternative arguments. The second model adds the variables that pertain to troop deployment levels and changes. The third model substitutes the *Democracy* variable for the *Polity* variable. For all six models, the constant (or y-intercept) is large in magnitude and negative, implying that states’ baseline probability for engaging in nuclear

\(^{17}\)For more on rare events logistic regression, see King and Zeng (2001).
Table 3: Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>GDPpc</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Disputes</th>
<th>Rivalry</th>
<th>Polity</th>
<th>Openness</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>P Decline</th>
<th>Cold War</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDPpc</td>
<td>-0.166</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.412</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disputes</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>-0.376</td>
<td>-0.060</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivalry</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>-0.369</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polity</td>
<td>-0.143</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>-0.330</td>
<td>-0.361</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>-0.147</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>-0.182</td>
<td>-0.286</td>
<td>-0.264</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>log(Personnel)</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>-0.047</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>-0.124</td>
<td>-0.337</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Decline</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>-0.090</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
<td>-0.149</td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>-0.292</td>
<td>-0.199</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>-0.162</td>
<td>-0.070</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
behavior is quite small. The coefficients on the Cold War variable show that states were more likely to engage in nuclear behavior during rather than after the Cold War.

Table 4: Determinants of Nuclear Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rare Events Logit</th>
<th>Logistic Regression with Country FE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
<td>(4) (5) (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDPpc</td>
<td>0.000152 0.000183 0.000125</td>
<td>0.00144*** 0.00163*** 0.00154***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00029) (0.00026) (0.00026)</td>
<td>(0.00023) (0.00025) (0.00024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP$^2$</td>
<td>-1.09e-08 -1.17e-08 -9.83e-09</td>
<td>-8.03e-08*** -9.03e-08*** -8.77e-08***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00029) (0.00026) (0.00026)</td>
<td>(0.00023) (0.00025) (0.00024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>1.06* 1.26** 1.25**</td>
<td>0.81* 0.58 0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.63) (0.64) (0.63)</td>
<td>(0.45) (0.45) (0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disputes</td>
<td>-0.097 -0.018 -0.044</td>
<td>-0.26 -0.30 -0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.37) (0.36) (0.37)</td>
<td>(0.20) (0.21) (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivalry</td>
<td>0.58 0.71 0.83</td>
<td>-0.12 0.061 -0.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.82) (0.79) (0.82)</td>
<td>(0.60) (0.63) (0.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polity</td>
<td>0.65 0.74 0.88</td>
<td>-0.28 -0.12 -0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.78) (0.74) (0.78)</td>
<td>(0.59) (0.62) (0.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>-0.0096 -0.014 -0.014</td>
<td>-0.058*** -0.044*** -0.042***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0089) (0.011) (0.012)</td>
<td>(0.013) (0.014) (0.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>log(Personnel)</td>
<td>-0.15 -0.13</td>
<td>0.33*** 0.36***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10) (0.10)</td>
<td>(0.092) (0.091)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Decline</td>
<td>0.71*** 0.65***</td>
<td>0.83** 0.82**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.22) (0.21)</td>
<td>(0.40) (0.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>1.74** 2.20*** 2.24***</td>
<td>0.57 0.16 0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.76) (1.73) (1.57)</td>
<td>(1.31) (1.61) (1.69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.4: *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$. Standard errors clustered on country in rare events logistic models.

The results support alliance compensation theory. In each model in which it is included, \textit{Personnel Decline} obtains statistical significance. The p-values become smaller in those models that use rare events logistic regression ($p < 0.01$). Using model six, holding all other covariates at their means, the predicted probability of nuclear behavior is 0.82 for the state experiencing troop withdrawals than for the state that is not.

The size of the coefficients remains stable across all models (between 0.65 and 0.83). In the rare events logistic regression models, the troop deployment size is negatively associated with nuclear behavior, as theoretically expected. However, when I use logistic regression with country-fixed effects, the coefficient is positive and acquires a high level of statistical
significance \( p < 0.01 \). One interpretation of this finding is that it is a function of how I pared the data to include only those aligned states in Western Europe, South Asia, and East Asia – states that are most likely to be recipients of US security guarantees because they are threatened with a nuclear-armed adversary.

I find mixed support for the realist variables. Industrial capacity, as measured by GDP per capita and the square of GDP, only obtain statistical significance when I use a logistic regression with country fixed-effects \( p < 0.01 \). The negative sign on the squared term suggests a curvilinear relationship. That is, states above a certain threshold of wealth do not engage in nuclear behavior. Industrial capacity, as measured by an index of energy consumption and production, obtains statistical significance when I use the rare events logistic regression. The size of the coefficients halve when I switch to using logistic regression with country-fixed effects. The other realist variables, Disputes and Rivalry, fare even worse. Not only do they lack statistical significance, but they are in the direction that is contrary to theoretical expectations. Having disputes and an enduring rivalry makes the state even less likely to engage in nuclear behavior. Nevertheless, both variables are statistically indistinguishable from zero in all models.

Domestic politics explanations also receive weak support. The Polity variable is in the expected sign only in models that use logistic regression with country fixed-effects. It never acquires statistical significance. Moreover, the sign on the dummy variable for democratic states flips with the model and lacks statistical significance in both cases. Economic openness acquires statistical significance \( p < 0.01 \).

What are the substantive effects of the independent variables examined in this analysis? I use CLARIFY to estimate differences in the probability that allies engage in nuclear behavior when independent variables change from their minimum to their maximum values.\(^\text{18}\) Figure 1 reports these differences in probability when all of the covariates are set to the observed


Figure 7.1: Estimates calculated using CLARIFY on a logistic regression model resembling Model 3 of Table 5. I set the control variables to the values observed for South Korea in 1970. The y-axis represents the difference in the predicted probabilities for a state to engage in nuclear behavior. This figure shows that a withdrawal of at least 1000 troops would have made South Korea almost 10% more likely to engage in nuclear behavior.

These statistics are drawn from a logistic regression model that resembles Model 3 of Table 5. In a baseline hypothetical scenario in which there were no troop withdrawals, this figure indicates that South Korea would have been 8% less likely to have not engaged in nuclear behavior had the number of US troops removed ranged from 0 to 999. Industry is the only other explanatory variable that has confidence intervals that do not overlap with zero. Having the technological requirements for this variable to be coded as 1 produces the largest impact on the predicted probabilities.

\[ dPr(\text{Nuclear Behavior} = 1) \]

For a similar empirical strategy, see Weeks (2012).

The `estsimp` feature of CLARIFY does not permit rare events logistic regression. Nevertheless, the coefficients and levels of statistical significance are comparable to those uncovered when I simply use a regular logistic regression. This finding demonstrates that the results concerning my main independent variable are stable across these types of models.

Recall that the United States removed 20,000 troops from South Korea in 1970.
Robustness Checks

I perform additional regressions to determine the robustness of these findings. First, I determine the cutoff points at which Personnel Change loses all statistical significance. I find that in the range of 700 and 11000 troops withdrawn this variable obtains statistical significance between $p < 0.1$ and $p < 0.01$ in the logistic regression with country fixed-effects. The range narrows to that between 500 and 9000 when I use rare events logistic regression, even when I use the dummy variable for Democracy in lieu of the Polity variable. The size of the coefficient increases when I adopt a higher cutoff point. Second, I include a dummy variable for the years after the NPT became open for signature in 1968. I do not code individual country’s signature or ratification of this agreement because such patterns might be endogenous to states’ termination of nuclear behavior. By distinguishing the panel across these two historical dimensions, I assume that the agreement represented a watershed moment in the global non-proliferation regime. Interestingly, the direction of the coefficient varies with the statistical model used. In the rare events logistic regression, the presence of the NPT is negatively associated with state’s likelihood to engage in nuclear behavior ($p < 0.01$). This relationship reverses when I use logistic regression with country fixed-effects. The statistical significance of the Personnel Change variable attenuates slightly ($p < 0.05$); the magnitude of the coefficient remains unchanged.

I undertake three more robustness checks. First, I use a broader definition of industrial capacity to determine whether the results still hold upon its inclusion. This dummy variable is coded as 1 if the state can produce steel domestically and produces more than 5000 megawatts of electricity and 0 otherwise.\footnote{Singh and Way (2004, 868).} This variable obtains high levels of statistical significance with a very large coefficient (2.46 and $p < 0.01$ using model 3). Nevertheless, as R. Scott Kemp notes, this proxy variable for industrial capacity might not capture whether the state has access to the specific inputs needed to make nuclear weapons. In fact, Kemp
argues that that the necessary industrial resources are “extremely modest, even by today’s developing world standards.”

The usage of a broad definition for industrial capacity does not efface the statistical results. To the contrary, the size of the coefficients on the Personnel Change, irrespective of the cutoff point used, increases. Finally, in light of the ambiguities of the case, I recoded Japan as not having ever engaged in nuclear behavior. In the rare events logistic regression the Personnel Change is statistically significant ($p < 0.1$) at a higher cutoff point range between 3500 and 5000 troops. In the logistic regression with country fixed-effects, the range is broader, covering 2000 and 12000 troops. The relationship between the other independent variables and Nuclear Behavior remains intact. I execute the same robustness check with respect to Spain. The statistical significance of the results remain the same, though the size of the coefficients increase across all models. Interestingly, the Disputes variable becomes statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) in models 4–6. All three industrial capacity variables acquire statistical significance. These findings suggest that including positive cases of Spain attenuates the results for both my theory and the realist independent variables.

One possible concern with the results so far presented is that they rely on an implicit interaction term. Recall that the data set used for the regression analysis draws on observations of US friends and allies in Europe and Asia. By focusing on this set of extended deterrence, some readers might feel that I am tilting the results in favor of my theory. To address this issue, I use the entirety of the Singh and Way data set to run the analysis on all cases. I use a three-way interaction term that reflects my theory’s argument. This interaction term is composed of the following variables: level of threat, indicator for being a US friend or ally, and being affected by troop redeployments. The basic results still hold.

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23 Kemp (2010).
24 I thank Todd Sechser for raising this issue.
25 See Appendix B for the results.
7.4 Troop Redeployments and Conventional Military Expenditures

Alliance compensation theory has one observable implication that merits assessment. In response to adverse shifts in the strategic posture of their major power patrons, do allies also increase their own conventional military expenditures? To be sure, conventional arms do not offer the same deterrent capabilities as nuclear weapons. Nor does the expansion of these capabilities sufficiently provoke alarm on the part of the major power patron so as to renegotiate alliance contracts. In fact, the major power patron might wish for its ally to ‘free ride’ less and spend more on its own defense. Nevertheless, the choice to engage in nuclear behavior and increase military expenditures is not mutually exclusive. In fact, the desire to protect oneself implies that these actions should go together.

To determine whether this observable implication has empirical validity, I rerun the analysis of the previous section but with a different dependent variable. Rather than a binary measure of nuclear behavior, I draw from the Correlates of War data set for a continuous measure of military expenditures. I regress the natural log of military expenditures on the same set of covariates as before. After all, there is no theoretical reason to expect that many of these variables should not predict or be correlated with significant expansions of conventional military capability. \( GDP_{pc} \), \( GDP^2 \), and Industrial Capacity provide the means whereas Disputes and Rivalry encourage the state to add to its military capability. Polity and Openness relate to the institutional incentives to allocate budgetary resources to militaries. More democratic and economically open states might face domestic pressures to maintain relatively low military expenditures so to devote resources towards domestic programs. Thus, they might be more constrained to respond to adverse shifts of their major power’s patron with an expansion of their own conventional military capabilities. I also include the natural log of troop deployment size with the expectation that larger US deployments would lessen the need of the state to spend on its own military. Finally, the
Cold War might have influenced defense spending in two, divergent ways. On the one hand, it might have engendered greater alliance free-riding on the United States. On the other hand, states might have been more willing to spend more on their militaries so to protect against conventional attack by communist forces. Drawing from the USAID Greenbook, I add the natural log of total military aid to account for the possibility that the major power patron is increasing such assistance to mitigate the effects of troop withdrawal.

Table 5: Determinants of Military Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Decline</td>
<td>0.27***</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.059**</td>
<td>0.52***</td>
<td>0.19***</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.060)</td>
<td>(0.026)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.071)</td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(Troop Numbers)</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>0.044*</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>-0.030</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.062)</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.023)</td>
<td>(0.069)</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
<td>(0.055)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>-1.43***</td>
<td>-0.23***</td>
<td>-0.00077</td>
<td>-1.32***</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.078)</td>
<td>(0.053)</td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ln(Military Aid)</td>
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<td>0.022*</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>-0.16***</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
<td>-0.071*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
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<td>(0.011)</td>
<td>(0.052)</td>
<td>(0.030)</td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.00027***</td>
<td>0.00055***</td>
<td>0.00029***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000043)</td>
<td>(0.000061)</td>
<td>(0.00010)</td>
<td>(0.000098)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP²</td>
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<td>-7.8e-09***</td>
<td>-0.000000018***</td>
<td>-0.000000013***</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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Table 7.5:  *p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01. Dependent variable is the natural log of military expenditures. Models 1–3 include lagged dependent variables whereas models 4–6 do not. Clustered standard errors on country.

As Table 5 indicates, some empirical support emerges from this analysis. Before describing the results, it is important to review which equations I use. Models 1, 2, and 3 incorporate all the same covariates as in the previous analysis but lagged by one year (with the exception

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26Olson and Zeckhauser (1966).
of Cold War). I justify lagging these variables because in many countries legislative politics could delay the timing as to when new spending on defense appears on government budgets. Models 4, 5, and 6 are similar but none of the covariates are lagged.\textsuperscript{27} The models also vary in which the fixed effects they include to account for unobserved country- and year-level heterogeneity. In four of the six models, personnel decline (of 1000 or more troops) did correspond with an increase in the states military expenditures (statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. This finding should be treated with caution, however. When we do not lag the personnel decline and include both country and year fixed effects, the relationship not only loses statistical significance, but also reverses in direction. Perhaps more importantly, the number of observations included in the regression is halved due to the number of fixed effects and missing data.

The other covariates included in the models generally do not have strong, consistent, or statistically significant correlations with military spending. The exception to this rule are those variables that measure a state’s economic and industrial resources. Unsurprisingly, GDP per capita has a positive association with military expenditures. Institutional variables such as Polity and Openness produce coefficients that are statistically indistinguishable from zero. One interesting finding is that Disputes and Rivalry only appears statistically significant when its measurement is not lagged and appears in an extensive model that features country and year fixed effects. The magnitude of troop presence does not exhibit a systematic relationship with military expenditures.

### 7.5 Summary

In this chapter I statistically test my explanation of why states engage in nuclear behavior. I show that US friends and allies are more likely to exhibit nuclear behavior in response to

\textsuperscript{27}As much as it is very reasonable to presume that one year’s military spending can best predict the next year’s military spending, I do not lag the dependent variables. The inclusion of lagged dependent variables leads to statistical bias. See Achen (2000) for a discussion.
reductions of US troop deployments on their own soil. This finding is consistent with the
general argument that states adopt this strategy in view of what they deem to be the growing
incredibility of their patron’s security guarantees. I also uncover mixed evidence that states
expand their conventional military expenditures in the face of such developments.
Chapter 8

Out There Beyond the Wall: Nuclear Behavior among Soviet Alliances

Nuclear proliferation seems to be an American problem. Consider the thirty-three countries that have engaged in nuclear behavior at one point since 1945. Nineteen of them had some level of alignment with the United States when they undertook nuclear behavior. Only three states (China, North Korea, and Romania) had defensive alliances with the Soviet Union. Whereas five of fourteen NATO allies undertook nuclear behavior by the 1970s, only one of seven Warsaw Pact allies committed the same offense. This observation raise a puzzle: why was the problem of nuclear behavior more acute and pervasive amongst US alliances than amongst Soviet alliances?

It is tempting to regard Soviet allies as having been mostly puppet regimes and thus lacking any autonomy. According to this view, engaging in even lower levels of nuclear behavior (i.e. ambiguous posturing) was improbable if not impossible. This view is reasonable and cannot be entirely dismissed, but it does contain several weaknesses. First, though they were subordinate to Soviet rule, satellite leaders were not as docile as mere puppets would

\footnote{See Appendix A. I include Sweden and Switzerland in this number because they still enjoyed the positive security externalities generated by US extended nuclear deterrence in Western Europe.}
be. Hope Harrison documents how the East German leadership in the 1950s and the 1960s forced the Soviet Union to adopt more hard-line policies than it would otherwise have preferred.\(^2\) Randall Stone documents how Communist officials in Central-Eastern Europe took advantage of distortions in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) – the primary economic international organization that the Soviet Union organized in the region – in order to frustrate Soviet economic reforms.\(^3\) Soviet leaders even feared that Poland would sign a separate treaty with West Germany at their expense in the mid-1950s.\(^4\) Members of the Warsaw Pact might have lacked the means and opportunities to openly and peacefully contest aspects of the Soviet-imposed order, but they still managed to employ subterfuge to advance their own national interests. Second, Soviet satellite leaders were willing to express their own anxieties over the direction of Soviet foreign policy when they believed that their country’s security interests were at stake. Such anxieties were especially manifest when West German intentions regarding nuclear weapons remained unclear.\(^5\) In sum, Soviet satellites were not puppets. They used subterfuge to their advantage and even voiced their own insecurities when their interests were at stake.

The case studies and statistical analysis presented in the preceding chapters suggest another plausible answer to the foregoing puzzle. Unlike the Soviet Union, the US was

\(^2\)Harrison (2003).
\(^3\)Stone (1996).
\(^5\)In the late 1950s, the Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki advanced far-reaching proposals for a nuclear free zone in Central-Eastern Europe. A key motivation for these proposals was to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by West Germany, either through indigenous production or nuclear-sharing arrangements. At first Khrushchev endorsed the Polish view that NATO should not adopt any institutional arrangements that appear to grant West Germany a nuclear trigger. By 1963, much to the consternation of Polish (and later East German) leaders, Khrushchev endorsed a draft of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty that appeared to tolerate NATO’s nuclear sharing. Aside from risking a nuclearized West Germany, such an agreement would have come at the expense of East Germany and Poland. One motivation underlying Khrushchev’s changed approach was to resolve tensions with West Germany in order to gain flexibility with China. Eventually, Khrushchev reverted to his original position and linked the MLF to a non-proliferation treaty. Yet this back-pedaling was insufficient to repair his reputation with already dissatisfied Soviet politburo members and military leaders, and thus prevent his ouster in October 1964. As if to reassure its frontline satellite states, his successor Leonid Brezhnev took a hardline against NATO nuclear-sharing arrangements in subsequent Soviet negotiations for a non-proliferation treaty. See Selvage (N.d.) for a description of intra-Soviet bloc discussions of non-proliferation treaty negotiations during the early 1960s. du Quenoy (2003) explains how Khrushchev’s foreign policy conduct contributed to his ouster as Soviet leader in 1964.
a major power of truly global reach. It was thus more likely to spread itself thin having made security commitments in such far-flung regions as Western Europe and East Asia. The United States was accordingly more likely to reallocate its military resources in ways that had diverse implications for the security of its allies. The Soviet Union, on the contrary, constituted a large proportion of Eurasian territory. This geographical positioning allowed it to project its power in Cold War theaters without having to venture too far from its own borders. The Soviet Union had no need to undertake shifts in strategic posture. Its leaders did not experience any desire to ‘offshore balance’ because they were already ‘onshore.’

Yet even this view is incomplete because the Soviet Union did exhibit variability in committing conventional military resources to protect allied regimes. At times, it even withdrew large numbers of its forces from the territory of those allies. To what extent does this observation bear on the external validity of my theory? Does the fact that we observe Soviet changes to forward deployment and strategic planning without much subsequent nuclear behavior suggest important qualifications to my argument?

The purpose of this chapter is to at once resolve the puzzle posed above and answer the foregoing questions. My argument for the relative absence of nuclear behavior has three parts. First, the underlying structural relationship Soviet allies in the Warsaw Pact had with the Soviet Union was distinct from that which characterized the Western alliance. Although members of the Warsaw Pact were not mere ‘puppets’ operating at the behest of the Soviet Union, Soviet alliance relations in Central-Eastern Europe featured domination – a term I explain below. By contrast, the Western alliance consisted of contractual arrangements and thus did not feature domination, notwithstanding the preponderance of US military power. In other words, fears of abandonment reflected doubts that the United States would live up to the alliance contract. Second, in further distinction from NATO, the Warsaw Pact adopted an offensive nuclear doctrine. Some international relations scholars claim that such doctrines undermine alliance stability, yet I argue that it is possible that the Soviet Union’s offensive
doctrine in fact reassured satellite states.\textsuperscript{6} The reality of domination and the implementation of an offensive doctrine had an important consequence for the meaning of Soviet conventional military power in Central-Eastern Europe. That is, troop redeployments in the Western and Soviet alliances did not have the same informational content when it came to credibility. Whereas a unilateral troop withdrawal suggested a problematic US security commitment, a similar action undertaken by the Soviet Union did not necessarily send the same signal. In East Asia, however, the Soviet Union possessed a limited capacity to project military power and thus reinforce its declared leadership status. The conventional military basis of Soviet extended deterrence was weak in the region. Thus, as an explanatory variable, Soviet conventional military deployments still mattered in the communist world – after all, every communist state after the Soviet Union to engage in nuclear behavior did not host Soviet troops – but they mattered for subtly different reasons.

This chapter thus builds confidence in the external validity of my theory by demonstrating its relevance for both negative and positive cases in Soviet alliances. I begin with section 2 by describing Soviet nuclear thinking and military deployments in Central-Eastern Europe and East Asia. Section 3 then examines whether major changes in Soviet military deployments – especially in Central-Eastern Europe – reflected meaningful changes in Soviet patronage. Section 4 consists of plausibility probes that seek to establish the importance of alliance dynamics for understanding why China, Romania, and North Korea engaged in nuclear behavior in the first place and for as long as they did. Analysis of these cases is less intensive than that which characterized the case studies of South Korea, West Germany, and Japan because the availability of direct evidence is very limited. I rely more on the historical secondary literature. Section 5 concludes.

\textsuperscript{6}Posen (1984) explains why offensive doctrines should stoke fears of entrapment and, by extension, undermine alliance integrity.
8.1 Soviet Conventional Military Power in Europe and Asia

The Sovietization of Central-Eastern Europe was a product of the Second World War. The Red Army expelled the Nazi military from its earlier territorial conquests in a region that spanned the pre-war independent states of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania in addition to the western parts of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union became the first ally to reach Berlin and occupied the eastern portion of Germany. These military successes had political significance. Joseph Stalin did not believe that his US and British allies would allow unfriendly regimes to appear in the territories they liberated in Western Europe. He plainly stated that “whoever occupies a territory also imposes his own political system.” In accordance with this belief, the Soviet leader oversaw the formation of communist regimes in Central-Eastern Europe amidst growing tensions with his erstwhile wartime partners. To ensure the loyalty of these new regimes, the Red Army kept its regional presence and, unlike the US and British militaries, remained mobilized for several years after 1945. Post-war Soviet troop strength peaked in 1953 at about 5.4 million military personnel.7

Such an extensive military posture in Central-Eastern Europe was too expensive to be sustainable for very long, especially in view of how the Second World War had cost the Soviet Union about 2.6 trillion rubles.8 Stalin was willing to tolerate these costs as long as he lived. Part of his motivation may have been to consolidate Soviet power in the region. Another reason may have been to deny US decision-makers the claim that a weakening Soviet military presence was the result of post-war US nuclear monopoly and later superiority.9 Once Khrushchev came to power and the Soviet Union was expanding its nuclear arsenal did these costs become harder to justify. After all, the Soviet conventional military presence was

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7Evangelista (1997, 4).
8Zubok (2007, 2).
9Holloway (1994). For more on Soviet responses to the US nuclear monopoly before 1949, the year when the Soviet Union first detonated its nuclear weapon, see Gordin (2009).
not even necessary for the defeat of communism’s adversaries. In the long-term, Western
arrogance and the internal contradictions of capitalism would lead to communism’s ultimate
triumph. Moreover, similar to how Eisenhower thought of US military commitments in Eu-
rope, Khrushchev believed that an extensive conventional military presence was superfluous
in the nuclear age.\textsuperscript{10}

If conventional military deployments were unnecessary and Marxist-Leninist theory stip-
ulated that the Soviet Union would surely prevail over capitalist adversaries, what role was
there then for nuclear weapons in Soviet strategy? Khrushchev disagreed with Mao Tset-
tung’s expressed view that nuclear weapons were paper tigers. Yet he also believed that
the threat of Massive Retaliation that Eisenhower and Dulles issued was only a bluff. Still,
he recognized the psychological power that these weapons wielded. US decision-makers,
according to Khrushchev, “knew where the brink was [that they] should not overstep, and
behaved in a prudent way, taking our resistance into account and seeing that, with sheer
force and extortion, they could not get what they wanted.”\textsuperscript{11} Khrushchev recognized mutual
nuclear deterrence, but he still felt that extending nuclear deterrence to allies and communist
movements in the Third World would further contain if not rollback capitalism.\textsuperscript{12}

This thinking only applied in a world in which the two rival major powers were the
possessors of nuclear weapons. As Khrushchev himself put it, “the question of war or peace
nowadays depends on the biggest powers of the two camps in possession of the thermonuclear
bomb.”\textsuperscript{13} If countries such as West Germany acquired them, then this delicate balance would
be upset. Accordingly, Khrushchev wished to avert nuclear weaponization of Central-Eastern
Europe in the absence of a formal German peace settlement. Thus, as much as costs would
be defrayed in reducing Soviet troops in the region, Khrushchev thought he could leverage
them so as to extract concessions from the Western alliance, the most important issue being

\textsuperscript{10}Evangelista (1997, 15).
\textsuperscript{11}Khrushchev quoted in Zubok and Pleshakov (1996, 190).
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13}Khrushchev quoted in Ibid, 191.
nuclear disarmament and the elimination of the US stockpile of nuclear weapons.

Troop redeployments in the Soviet bloc unfolded in several stages. Shortly after becoming the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1953, Khrushchev oversaw the first major systematic cut in Soviet convention military forces. These reductions occurred gradually throughout the 1950s. Between Stalin’s death in March 1953 and August 1955, the Soviet armed forces demobilized 600,000 troops. Another 340,000 troops were cut by January 1956, thereby exceeding targets put forward in an earlier announcement made by Khrushchev in August 1955. In May 1956, the Soviet leaders scheduled the demobilization of 1.2 million troops. Another reduction of 300,000 was made in 1958. Not yet finished, Khrushchev declared that the Soviet army would also demobilize 1.2 million troops – a quarter of a million of which were officers. This planned reduction, however, did not take place because of the Berlin Crisis.14 The implemented troop reductions were the largest undertaken by the Soviet Union until Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew a large share of Soviet forces from Central-Eastern Europe at the end of the Cold War.15

By contrast, the Soviet military presence in East Asia was relatively small for much of the Cold War. Before their withdrawal in 1948 Soviet military forces occupied the portion of Korea that later became North Korea. Only military and political advisers remained on North Korean territory afterwards. The Soviet presence was even more limited in China. As discussed in chapter 4, the Soviet Union also lacked a naval and aerial capability to project military power in the region.16 This shortcoming in Soviet military power changed in the 1970s when in 1977 the Soviet Union began a major military build-up in the region. Simply put, the conventional military basis of Soviet extended deterrence in East Asia was weaker than that in Central-Eastern Europe.

One final note deserves mention. Though these Soviet troop withdrawals in Europe were extensive in scale, an important contrasting feature exists between them and those

14Numbers drawn from Evangelista (1997).
15See Gelman (1989) for a contemporary analysis of Gorbachev’s troop reductions.
16Ha and Guinasso (1980, 250).
undertaken by US decision-makers. US troop withdrawals were usually the fulfillment of some declared change in US foreign policy – a difference that reflects the relative openness of the US political system. The confusion sparked by the rhetoric of the New Look and later the doctrine of flexible response provided the basis of West German apprehensions during the 1950s and 1960s. Johnson’s stated desire to unilaterally reduce hostilities in Vietnam in 1968 fueled Japanese suspicions of waning US commitment. Nixon’s Guam Doctrine offered the strategic rationale for the troop redeployments that the United States would later carry out in East Asia in the early 1970s. When campaigning for the presidency, Carter promised a moral foreign policy that would terminate political and military support for human rights violating regimes such as Park Chung Hee’s South Korea.

The Kremlin generally refrained from making similar foreign policy pronouncements. In fact, during the Cold War, the Soviet leadership articulated only two clear foreign policy doctrines that directly affected its military and political alliances. The first was the Brezhnev Doctrine. Articulated in 1968 to justify the Soviet suppression of a reformist movement in Czechoslovakia, this statement announced that the deviation of any member of the Soviet bloc from socialism had significance for all of its allies. The second was the so-called Sinatra Doctrine that, in 1989, effectively overturned the Brezhnev Doctrine. It enabled members of the Soviet bloc to determine their own internal affairs. Note that neither of these doctrines implied or justified any redistribution of military capabilities and personnel within the Warsaw Pact. To what extent, then, did the troop redeployments fundamentally reflect a change in the Soviet leadership and patronage in Central-Eastern Europe?

8.2 Soviet Domination and Offensive Doctrine

To answer this question, it is useful to return to a key definition. Scholars define grand strategy as the general use of military and economic instruments to advance the political

\[ \text{[Note: On the end of the Soviet bloc, see Sarotte (2009).]} \]
goals of the state. Military power, strategy, and ideological goals intersect at this top level of decision-making for all major powers. Nevertheless, this nexus had a uniquely powerful ideological content in Soviet grand strategy. From the Russian Revolution onwards, the Soviet Union’s grand strategy was predicated on protecting the socialist state from the ostensibly capitalist-friendly composition of the international system. As a result, the ideological character of Soviet grand strategy had two important consequences for intra-alliance dynamics and, by extension, the possibility of nuclear behavior in Central-Eastern Europe. First, such political thinking ultimately fostered a hierarchy of domination that the Soviet Union exercised over the Warsaw Pact. Second, as much as other factors might have influenced its development, the offensive doctrine characterizing Soviet military planning was also a function of ideology. Counterintuitively, the adoption of an offensive doctrine might have benefited the integrity of the Warsaw Pact. International relations scholars claim that offensive doctrines risk undermining alliance stability by stoking fears of entrapment. Yet the structure of Soviet power in the region plausibly produced the opposite effect; that is, it reassured allies that the Soviet Union did not merely treat them as ‘buffer states.’ The combination of these factors – the character of Soviet political leadership and an offensive military doctrine – might have lowered the incentives of Soviet allies to engage in nuclear behavior. Put together, troop redeployments, therefore, were of lesser informational value regarding patron reliability to Warsaw Pact members than to NATO members.

Hierarchv in the Soviet Bloc as Domination

I argue that the Sovietization of Central-Eastern Europe constituted domination. This form of hierarchy does not constitute a contractual arrangement in which subordinate states voluntarily surrender sovereign rights to a patron in exchange for such goods as protection and order. The subordinate cannot peacefully and freely determine whether it wishes

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18 For a discussion of buffer states in international politics, see Fazal (2007).
19 The following discussion relies extensively on Lanoszka (2013).
20 Lake (2009) elaborates on the contractual view of hierarchy.
to participate in the hierarchical relationship. Even if a ‘contract’ were to form the basis of the relationship, it does not feature a *bona fide* agreement between the patron and the subordinate over the limits or expiration of the hierarchy. To be sure, being subject to domination does not imply that the subordinate’s behavior completely reflects the interests of its superordinate. To borrow an analogy from republican theorist Philip Pettit, slaves might retain a semblance of freedom of action out of either their own individual cunningness or the benevolence of their masters. Nevertheless, they remain as slaves and thus in the proprietary interest of their patrons. Accordingly, the state that experiences domination can still pursue sometimes policies that diverge from its patron because it might be unable to peacefully remedy its subordinate status.\(^{21}\)

The Soviet bloc featured domination. First, the formation of the political regimes that comprised it was due to the Soviet imposition of control in the region following the Second World War.\(^{22}\) These states did not have the option of withdrawing recognition of Soviet authority. Upon coming to power during the October Crisis in 1956, Władysław Gomułka had to reassure Khrushchev of his allegiance to the Soviet Union. This situation applied equally to states that experienced domination while pursuing policies at variance with the preferences of the Soviet Union. By the 1970s, Romania exemplified such a state: despite finally achieving foreign policy autonomy, its leaders felt obliged to pay lip-service to the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Second, as if to render domination an explicit policy of the Soviet Union, its leaders articulated the Brezhnev Doctrine. Announced shortly after the Warsaw Pact’s suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968, the Brezhnev Doctrine declared that the deviation of any one socialist state had significance for the security of all other socialist states. As the invasion of Czechoslovakia suggested, such deviations might elicit punishment from the Soviet Union. Third, Soviet support for communist leaders was at times fickle, thereby lending credence to the argument that even the survival of satellite leaders was oftentimes contingent

\(^{21}\)For more on republican (or neo-Roman) theory and the concept of domination, see Pettit (1997), Skinner (1998), Deudney (2006), Pettit (2008), Pettit (2010), and Lovett (2010).

\(^{22}\)The process of Soviet imposition in Central-Eastern Europe is recounted in Applebaum (2012).
on the preferences and whims of Soviet leaders. The Stalinist Polish leader Boleslaw Bierut seems to have learned this lesson when, despite his enthusiastic support for the Soviet Union, he was recalled to Moscow and died under mysterious circumstances.\(^\text{23}\)

Third, the preservation of Soviet security rested on the subordinate status of communist regimes in Central-Eastern Europe. An irony of the Brezhnev Doctrine is that the events of 1989 gave it intellectual vindication.\(^\text{24}\) It was only when Soviet leaders began renouncing control of Central-Eastern Europe with the Sinatra Doctrine that these states began to loosen their ties to the Soviet Union. So long as Soviet leaders asserted the necessity and legitimacy of communist rule in the region, local leaders could not risk their own political survival by challenging the Soviet order. Indeed, in some cases, they took it for granted that the Soviet Union would intervene to protect its interests. For example, Mark Kramer offers evidence that communist leader Wojciech Jaruzelski imposed martial law in Poland after he realized that the Soviet Union would not support him militarily.\(^\text{25}\)

By contrast, non-domination characterized the hierarchical relationship between the United States and its allies in Western Europe. The US military presence was intended to be temporary. The United States had to remain in Europe until the Western European countries reconstructed their economies and posed their own deterrent threat to the Soviet Union. In the words of historian Geir Lundestad, it was an ‘empire by invitation.’\(^\text{26}\) Such was the grand bargain struck between the United States and Western Europe in the early years of the Cold War.\(^\text{27}\) That such a grand bargain existed did not imply that both sides always abided by its terms. On the part of the United States, the nuclear doctrine of Massive Retaliation was appealing precisely because the United States mainland had remained relatively impervious to Soviet attack. As a result, US administrations appeared too willing

\(^{23}\)Kemp-Welch (2008, 72).
\(^{24}\)Once liberalizing reforms progressed favorably in Hungary and Poland, the remaining communist regimes in the region confronted similar forces of political change.
\(^{25}\)This finding directly contradicts Jaruzelski’s repeated assertions that he imposed martial law because it would have prevented Soviet invasion. Kramer (1998).
\(^{26}\)Lundestad (1986).
\(^{27}\)For more on this ‘grand bargain,’ see Ikenberry (2001).
to sacrifice Western Europe wholesale despite their assurances to the contrary. On the part
of Western European allies, US decision-makers were frustrated at what they perceived as
Western European free-riding and foot-dragging on both rearmament and negotiating offset
arrangements. At times these frustrations led US decision-makers to threaten an “agonizing
reappraisal” of trans-Atlantic relations. The Soviet bloc did not exhibit these types of
uncertainties and bargains.

The Soviet Union was not able to dominate its communist underlings in East Asia. Indeed, a patron can most effectively enforce its domination over subordinate states when it
enjoys a preponderance of military power. Unfortunately for the Soviet Union, it could not
project the same level of power over its Chinese and North Korean allies and thus defend
its leadership position in the face of growing tensions with China. Indeed, it was primarily
occupied with European affairs than developments in Asia. Prior to the major military
buildup undertaken by the Soviet Union in East Asia in the 1970s, its military presence was
relatively minor in the region.

Soviet Offensive Military Doctrine

The brief opening of archival records after the collapse of the Soviet Union enabled analysts
to learn how Warsaw Pact planners envisioned a military conflict in Europe. One important
finding is that very little effort was put in making adequate defensive preparations despite
concerns over the damage that NATO forces would inflict on Warsaw Pact countries. All
operational exercises and war plans were offensive in nature. This orientation in military
planning provides another contrast to the defensive nature of NATO’s conventional war

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28 In reviewing US war plans from the Cold War period, Darryl Press notes the “callousness of American
policies with regard to the well-being of the European allies.” Press (2005, 110).
29 See, e.g., Duchin (1992) and Ruane (2002).
30 Note that domination is more than simply the overwhelming projection of military power over allies.
The United States projected extensive military power over its allies in the North Atlantic, yet the meaning
of that power imbalance was different for the reasons described above.
31 Christensen (2011) argues that the Soviet Union on occasion had to support communist activities in
Asia simply because not doing so would have allowed the Chinese to claim ideological leadership.
planning. Indeed, the main goal of NATO’s conventional military forces was to hold-up the numerically superior Warsaw Pact forces until nuclear weapons forced the Soviet leadership to relent. Warsaw Pact leaders, by contrast, expected to use tactical nuclear weapons to overwhelm NATO and acquire territory in Western Europe.

Several reasons for the Warsaw Pact’s uniquely offensive doctrine are possible:

- **Lessons of the Second World War**: Soviet military leaders inferred from their experience that the offensive campaign won this war. Although the most consequential losses incurred by the German army took place when the Soviet Union was still on the defensive (e.g., the Battle of Stalingrad) or on the counter-offensive (e.g., the Battle of Kursk), the Soviet Union made its most significant territorial gains in Central-Eastern Europe when it finally took the initiative and launched a deep offensive into Nazi German territory.

- **Bureaucratic interests**: Soviet military leaders regarded offensive doctrines as critical to maintain bureaucratic autonomy and resources. International relations scholar Barry Posen describes the logic of such beliefs. Aside from reducing uncertainty on the battlefield, civilian leaders are less likely to be engaged in military planning when war takes place abroad. Furthermore, offensive doctrines cost more, thereby requiring bigger budgets. Militaries, therefore, have a bureaucratic incentive to advocate for offensive doctrines.

- **Soviet ideology**: Revolutionary ideologies such as Soviet communism are by their nature revisionist, especially if they espouse universalist values and goals that seek to challenge the legitimacy of the existing international order. One theme in Marxist

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32 To clarify, during the Berlin crises at least, war plans indicated that NATO would launch an “immediate nuclear offensive against hundreds of targets throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.” British document cited in Press (2005, 84). I am not aware of any NATO war plans that, for example, had French troops occupy Polish Galicia.

thought, after all, was that the existing international system was capitalist and, therefore, hostile to communism. The moral righteousness of a revolutionary cause can also lead its proponents to overestimate the appeal of their ideology and be optimistic of ultimate victory.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, Marxist-Leninist theory contained an eschatology that emphasized the inevitability of global communism. These elements of Soviet ideology encouraged an offensive posture.

- \textit{Balance of power imperatives}: Posen also writes that states that are expansionist, declining, have no allies, or have multiple adversaries are more likely to adopt offensive doctrines. The case of the Soviet Union appears to satisfy most of these criteria because it had espoused a revolutionary ideology, faced a technological and economic decline vis-à-vis members of the Western alliance starting in the mid-1970s, and confronted adversaries in the west and the east (especially after the Sino-Soviet split). Presumably, these considerations overwhelmed the desire to adopt a defensive doctrine so to reassure allies.

Some combination of learning, ideology, and balance of power imperatives pushed Soviet military planners to embrace an offensive doctrine.\textsuperscript{35} To be sure, some weaknesses bear on the notion that Soviet military leaders believed that, after the Second World War, attacking was preferable to defending. Defending wore down the German army to the point that both

\textsuperscript{34}\textsuperscript{Walt (1992, 337).} Stephen M. Walt argues that revolutionary states are more likely to engage in military conflict because of difficulties in assessing intentions.

\textsuperscript{35}\textsuperscript{As much as Posen himself dismisses the empirical validity of organization theory in explaining military doctrine, the explanation centering on bureaucratic interests suffers from important theoretical flaws. First, in modern warfare, the weapons needed for defense are similar to those necessary for attack. As a result, militaries gain little to no budgetary advantage by selecting one doctrine over the other. That about a fifth of Soviet gross domestic product was dedicated to military spending should not obscure this point. Second, going on the attack allows the military to be on the initiative but it in fact increases rather than decreases uncertainty. After all, attacking requires advancing across unfamiliar terrain, moving away from one’s command posts and supply networks, and raising one’s vulnerability to counterattack. If bureaucracies are risk-averse and conservative, then they should prefer defensive doctrines. Balance of power theory has its own conceptual weaknesses, too. Declining states should be averse to offensive doctrines because of the risk of ‘suicide from fear of death.’ Especially when facing multiple adversaries, adopting an offensive doctrine risks provoking rising states to implement their own security-enhancing measures, thereby generating the effects of ‘spiral model.’}
the Soviets and the Americans could attack. Yet defending also came at an enormous cost in terms of personnel and matériel for the Soviet Union. A defensive posture became an unpalatable basis for a future war-fighting doctrine. Furthermore, starting in the 1970s, the Soviet military faced a technological disadvantage vis-à-vis NATO. Western technical innovation enabled the United States to enhance its precision and deep strike capabilities such that mass pre-emptive action might have been the only way to shift the zone of action to Western. Such action would also provide the Soviet Union with sufficient depth so as to keep Western forces from hitting Soviet territory at will with conventional artillery or tactical nuclear weapons. As much as analysts tend to offer these explanations for Soviet doctrine, there still exists another possible strategic rationale. Whether a source of additional motivation or a favorable by-product, having an offensive doctrine added to the integrity of the Warsaw Pact.

One reason for the Sovietization of Central-Eastern Europe was to provide the Soviet Union with a bulwark against future German aggression. It is difficult for the Soviet Union to pitch a military doctrine to its ‘buffer zone’ that effectively admits that states found in that region are simply a ‘buffer zone.’ A defensive doctrine would have been too obvious in privileging the Soviet Union’s security interests above those of its allies in the Warsaw Pact. Thus, due to geography, an offensive doctrine might have perversely been more reassuring to members of the Warsaw Pact. Implementing it suggested that the Soviet Union was designing military operations and exercises that appeared to accord some level of agency and initiative to its satellites.

That the Soviet Union adopted an offensive doctrine does not invalidate the view that the Soviet bloc constituted domination. To argue by analogy, though it dominates a slave, the master can still perform actions intended to demonstrate its benevolence. For example, the master could provide comfortable quarters, punish abusive intermediaries, or even grant respite. Yet the provision of such goods and services – even if they are intended to reassure the slave that its interests are respected – does not alter the reality of slavery. An offensive
doctrine might have reassured Soviet allies, but these allies were forbidden to peacefully and openly contest the underlying power structures that marked their relations with the Soviet Union.

Implications for Signaling Commitment in Soviet Alliances

Two observations regarding Soviet domination and the Warsaw Pact’s offensive doctrine are worth recapitulating. First, the preservation of Soviet security necessitated the subordinate status of Warsaw Pact members. They could not be granted sufficient flexibility and autonomy because they would defect to the Western alliance. Second, the adoption of an offensive doctrine meant that members of the Warsaw Pact coordinated their military operations in order to make a joint military attack on NATO positions in Western Europe in the event of war. They were not treated as mere buffer states – even if the raison d’être of the Sovietized Central-Eastern Europe was largely to provide a bulwark against the threat posed by the Western alliance.

These political and military attributes of the Warsaw Pact affected the meaning of forward conventional military deployments within the Soviet bloc. Unlike in Western Europe, where the US military presence was contingent and never intending to last indefinitely, Soviet troop deployments conveyed less information regarding the credibility of the Soviet Union’s commitment. Their status as a ‘trip-wire’ was accordingly less meaningful because of the intimate connection between the integrity of the communist regimes in Central-Eastern Europe and the security of the Soviet Union. For local leaders, the Soviet military presence was a reminder of the political constraints they faced in their relations with the Kremlin. For the populations serving under them, it was a source of resentment. In Poland, a major demand articulated in nation-wide protests in October 1956 was the removal of the Soviet officer Konstantin Rokossovsky from his posts as both Marshal of Poland and the Defense

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36David Lake argues that the risk of opportunism was high in the Soviet bloc, hence a tighter alliance structure than that which characterized NATO. See Lake (1996).
Following Warsaw Pact interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1956 and 1968, respectively, the Soviet military bore similarly negative connotations in those societies.

Given the concentration of Soviet military power in Europe, Soviet alliance reliability had a weaker conventional military basis in East Asia. The Soviet Union could not enforce a hierarchy of domination despite the best efforts of Soviet leaders to preserve their authority in that region. This lack of military power so as to control allies also meant that the Soviet Union could not offer a reliable form of extended deterrence in the region. Moreover, the Soviet Union saw its allies in Europe more integral to its security. That it was more interested in Europe suggested that Soviet willingness to defend its East Asian allies was lesser. Put together, these observations suggest the hypothesis that nuclear behavior should be rare if not absent in the Soviet bloc whereas it should be more likely in East Asia.

8.3 Nuclear Behavior in Soviet Alliances

That the Soviet Union’s two East Asian allies both engaged in nuclear behavior and only one Warsaw Pact member (out of five) engaged in nuclear behavior corroborates the hypothesis advanced above. China began its nuclear behavior in the mid-1950s whereas North Korea’s nuclear behavior dates as far back as the 1960s. Romania was the lone Eastern bloc member to engage in nuclear behavior. This section will focus on these (positive) cases of nuclear behavior and assess the plausibility of my theory for understanding them. The remainder of this section offers an account of each of these state’s bout of nuclear behavior.

China’s Pursuit and Acquisition of Nuclear Weapons

When Mao Tse-tung determined that China should acquire its own nuclear capability, he already had an alliance with the Soviet Union. The two states formed this alliance with  

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the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance in February 1950. As both states were founded on a revolutionary communist ideology, this alliance seemed natural. Indeed, following the Korean War, relations between the two communist powers were positive. Within several years, however, ideological disagreements began to create a rift between the two countries.

Shortly after Khrushchev succeeded in asserting his rule of post-Stalin Soviet Union, he undertook a set of policies that Mao personally found distasteful. First, Khrushchev denounced Stalin’s leadership and personality cult in his speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956. Second, Khrushchev embraced a relatively dovish line in Soviet foreign relations by first restoring relations with Yugoslavia and disbanding the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform). This Soviet-led organization provided a forum at which national Communist parties could coordinate their activities. Khrushchev also began advocating ‘peaceful co-existence’ with the capitalist world. These actions appeared to signify to Mao a weakening of Soviet resolve in promoting communism and prevailing in the inevitable struggle with capitalism. Most importantly, Mao was upset over the lack of diplomatic and military support that the Soviet Union was offering to China in the Taiwan Strait Crises. Though one purpose of this crisis from Mao’s perspective was to determine US resolve in protecting Taiwan, another motivation was to probe the extent to which China could rely on Soviet support. Soviet leaders failed the ‘litmus test,’ however. Khrushchev even suggested surrendering the offshore islands and recognizing Taiwan’s autonomous status to his Chinese counterpart.\textsuperscript{38} Mao finally decided that the Soviet Union was an unreliable security partner. These disagreements over doctrine and foreign policy led to a deterioration in the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Avery Goldstein argues that the Chinese dissatisfaction with Soviet alliance support motivated the formation of its program. Reliance on the Soviet Union proved ineffective.

\textsuperscript{38}Zubok and Pleshakov (1996, 201).
for dealing with the use of nuclear threats by the Eisenhower administration.\footnote{On the Eisenhower administration’s use of nuclear threats, see Chang (1988) and Foot (1988-1989).} As a result, the Chinese leadership judged sometime during the First Taiwan Straits Crisis that, in Goldstein’s words, a “self-reliant strategy of dissuasion of nuclear deterrence would better serve China’s national security interest.”\footnote{Goldstein (1993, 225).} Within several years China built its first uranium enrichment plants and plutonium facilities. In October 1964 China successfully detonated its first atomic weapon. By this time the Sino-Soviet split became definitive.\footnote{For more on China’s nuclear weapons program, see Lewis and Litai (1988), Goldstein (2000), and Hymans (2012).}

Why was the Soviet Union unable to prevent China from successfully acquiring its own nuclear deterrent? To be clear, the Soviet Union did partly assist China in realizing its nuclear ambitions by providing sensitive nuclear assistance and even dispatching Soviet nuclear experts.\footnote{Lewis and Litai (1988, 53, 61, 121).} Yet once it became clear that the Chinese were intending to develop its own nuclear capability the Soviet Union withdrew its assistance.\footnote{The Soviet Union terminated its aid to the Chinese in 1959. China responded by dedicating greater effort to its nuclear weapons program. Goldstein (1993, 227). For Chinese frustrations with the Soviet Union on withholding its cooperation, see “Report by Nie Rongzhen to Mao Zedong Regarding Science and Technology (abbreviated version)” July 03, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Dangde wenxian [Party Historical Documents], vol. 3 (1994), pp. 16-19. Translated for NPIHP by Neil Silver.} The Soviet Union did not appear to do more than withdrawing aid and take greater advantage of its economic power vis-à-vis China. As Kennedy and Johnson were considering attacking China to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons, their efforts to secure Soviet support obtained no success. One possibility is that Khrushchev, at least during the 1961 Vienna Summit, still did not believe that the Sino-Soviet split was definitive.\footnote{Chang (1990, 230-232).} Another source of Soviet reluctance to cooperate with the United States was because of the MLF. Soviet leaders did not wish to agree on a major counterproliferation effort against China when the United States continued its advocacy of nuclear-sharing arrangements that involved West Germany.\footnote{Burr and Richelson (2000/2001, 69-70).} Finally, even though its formal alliance with China was bilateral, direct action would have wider

repercussions for the so-called ‘socialist camp’. After all, as negotiations regarding the NPT took place during the early 1960s, many communist states expressed worry over the treaty’s implications for the already discordant diplomatic relationship between the Soviet Union and China.\footnote{For Polish concerns regarding these issues, see “Letter from Gomulka to Khruschev, Marked “Final Version”” October 08, 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AAN, KC PZPR, sygn. 2637, pp. 267-82. Translation from the Polish. For Romanian concerns, see Selvage (N.d., 16-18). For an overview of the tensions that threatened to unravel the ‘socialist camp’, see Zubok (1987-1988).} Cooperating with the United States and actively preventing China from acquiring nuclear weapons would have undermined Soviet leadership. Put together, although the objective factors (e.g., bilateralism and economic dependence) appeared to favor a successful counterproliferation policy, the Soviet Union still felt hamstrung by broader alliance considerations.

\section*{Romania’s Nuclear Pursuits}

Romania’s alliance ties to the Soviet Union were more extensive than China’s ever were. In 1948, the two countries concluded a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance. Seven years later, Romania was a founding member of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. As a member of the Soviet bloc, Romania hosted at one time about 35,000 Soviet troops and provided military and diplomatic support for the Soviet intervention in the Hungarian Uprising in 1956.\footnote{Deletant and Ionescu (2004, 11).} By 1958, however, the remaining Soviet troops finally withdrew Romania as part of Khrushchev’s military cuts.\footnote{“Letter addressed by N.S. Khruschev, First Secretary of the CC of the CPSU to the CC of the RWP concerning the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Romanian territory” April 17, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, ANIC, Fond CC RCP - Foreign Relations Section, File 9U/1956-1958, pp. 227-228. See also Romania. Retragerea trupelor sovietice. 1958 [Romania, Withdrawal of Soviet Troops, 1958], Editura Didactica si Pedagogica R.A., Bucharest, 1996 (coordinating editor: Prof. Ioan Scurtu, Ph.D.), pp. 273-274. Translated by Delia Razdolescu.} Although Romanian leader Gheorghiu-Dej had a favorable opinion of this troop withdrawal, it is important to keep in mind that this action did not fully relax the Soviet Union’s grip on the country. Dennis Deletant and Mihail Ionescu write that “Romania was still firmly tied within the Soviet bloc. Soviet air and naval bases remained on Romanian territory, and Soviet divisions in southern Ukraine and across the
Prut in the Moldavian Republic could descend at once in an emergency.” Moreover, the troop withdrawal preceded Soviet efforts to integrate Romania in such a way that would have consigned the country into subordinate agricultural status vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

Romania’s interest in developing a nuclear capability began in 1963 at the latest. Admittedly, on the basis of limited data it is difficult to infer its motives for developing a nuclear capability. Details remain murky and impressionistic of the nuclear weapons program that Romanian leaders Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej first explored having and that Nicolae Ceausescu later established. Nevertheless, it is important to note that 1963 represents the year in which Romanian government officials began openly criticizing the Soviet Union in diplomatic channels. By this time, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had already embarked on an independent economic strategy of development that weaned Romania away from the Soviet-managed Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Yet he had refrained from expressing diplomatic approval for Khrushchev’s actions. This silence ended with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Documents reveal that the Romanian leadership was dissatisfied with Khrushchev’s handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Specifically, they disliked the unilateralism and the dangerousness of his foreign policy that this event embodied. Dej complained privately that “[Khrushchev] didn’t talk with me, he didn’t ask my opinion, but just so, I only was informed by him that he sent missiles to Cuba.” Nor did he believe Khrushchev’s account of how the Cuban Missile Crisis unfolded and was resolved. Khrushchev showed some mea culpa when he mentioned to Romanian Politburo member Nicolae Ceausescu that “by send-

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49 Deletant and Ionescu (2004, 15).
50 Douglas Selvage shows that the Romanian leadership challenged the Soviet Union’s (and the Warsaw Pact’s) stance on the NPT and began seeking nuclear power facilities. See Selvage (N.d., 16-18).
51 As Dej explained, “[f]irst of all, the way in which [Khrushchev] presented the problem about Cuba doesnOt stand to logic. He said at one point that it was an adventure on their part, that we couldnOt know if it will generate or not generate a war, then, during the exposure time, expressing his opinion to the end, he wanted to show us how many times they had met and discussed this problem on the Presidium, to indicate that they seriously treated these things and eventually they had to send those missiles for defending Cuba and that were strictly necessary to defend Cuba.” All quotes from “Record of Romanian Workers Party Politburo Discussion, 26 June 1963, re Nikita Khrushchev Visit to Romania” June 30, 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Chancellery Collection, file 34/1963, pp. 10-11; translated by Petre Opirs.
ing missiles to Cuba, we ourselves put our head in a bind. I know comrade Gheorghiu-Dej was upset that I had not informed about sending missiles to Cuba. And he has been rightly upset. When I will meet him, I will explain. Last year I met him personally to tell. Gomulka, Zhivkov, Novotny, Ulbricht knew.”\textsuperscript{52} In other words, Khrushchev openly admitted to forgetting to inform the Romanian leader. Accordingly, at a later date, the Romanian Prime Minister conveyed his government’s frustration with the Soviet Union when he noted that “a series of circumstances in which the decisions were taken unilaterally, expressing only the Soviet point of view or, when there were consultations, we did not participate [and] we were not even aware of them.” To further press his case, Dej then noted that “we presented the case of the deployment of nuclear weapons in Cuba and elsewhere, which confronted us with the possibility of war without even knowing what it was all about. Certainly, these are just some of the problems.”\textsuperscript{53} These statements may not indicate the reasons for why Romania began to undertake nuclear behavior. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that its leaders feared entrapment and saw the Soviet Union as a problematic patron.

It is unclear to what extent the Soviet Union knew of Romania’s nuclear ambitions. Certainly, Romania’s foreign policy independence became more evident when its leaders denounced the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, showed greater diplomatic and ideological support to China than to the Soviet Union, and even “boycotted” and “misinformed” other Warsaw Pact members.\textsuperscript{54} Though Romania used atomic energy for civilian

\textsuperscript{52}“Report on Talk between Nicolae Ceausescu and Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, 8 June 1963 (excerpt)” December 08, 1962, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Foreign Relations Department Collection, file 17U/1963, p. 46; translated by Petre Opris.

\textsuperscript{53}All quotes here are from “Conversations between Delegations of the Romanian Workers Party and the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing, 3-10 March 1964 (excerpts)” March 03, 1964, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, translated for the Cold War International History Project by Larry L. Watts.

\textsuperscript{54}On Romania and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, see, for example, “Cryptogram No 10456 from Polish Embassy in Bucharest, Ambassador Och?duszko’s Meeting with the Soviet Ambassador” August 28, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland, D-I-R-0-2420-19/68, 24. Obtained and Translated by Adam Burakowski. On Romania and China, see “Analysis of Romanian-Chinese Relations by the East German Embassy in Bucharest” December 18, 1972, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. On the Romanian ‘boycott’, see “Cryptogram No 1144 from Polish Embassy in Beijing, Romanian Diplomats in China” September 09, 1973, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland,
purposes, it operated its nuclear program covertly despite having earlier proclaimed the value of international disarmament and later ratifying the NPT in 1970.\textsuperscript{55}

Without knowledge of the program, the Soviet Union could not have directed a counter-proliferation campaign against Romania. Even if it did, such efforts faced certain challenges. Romania was still a member of the Warsaw Pact – openly seeking a Romanian nuclear reversal might have further exposed cleavages in the ‘socialist camp’. Romania still depended on some Soviet economic assistance, but by the 1970s it began to rely increasingly on Western trade and foreign aid in reward for its autonomous policies. Nevertheless, the Soviet proclivity to use force against wayward allies was not lost on Ceausescu. Historians have demonstrated that his personal insecurity vis-à-vis the Kremlin caused him to become more repressive at home.\textsuperscript{56} Ceausescu may have wanted to keep the nuclear secret for fear of Soviet reprisals. We lack the evidence to properly understand his reasoning and intentions.\textsuperscript{57}

**North Korea’s Movements towards Nuclear Weapons**

During the Cold War, North Korea had two bilateral alliances. One was an alliance with the Soviet Union. This alliance began shortly after North Korea became a sovereign state and Soviet military forces withdrew from its territory in 1948. The second alliance was formally embodied in the Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid and Cooperation Friendship Treaty. This treaty was signed in 1961 and has been renewed every twenty years. China and North Korea had already extensive military and economic ties. Indeed, China intervened in the Korean War on its side. Still, according to this treaty, China and North Korea pledge to adopt all


\textsuperscript{56}Deletant and Ionescu (2004).

\textsuperscript{57}Gheorghe (2013) describes how Romania sought to get nuclear technology in the late 1960s.
necessary measures to oppose any external aggression that threatens either of them.

Though most observers associate North Korean nuclear behavior with its post-Cold War leaders Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un, the country’s interest in acquiring nuclear technologies dates as far back as the late 1950s. In 1958, its leaders showed interest in atomic energy for peaceful purposes.\textsuperscript{58} In 1963 members of the North Korean military suggested that the Soviet Union provide North Korea (and China) advanced missiles.\textsuperscript{59} Korean officials also looked to the Soviet bloc for nuclear weapons-related information, having made inquiries in East Germany and Hungary.\textsuperscript{60} North Korea succeeded in obtaining Soviet support to build a thermal power reactor in Pyongyang, and subsequently rushed to complete the project.\textsuperscript{61} Unlike South Korea, the North Korean government chose to sign and ratify the NPT. Yet its nuclear ambitions persisted. Polish and Hungarian diplomats, for example, noted that North Korea sought to “construct nuclear reactors ... in order to become capable of producing atomic weapons in the future.”\textsuperscript{62} The Soviet Union continued to receive (and reject) requests from North Korea to supply it with nuclear assistance throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. North Korea’s nuclear activities at last became public in the early 1990s. Though these activities ceased with an agreement struck with the United States in 1994, the North Korean government resumed its nuclear activities by 2002 and withdrew from the NPT in 2003. Negotiations to get North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program have been


\textsuperscript{59}“Conversation between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and Czechoslovak Ambassador Moravec” April 15, 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 19, papka 97, delo 4, list 140. Obtained and translated for North Korea International Documentation Project (hereafter NKIDP) by Sergey Radchenko.

\textsuperscript{60}“Conversation between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and the German Ambassador” August 26, 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 19, papka 97, delo 5, list 93. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko.

\textsuperscript{61}Some of the grim details relating to the reactor’s construction can be found in “Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry” January 11, 1964, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 5. doboz, 5/bc, 0015/RT/1964. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Balázs Szalontai.

intermittent and unsuccessful ever since.

What explains North Korea’s early decision to seek nuclear weapons? The lack of confidence in Soviet military support accounts for North Korea’s onset of nuclear behavior. Two events shattered North Korea’s faith in the Soviet Union. The first was Khrushchev’s secret speech at the CPSU Twentieth Congress in 1956. As was the case with Mao, North Korean leader Kim Il-sung understood Khrushchev’s remarks as creating a major ideological division between the two communist regimes.\(^\text{63}\) Indeed, North Korea at this time was beginning to resemble a Stalinist state insofar as it sought to collectivize most (if not all) economic activity, create a centralized state, and even establish a cult of the personality. Khrushchev’s speech was a severe critique of this form of politics. Subsequently, North Korea “vacillated” in offering its greatest diplomatic support between the Soviet Union and China.\(^\text{64}\)

The second event that triggered North Korean anxieties was the Soviet Union’s behavior during the Cuban Missile Crisis. North Korean leaders saw Khrushchev’s decision to back down in the crisis as evidence of his willingness to strike a deal with the United States at the expense of a small communist ally. Statements that North Korean leaders made to their Soviet interlocutors in the mid-1960s reflect such unease. Although Kim Il-sung told the Soviet ambassador to North Korea that the Soviet Union acted “correct[ly]”, Soviet diplomats began to suspect that the North Koreans were insincere in their communications.\(^\text{65}\)


In discussions with Chinese statesmen, the North Korean minister of foreign affairs described the Soviets as being “afraid of fighting wars.” As economic relations deteriorated between North Korea and the Soviet Union, the North Korean deputy prime minister accused the Soviet Union of curtailing North Korea’s economic development, noting that “only barbarians act this way.” By early 1965, North Korean openly discussed their lack of trust in the Soviet Union. In the presence of the chairman of the Soviet Union’s Council of Ministers, the head of the North Korean delegation stated that “[t]he Korean leaders were distrustful of the CPSU and the Soviet government, they could not count on that the Soviet government would keep the obligations related to the defense of Korea it assumed in the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, Kim Il said, and therefore they were compelled to keep an army of 700,000 and a police force of 200,000. When asked of the sources of this distrust, the North Koreans responded by saying “[i]n the view of Kim Il, the Soviet Union had betrayed Cuba at the time of the Caribbean crisis, and later it also betrayed the Vietnamese. For instance, it happened as late as 8 days after the Tonkin [Gulf] provocation that the Soviet government made a mild pro-DRV statement.” The North Koreans felt as though they could no longer rely on the Soviet Union.

With some interruption, the North Korean government has persisted to this day (March 2014) in nuclear behavior since the early 1960s. This persistence has characterized North Korea’s defense policy despite its bilateral alliances and economic dependence on the Soviet Union during the Cold War and China to this day. This dependence contradicts a key component of North Korean communist ideology – *juche* – that prioritizes economic self-
sufficiency and political independence. These two factors should raise the likelihood of a successful counterproliferation effort by China. Why has it been so difficult for its alleged patrons – the Soviet Union and then China – to compel North Korea to credibly terminate its activities?

A lack of willingness rather than ignorance on the part of its patrons explains the endurance of North Korea’s nuclear behavior. It is likely that the Soviet Union was aware of North Korean activities during the Cold War. After all, as the above discussion indicates, Central-Eastern European diplomats recognized North Korean interest to procure sensitive nuclear technologies. North Korean nuclear scientists were even educated in the Soviet Union. Soviet decision-makers refrained from acting on this knowledge. It might not have wanted to embarrass an ally and provoke a nuclear crisis in East Asia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, China gradually became North Korea’s patron. It, too, became reluctant to use its leverage and induce a nuclear reversal. One reason may be out of fealty to their treaty, but it is more likely that China wishes to avoid regime collapse and prevent the regional unrest that would ensue. Yet, consistent with my expectation, North Korea has been responsive to when China exerts pressure on it. In May 2013, China finally pressured on North Korea to enter into diplomatic talks regarding its denucleaization. The problem is that China exerts such pressure only intermittently. China has so far decided not to implement a sustained counterproliferation campaign against North Korea.

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8.4 Summary

Whereas previous chapters provided comprehensive analysis of nuclear behavior within US alliances, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that my theory has explanatory relevance for understanding patterns of nuclear behavior within Soviet alliances. The argument presented here proceeds in two steps. First, the relative absence of nuclear behavior within the Soviet bloc was a function of the very form of Soviet political leadership took in the region. The Western alliance was never intended to feature an indefinite US military presence. It thus resembled a contractual relationship in which the United States supplied security for as long as its allies required it. By contrast, the Soviet alliance in Europe featured domination – Soviet rule over Central-Eastern Europe was rooted in the need to provide the Soviet Union with a territorial bulwark and ensure the survival of communism. States that found themselves suborned to Soviet rule could not peacefully terminate their alliances. The result of this domination was that leaders in this region took for granted that the Soviet Union would support their regime’s survival vis-à-vis western adversaries.

Second, I undertook plausibility probes to demonstrate that my theory has some relevance for explaining those three cases where communist allies did undertake nuclear behavior. The alliance dynamics that my theory emphasizes nevertheless played an influential role in those states’ decisions to engage in nuclear engagement and their ability to sustain their activities. Both China and North Korea sensed that the Soviet security guarantees were unreliable. Their strategic disagreements widened, particularly in the wake of Khrushchev’s secret speech. Romanian leaders were also uncertain of the compatibility of their security interests with those of the Soviet Union, after Soviet troop withdrawals no less. The need to preserve the illusion of integrity and cohesion of the ‘socialist camp’ likely would have forestalled Soviet efforts to curb their nuclear behavior.

What of alternative explanations? One problem with domestic politics explanations is that all the regimes exhibited important similarities: they were authoritarian and, with
the exceptions of Hungary and Romania, relatively closed economically. Another problem
with domestic politics explanations is that all communist nuclear weapons programs be-
gan covertly. Indeed, some states like North Korea and Romania even ratified the NPT to
publicly demonstrate their commitment to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. Fi-
nally, explanations that emphasize norms regarding weaponization and militarism, political
regimes, and economic preferences lack validity because these factors are arguably constant
across all communist cases. A more compelling set of alternative arguments for understand-
ing nuclear behavior within Soviet alliances would center on the role of individual leaders,
security apparatuses, and civil-military relations. More significant variation exists across
these domestic attributes. Unfortunately, we have to this day too little primary source evi-
dence to properly determine the relative causal importance of psychological and bureaucratic
variables.
Chapter 9

Struggling Not to Be Laughed At: Extended Deterrence in the 21st Century

Before he became one of the most important writers of the English language in the twentieth century, Eric Arthur Blair (known more famously as George Orwell) served as an imperial policeman in Burma. Though he was responsible for the security of about 200,000 people, a good share of whom resented the British colonial presence, many of his day-to-day tasks were menial and dull. On occasion, however, a crisis would break out that required both quick thinking and action.

One such crisis began when he received reports of dubious quality of an elephant that had suddenly rampaged through a town’s poorest neighborhoods. Having grabbed his Winchester rifle and mounted his pony, Blair proceeded to investigate. His skepticism quickly evaporated when he found a dead native – his body crushed from being trampled underfoot by the wild elephant – and a panicked woman seeking to protect the local children from the sight of the corpse. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Blair ordered a member of his staff to retrieve
an elephant gun. Once he acquired possession of it, he followed the path of the elephant.

He eventually found the murderous elephant in a paddy field. The beast was grazing peacefully, as if it had committed no violence or wreaked no damage. Blair suddenly became hesitant, for he now wished nothing more but to leave it alone and alive. Such inaction was, unfortunately, no longer possible. His armed pursuit of the elephant had stirred local interest. By the time he came upon the elephant, a crowd of interested onlookers gathered and grew to several thousand in number. All their eyes were focused on Blair, curious to observe how he would handle the situation. Unable to tolerate the pressure, Blair set aim, fired his weapon, and thus gave in to the crowd's silent demand that he kill it.

The experience left him weary of colonialism. He wrote:

“Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd – seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind ... [The white man] becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the “natives,” and so in every crisis he has got to do what the “natives” expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing – no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man’s life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.”

For Blair, empire had become a game of role-playing that consisted of symbolic gestures

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necessary for the maintenance of power.

My dissertation examines those instances in which the imperial police officer fails to perform those duties expected of him when elephants rampage, and tries to later make up for it. I began this dissertation by relating two separate anecdotes regarding US efforts to reassure South Korea and, by extension, reduce its willingness to engage in nuclear behavior. The more recent episode involves the dispatch of a stealth bomber from Missouri to fly over the Korean peninsula during the nuclear crisis of spring 2013. The second episode describes a South Korea nuclear scientist – presumably the individual with the most expertise on nuclear technology and policy – beseeching the US ambassador for an extension of a nuclear umbrella in the late 1970s in the event that a threatened withdrawal of US troops would be implemented. What unites these two episodes is the weight interested observers ascribe to various indices of military power as evidence of major power support. The target audience – in these cases, South Koreans and their government – looks for such actions to seek reassurance. Insecurity rises in the absence of such shows of force and symbols of alliance credibility.

I analyzed why states that already have a nuclear security guarantee would strive towards nuclear weapons acquisition, and what makes those offending states reverse their activities. I propose a theory – alliance compensation theory – that argues that states become more likely to engage in nuclear behavior when confronted with an unfavorable change, real or anticipated, in how its major power patron allocates its conventional military resources in the international system. I find that leaders of these states react strongly against the withdrawals of their major power ally’s troops from their territory. Though troop deployments act as a ‘trip-wire’ against external aggression, they technically do not affect the nuclear security guarantee. Instead, they present a vivid and tangible representation of it. State leaders thus link adverse conventional military redeployments to a weakening of the nuclear umbrella, and become more likely to engage in nuclear behavior. They do not react to announced doctrinal changes or other indicators that they could use to evaluate the credibility of their
I further assert that nuclear behavior often sparks a bargaining dynamic between the major power and the offending ally over the terms of alliance protection and nuclear reversal. The extent to which the ally depends on its patron for its security and economic needs shapes the counterproliferation process. For evidence, I use primary sources I collected from eight repositories located globally for case studies on West Germany, Japan, and South Korea. I also use statistical analysis and offer a discussion on why nuclear behavior is relatively absent in Soviet alliances. I find at best mixed support for arguments that stress balances-of-threat and domestic politics as a principle driver of nuclear behavior.

Yet a key question emerges from this analysis: to what extent am I merely describing a dynamic that was internationally salient during the Cold War? To ask the question in another way, why should we think that the insights generated from this analysis would be useful for understanding a post-Cold War world in which a strong nuclear taboo exists, the NPT has been renewed indefinitely, the Soviet Union is no more, and the volume of international commerce has become so extensive following globalization as to completely discourage nuclear proliferation? What is the significance of my findings for contemporary security dynamics in Europe and East Asia?

9.1 Extended Deterrence in Post-Cold War Europe

The collapse of the Soviet Union removed a major threat that members of the Western alliance had confronted throughout the Cold War. The states that made up this alliance now were able to enjoy the so-called ‘peace dividend,’ reduce their defense expenditures, and focus more on maintaining, if not improving, their social programs. Yet insecurity still prevailed in parts of Europe.

The demise of Soviet-led communism led to the creation of new and aspiring liberal
democratic states in Central-Eastern Europe. Having finally removed themselves from the yoke of Soviet rule, many of these states remained fearful of Russian revanchism. After all, these states had acquired political independence early in the twentieth century only to lose it to the Soviet Union during the Second World War and its aftermath. For the Baltic states, Soviet domination meant that they were wiped out from the map altogether. These states now needed assurances that their newfound political sovereignty would endure and thus wished to secure diplomatic support from the United States.

The assurance they eventually received took the form of membership in NATO. The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland became US defensive allies in 1999. Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and the Baltic states joined NATO five years later. Prior to joining NATO, all these states took part in the program Partnership for Peace – one purpose of which was to build security relationships between NATO members and non-members that once belonged to the Soviet bloc. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to determine the merits of NATO expansion. Suffice it to say, critics saw NATO expansion as unnecessarily provocative for Russia and driven by US domestic politics rather than “grand-strategic calculations.” Of course, such criticisms fail to consider how those states might have behaved had NATO been closed to them.

Though this counterfactual is impossible to determine, these states might have been alienated by a rejection from NATO. Without security pledges from the United States and other NATO members, states like Poland might have sought to compensate by internally balancing in a way that could have sparked local but dangerous arms races. To be sure, with its democracies secure and stable, economic cooperation deepening, and supranational

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2 Slovenia also joined NATO in 2004 whereas Albania and Croatia became members in 2009. These states – two of which were part of the former Yugoslavia – were independent of Soviet control during the Cold War.

3 Critics allege that the United States reneged on a settlement with the Soviet Union/Russia by enlarging NATO membership to include former Warsaw Pact states. See Deudney and Ikenberry (2009). Contemporary criticisms of NATO expansion can be found in Mandelbaum (1995) and Gaddis (1998).

4 Russian politicians made numerous statements that appear to support the claim that NATO enlargement posed a serious threat to Russia. One resolution passed in the Russian Duma in 1998 asserted that “NATO enlargement means the appearance of the most serious threat to our country since 1945.” For this statement and others, see Pry (1991, ix).
institutions expanding, post-Cold War Europe was a very different environment than that which appeared after the First World War when Central-Eastern European states first experienced with democracy. The incentives for nuclear behavior might have been minimal since these states wished to maintain access to international markets, preserve the flow of credit while restructuring their debts and liberalizing their economies, and accede to the European Union (EU). Yet if concerns over the Russian threat became overwhelming, the lack of formal security guarantees might have encouraged them to at least consider their own nuclear option. That all has so far turned out well in Central-Eastern Europe should not refute this point. Indeed, many international observers had predicted regional instability with the collapse of communism, the emergence of new democracies, and the rise of nationalism. The Yugoslav Wars proved that some of these concerns were justified. If Central-Eastern Europe has proven peaceful and relatively prosperous, then it is reasonable to suspect that NATO membership played some, if inconclusive, role in shaping that outcome.

Nevertheless, states like Poland and the Czech Republic have found NATO membership to be insufficient for addressing their security concerns. In their view, the Russian threat persists, particularly as Russian President Vladimir Putin centralized executive power and asserted state control over such strategic industries as energy. Consequently, they have sought additional sources of protection from the United States. One opportunity for extracting further military commitment came when the Bush administration sought to establish a missile defense system under NATO’s auspices. The Bush administration’s stated intention was to complement its own national missile defense system and secure Europe from missile attack from Iran. Poland and the Czech Republic quickly showed their support for the project despite Russian protests that the shield would undermine deterrence and spark a

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5Mearsheimer (1990) offers the most important set of pessimistic predictions regarding post-Cold War Europe.

6Within several years of coming to power, Putin raised the price of energy charged to Belarus and the Ukraine. When neither paid their dues, Putin cut-off their flows of natural gas. The result of this action was to create energy shortages in Central-Eastern Europe, as pipelines in both Belarus and the Ukraine serve to supply Russian-produced energy to that region.
local arms race. The United Kingdom excepted, these states became the Bush administration’s strongest allies, having also offered diplomatic and military support to the ‘coalition of the willing’ against Iraq.\textsuperscript{7}

Their efforts to acquire more military commitments from the United States partially succeeded. On August 20, 2008, several days after Russia concluded a two-week war against Georgia, Poland and the United States signed a preliminary agreement to install a base with ten interceptor missiles on Polish territory. Poland did not get a bilateral defense pact in return for hosting this base.\textsuperscript{8} This base would have been linked with a radar located in the Czech Republic. When Russia responded by making threats to aim nuclear missiles against Poland, Polish President Lech Kaczynski announced in a televised address that “[n]o one can dictate to Poland what it should do. That’s in the past. Our neighbors should now understand that our nation will never give in, nor allow itself be intimidated.”\textsuperscript{9} Although the United States initially reneged on the terms of this agreement, Poland eventually signed a Status of Forces Agreement to permit a limited US troop garrison and prepare for the deployment of Patriot missile deployment.\textsuperscript{10}

In sum, alliance politics of the sort described in this book remain a feature of European

\textsuperscript{7}The European states that had participated in the US-led ‘coalition of the willing’ against Iraq were generally those that had suffered under Soviet rule: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Moldova, and Hungary. Portugal, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Denmark, and the United Kingdom were the only ‘old’ NATO members to join the United States whereas others such as France and Germany diplomatically opposed the military effort.


\textsuperscript{9}Polish inclusion in a missile defense system has some domestic opposition but it is worth pointing out that political support for the missile interceptor deal transcended partisan lines. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a political opponent of Kaczynski’s at the time, claimed that, with the agreement, “we have achieved our main goals, which means that our country and the United States will be most secure.” See “United States, Poland Sign Missile Interceptor Deal,” August 20, 2008, Global Security Newswire, Available: \url{http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/united-states-poland-sign-missile-interceptor-deal/}.

security affairs. The locus of these dynamics has simply shifted eastward. States like Poland still accord significance to the quantity and quality of military hardware that their patrons are willing to install on their territory. Security guarantees still matter in Central-Eastern Europe, particularly in light of Russian military actions in Crimea in March 2014.\footnote{I finished this dissertation on the day that Putin sought approval for deploying troops to Crimea from the Russian Upper House of the Duma. Shortly thereafter Poland invoked Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty so as to have consultations with its NATO allies.}

## 9.2 Extended Deterrence in Contemporary East Asia

Yet it is in East Asia where the need to reassure insecure allies and the dangers of allied nuclear proliferation are the most prominent. The rise of China has generated unease in the region and sparking wider concerns over an emerging security dilemma between it and the United States.\footnote{Goldstein (2013).} Its growing economic power allows China to expand and modernize its military. This combination of new economic and military power has encouraged China to be more assertive, especially in maritime disputes with its East Asian neighbors regarding territorial boundaries and control.\footnote{Though critical of the ‘assertiveness’ meme that is popular in foreign policy discourse regarding China, Alistair Iain Johnston offers evidence of the trend described here. See Johnston (2013).} China has already tried to pressure the Philippines to accept new boundaries. Its dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands with Japan has been especially worrisome. In one instance, Chinese naval vessels have locked targets on Japanese ships. The inflammatory rhetoric even led to fierce anti-Japanese protests in the fall of 2012.\footnote{The Japanese have not been faultless either. Abe’s visits to the Yasukuni Shrine not only provokes China, but also alienates South Korea – the cooperation of which is needed to balance against China.} Though it has developed closer economic ties with the mainland, many in Taiwan fear that China would attempt to assert control over the island. South Korea, for its part, has been frustrated with China’s reluctance to restrain the North. Tensions in the region inspired Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to remark at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2014 that East Asian security dynamics resemble those that
characterized Europe before the First World War.\footnote{15} 

To its credit, the Obama administration has taken the needs of its alliance partners in the region seriously. Take, for example, its 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The NPRs of the Clinton and Bush administrations placed heavy emphasis on deep reductions to the US nuclear force structure and military flexibility towards potential adversaries beyond Russia, respectively.\footnote{16} Although the 2002 NPR recognized the technical needs of deterrence in the twenty-first century, the 2010 NPR went further in its emphasis of assuring allies and regional extended deterrence. The United States has backed these declaratory statements with action. Though it has its origins in latter part of George W. Bush’s presidency, the ‘pivot to Asia’ is premised on the view that the United States needs to demonstrate its engagement with the region so as to promote stability. The United States has consequently increased its military presence in the Pacific region, including the stationing of 2500 Marines in Darwin, Australia.\footnote{17} Finally, as highlighted above, in response to North Korean provocations during the nuclear crisis of spring 2013, the US military engaged in joint military exercises with its South Korean counterpart and dispatched a B-2 bomber to drop duds on targets in South Korea.

To be sure, uncertainty remains over the true nature and endurance of US security commitments to the region. The economic crisis that began with the collapse of financial markets in 2008 persists with sluggish growth and stagnant labor participation rates in the United States. During the September 2013 crisis over the alleged Syrian use of chemical weapons, the Obama administration discovered that the prolonged military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq have led to a domestic aversion to new engagements abroad. Added fiscal con-

straints mean that the defense expenditures are seeing significant reductions. Indeed, the US military has already felt the strain of sequestration and the uncertainty created by severe partisan infighting in Congress. Some observers thus remain unsure whether the ‘pivot to Asia’ is for real in light of the US inability or unwillingness to fully engage in that policy. Whichever the case, pressures for military retrenchment and a retraction of military commitments abroad are poised to increase. Some analysts have renewed their calls for the United States to ‘offshore balance’ in light of the tighter political and economic constraints that the United States faces today.\(^{18}\)

As a result, the threat of regional nuclear proliferation lingers. In South Korea, about two-thirds of South Koreans polled endorsed the view that their country should acquire an indigenous nuclear weapons capability.\(^{19}\) Officially, the South Korean government has not made statements that echo such sentiments. Yet reasons for concern exist. First, the government under Park Geun-hye’s leadership has actively sought to lift the US ban on its ability to reprocess spent nuclear fuel. The US worries that lifting this ban would enable South Korea to divert its nuclear activities towards non-peaceful purposes. Second, South Korean politicians have not been averse to raising the specter of South Korean nuclear proliferation. It is likely that these politicians use the ‘nuclear card’ to extract US assurances. As the case studies reveal, stirring US anxieties over nuclear proliferation has its benefits if it helps ensure US interest and commitment to the region.

Many of the regional experts and former government officials with whom I interviewed in both South Korea and Japan were quick to dismiss any likelihood of their country acquiring nuclear weapons. As one interviewee put it, ‘South Korea favors building smart phones and not nuclear weapons’ and that nuclear weapons acquisition would ‘wreck the South Korean economy.’ Others have noted the continuing strength of the nuclear taboo in Japan. Never-

\(^{18}\)Williams (2013).
theless, concern remains as to whether these disincentives will endure. China’s growth and North Korea’s erratic and dangerous behavior continue to be a source of major apprehension. Yet some point out that attitudes towards nuclear weapons may change in light of larger alliance dynamics in the region. One interviewee postulated that if South Korea were to acquire nuclear weapons, then the domestic nuclear taboo would weaken significantly. Even members of the Japanese public do not want their country to be the only one in the region without nuclear weapons. Another interviewee made the opposite claim: Japanese nuclear weapons acquisition would provoke the South Koreans to develop. After all, polls reveal that South Koreans are almost as apprehensive of Japan as they are of Japan. If US commitments were to lack credibility, then renewed consideration of nuclear weapons would take place. And indeed, some experts already point to a disconnect in US posture and rhetoric. The removal of tactical nuclear weapons from the peninsula since George H.W. Bush’s presidency has meant that the nuclear umbrella over South Korea is fictional.20 A US conventional deterrent exists, so the argument goes, but not a nuclear one.

### 9.3 Implications for International Relations Scholarship

My research has implications for at least three areas of theoretical importance in international relations theory: international hierarchy; the bargaining power of allies under bipolarity; and credibility.

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International Hierarchy

Hierarchy is a stratified but stable arrangement in which one actor (a “superordinate”) enjoys special rights and exercises authority over another actor (a “subordinate”). This differentiated ordering can be voluntary inasmuch as one actor entrusts residual sovereign rights to another actor without compulsion. Alternatively, a hierarchical arrangement can feature domination if the subordinate had entered the arrangement under the duress caused by the superordinate actor. In this latter situation, the subordinate is hostage to the interests and disposition of the superordinate, much like a slave is to a master. In either scenario, the superordinate will seek to legitimate its stature so as to socialize the subordinate into accepting its rule. This strategy serves to reduce the likelihood of the patron resorting to violence so as to obtain compliance, thereby lowering governing costs. Put differently, the superordinate will exploit its resources and position to project political authority.

David Lake defines authority as “rightful or legitimate rule” whereby the superordinate has the “right” to issue and enforce commands and the subordinate has the “duty” to comply. Lake adds that political authority can assume multiple forms, but emphasizes that international political authority is often “relational.” This type of political authority is one in which “legitimacy follows not from the office of the ruler, but from an exchange or bargain between ruler and ruled.” In Lake’s view, the United States has exercised relational authority in the international system by providing some states with alliances, alternative forms of security assistance, access to markets, and international economic management. In return recipient states exercise deference to US leadership. Lake’s argument is similar to other descriptions of the US-led international order. John Ikenberry argues that after the Second World War the United States bound itself through political institutions so as to gain

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21 For alternative but related definitions, see Ikenberry (2011) and Lake (2009).
22 Ikenberry and Kupchan (see 1990).
23 For more on these distinctions, see Lanzoska (2013). See also Snidal (1985).
the support of weaker states and ensure its leadership for the long-term.\textsuperscript{26}

Submitting oneself to an international hierarchy has costs and benefits. The benefits can include order, stability, and even military protection.\textsuperscript{27} In the nuclear age, this protection takes the form of extended deterrence whereby the superordinate state discourages an attack on its subordinate by threatening unacceptable costs on a third-party adversary.\textsuperscript{28} However, accepting this form of protection (and hierarchy) requires that the subordinate ally accept some losses in its foreign policy autonomy. As some scholars of asymmetrical alliances and hierarchy observe, the losses in autonomy can be the result of having to provide diplomatic support, military basing and use rights to the patron.\textsuperscript{29}

Because so much appears to be at stake on the uncertain promises of extended deterrence, it might seem reasonable for allies to elect out of these arrangements so as to attempt self-sufficiency in their own security. If hierarchies were to reflect voluntary bargains or consent-based institutions, then developing an independent nuclear weapons arsenal should represent an effort by allies to ‘opt out’ of these agreements. However, allies discovered that ‘opting out’ is difficult to undertake for non-technological reasons. Instead, the major power views nuclear weapons proliferation as a subversive and provocative act that requires punishment. The case evidence examined in this dissertation supports this observation. Indeed, major power attempts to curb the nuclear ambitions of their security partners suggest that weaker allies faced limits in their ability to adjust their hierarchical relations. For descriptions of hierarchy that recognize the role of domination and predatory structures in these alliances, ‘nuclear inhibition’ is an understandable and even predictable element of these relationships. However, ‘nuclear inhibition’ is less comprehensible from those perspectives that allege that these hierarchies embody consensus and voluntary agreements amongst its members. The pattern of nuclear inhibition appears to vindicate realist critiques of theories

\textsuperscript{26}(Ikenberry 2001, 2011).
\textsuperscript{27}Lake (2009).
\textsuperscript{28}Huth (1988).
\textsuperscript{29}Lake (2009); Morrow (1991).
of benign international order. After all, major powers would use coercion against even their allies so as to preserve their ability to project military power.\textsuperscript{30}

The Bargaining Leverage of Allies in the Nuclear Era

Interestingly, many important accounts of major power statecraft in the nuclear age dismiss the importance of allies altogether. A common view is that bipolarity and nuclear weapons lowered the bargaining leverage of allies. According to this argument, bipolarity clarified the lines of opposition between competing blocs, both of which were managed by a nuclear-armed superpower.\textsuperscript{31} Unlike multipolarity, in which coalitions of states are unstable, the defection of one ally did not meaningfully shift the balance of power between the two superpowers. Moreover, because military victory in an “all-out nuclear war” is impossible, allies have become less able to drag their patrons into war.\textsuperscript{32} Once both rival patrons – the United States and the Soviet Union – acquired a second-strike capability, allies and patrons alike became averse to risking a crisis that could escalate beyond their control and produce nuclear war at their expense. When patrons appear to be serving the security interests of their allies, as when the United States strengthened NATO following the Korean War, the reasons for doing so were more psychological rather than military-strategic.\textsuperscript{33} That is, the intent behind these military build-ups was to reassure allies rather than prevent any external aggression that most decision-makers saw as unlikely.\textsuperscript{34} Put together, the result for great power statecraft, in the words of John Lewis Gaddis, was that “[t]he post-1945 bipolar structure was a simple one that did not require sophisticated leadership to maintain it.”\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{30}Schweller (2001).
\textsuperscript{31}Waltz (1979).
\textsuperscript{32}On alliances and multipolarity, see Christensen and Snyder (1990). For a comment on alliance politics in the nuclear era, see Jervis (1989, 36-37). Kim (2011) examines why entrapment – defined as a state being dragged by an troublesome ally into a war it wishes to avoid – is a rare phenomenon.
\textsuperscript{33}Jervis (1989, 210).
\textsuperscript{34}Alternatively, the need to mobilize resources to pursue a robust containment strategy required an overstated sense of threat. Christensen (e.g., 1996).
\textsuperscript{35}Gaddis (1986, 108).
Yet this view has several weaknesses. First, if allies had reduced bargaining leverage, then it is not clear why their patrons expended so many resources in trying to ensure their loyalty and reassure them. For example, a major preoccupation of US decision-makers during the first two decades of the Cold War was the long-term alignment of West Germany and Japan. Concerns over their potential neutralism informed choices made by US decision-makers as to how to manage diplomatic relations with those two allies. Similarly, the Soviet Union showed a willingness to use force against its satellites when their leaders attempted to pursue more independent domestic and foreign policies. Part of the reason may be that decision-makers were still learning how to cope with bipolarity, and so alliance relations stabilized after the 1960s, but this observation demonstrates that bipolarity does not *ipso facto* guarantee stability.

Second, it took time for some allies to learn that their patron would be averse to risking nuclear war on their behalf. It was not self-evident that the combination of nuclear weapons and bipolarity reduced allies’ bargaining leverage. One reason why China sparked several crises in the Taiwan Straits in the 1950s was to probe the reliability of the Soviet Union. Upon realizing that the Soviet Union would not assist it against the United States by deploying nuclear weapons – that is, when China found evidence that it lacked some traditional sources of bargaining leverage over its patron – it changed its diplomacy in a way that eventually produced the Sino-Soviet split. Its defection from the Soviet Union did not reshape polarity within the international system, but it provided an opportunity to US decision-makers to further contain the Soviet Union. North Korea also undertook a very

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36 (Chang 1988; Goldstein 1993).
37 That said, one puzzling feature of many Cold War descriptions of bipolarity is that they tend to overlook how contemporary decision-makers regarded the system as *multipolar*. Nixon is exemplary in this regard. Bipolarity might be an adequate description of the prevailing distribution of material capabilities during the Cold War. Nevertheless, such an ‘objective’ variable has less causal importance if decision-makers draw subjective conclusions regarding polarity in crafting foreign policy. Neoclassical realism is premised on how decision-makers’ biases and domestic constraints form an intervening variable between the international distribution of power and foreign policy choices. See Rose (1998) and Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro (2009). Nevertheless, if the international distribution of power were itself subject to subjective interpretation, then the theoretical framework of neoclassical realism features a redundancy.
aggressive foreign policy once it reconstituted its economy in the late 1960s, with the capture of the USS *Pueblo*, skirmishes against South Korea along the Demilitarized Zone and an attempted raid on the South Korean leader’s place of residence. That these examples are all communist allies in East Asia may not be a coincidence. Just because these aggressive actions failed to entrap the Soviet Union should not lead one to conclude that allies were unimportant because their traditional sources of leverage were ineffective. Each bellicose action mentioned above created regional instability that could have escalated beyond the control of any one side.

Third, and more importantly, this view overlooks the alternatives sources of leverage that allies can use against their patrons in the nuclear age. Before nuclear weapons, war was costly but it was often limited in magnitude and thus winnable. Thus, allies sometimes sparked crises or engage in risky ventures not only because the security guarantees they received emboldened them, but also because they wished to probe the commitment and resolve of their patrons. With nuclear weapons, however, the likelihood of unlimited nuclear war discourages allies to undertake aggressive foreign policies. Still, the interest to gauge major power credibility persisted because of the stakes involved. War might be too risky, but allies can test commitment or resolve by demonstrating an interest in acquiring nuclear weapons.

Put together, in light of the empirical analysis presented in this paper, I argue against the conventional view that junior allies are passive recipients in the security relationships that they have with their major power patrons. The weak do not necessarily suffer as they must – even under bipolarity. If they feel that their survival is at stake, then they may well undertake provocative actions that displease their patrons. I also show that we cannot understand nuclear proliferation from a single state’s (i.e. monadic) perspective. We need to incorporate broader strategic factors to grasp why states would undertake provocative foreign and defense policies. States would prefer not to acquire nuclear weapons because of

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the regional instability that such efforts risk generating. If nuclear proliferation produces a collective good by expanding the scope of nuclear deterrence and generating regional stability, as Kenneth Waltz proposes, then it is not entirely clear why more states do not have nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{39} My theory and the supporting evidence show that states do prefer to depend on nuclear patronage, yet they are more likely to ratchet up their nuclear behavior when they feel that the security guarantees they receive lose credibility.

**Credibility**

Though I discuss credibility more directly than I do reputation, I show that these concepts matter in international relations. Some analysts have found through careful and thoughtful empirical work significant evidence that ‘past actions’ rather than the present balance of interests and capabilities affect assessments of credibility and reputation. These analysts conclude that the emphasis on such psychological concepts is misplaced.\textsuperscript{40} Yet my research found that credibility did matter. After all, if it did not then they would not have flirted with nuclear proliferation in response to shifts in US force posture. Their perceptions of the credibility of the nuclear security guarantees were critical to whether they engaged in nuclear behavior. Indeed, their concern was that the incredible nature of the nuclear security guarantee would present adversaries with ‘windows of opportunity’ to exploit.\textsuperscript{41} The US decision-makers are correct to attach significance to their actions and strategic choices with their reputation. Of course, my findings are reconcilable with those presented by Jonathan Mercer and Daryl Press: it is possible that allies infer credibility and reputation based on past actions and adversaries do not. Future research should explore this hypothesis further.

I also go beyond merely showing that allies refer to the credibility of their nuclear security guarantees as the basis of some of their high-level decision-making. I show which indicators

\textsuperscript{39}Sagan and Waltz (1995).
\textsuperscript{40}Mercer (1996); Press (2005).
\textsuperscript{41}On ‘windows of opportunity’ and war, see Evera (1999).
allies use to infer credibility. Specifically, US allies at least accord much significance to the conventional military deployments they receive from their patrons. Relying on this indicator comes at the behest of alternative indicators. Park Chung-hee’s behavior in the late 1960s presents a nice example. Although he was dismayed with how US troops failed to prevent the Blue House Raid, he only lodged a (strong) complaint to his US interlocutors. However, the decision to seek nuclear weapons seems to be more the result of Nixon’s sudden announcement of the withdrawal of one troop withdrawal. In other words, not even the weakness of the US conventional military deployments in protecting him personally induced him to furtively acquire nuclear weapons. It was their removal that prompted the fear of abandonment. My evidence from the West German case and the statistical analysis corroborate this observation.

9.4 Policy Implications

The US Department of Defense announced in February 2014 that it plans to cut the size of the US Army down to pre-Second World War levels. Other areas of the US military are also experiencing budgetary strain due to sluggish growth in the US economy and war weariness following two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The result of these changes is not necessarily an enfeebled US force structure. The US military will be for the foreseeable future a leaner, more versatile, and technologically superior fighting force with massive firepower – a fighting force certainly capable of conventionally deterring potential peer competitors in Russia and China. Indeed, both countries themselves face serious weakness in their ability to project military power abroad. Some analysts even allege that the United States enjoys nuclear primacy over them.\footnote{Lieber and Press (2006).} Nevertheless, one major concern that should be on the minds of US decision-makers is how US allies might view these developments and what conclusions they might reach – rightly or wrongly – regarding the ability and the willingness of the United States to come to their support in the event of a militarized crisis. Thus, perhaps the most
important question facing the United States today is how it can adjust its alliances in view of new geopolitical and fiscal realities.

Fortunately, US decision-makers show a strong understanding of the stakes involved, as made evident in the declaratory policy of the 2010 NPR and the conduct of the United States during the Korean nuclear crisis in spring 2013. But the pressures to abide by these assurances will remain, if not mount. As China becomes stronger and North Korea refuses to abandon its nuclear ambitions, South Korea and Japan will continue to evaluate the reliability of US security guarantees in determining their defense policies. Consultations and even joint military exercises can help inform allies of US deterrent capabilities despite the reductions in the overall US force posture. That way, the United States and its allies can avoid potential misunderstandings regarding the inevitable withdrawal of some conventional military deployments in the future. If the problem is that political leaders mistake quantity of conventional military deployments for the quality of the US deterrent, as in mid-2000s when Rumsfeld sought to remove draw down US forces in Korea, then US political and military leaders can impress upon their allies that the security guarantees they receive remain intact. Early warning and consultations could also ease allies into accepting a gradual process of retrenchment that proponents of offshore balancing support. The worst thing that the United States can do is what Nixon did in 1969 and 1970. Despite assurances to the contrary, he suddenly announced to South Korea of a troop withdrawal. The lack of early warning and consultation terrified the South Korean leadership into seeking nuclear weapons, creating a deep-seated fear of US abandonment that persisted throughout the following decade.

Yet one unfortunate irony that could be troubling for US decision-makers is that not all crises in the region will have the same nuclear dimension as that in early 2013 with North Korea. As of spring 2014, China has not played the game of nuclear brinkmanship as the Soviet Union had done in the late 1950s. Instead, it is using its conventional military power to challenge its neighbors on territorial disputes. The result is that the stability-instability paradox is at play. In other words, precisely because these disputes do not involve nuclear
weapons and extended deterrence as with crises involving North Korea, China might assume its assertiveness will not invite direct US participation. Yet the United States might find itself increasing under pressure to respond lest its allies fear that they are being exposed to potential salami tactics. Hence the United States flew (unarmed) B-52 bombers through the Air Defense Identification Zone that China unilaterally announced in November 2013. Such efforts help to assuage allied concerns, but they may be insufficient. After all, they are reactive. These shows of force might be useful in crisis bargaining when the goal is immediate deterrence. However, in the absence of crises, allies might still feel vulnerable when the goal is general deterrence.\footnote{For more on the distinction between immediate and general deterrence, see Morgan (1983).}

Three points are worth making here. First, US decision-makers would be well served to stop thinking of proliferation in dichotomous and pejorative terms. Much about nuclear proliferation is unattractive: nuclear weapons programs can be destabilizing, and nuclear weapons among allies can undermine our ability to wield influence and conduct coercive diplomacy with our adversaries. Yet tremendous variation in what constitutes nuclear behavior exists, with sometimes complex motivations underlying decisions to move towards nuclear weapons acquisition. Sometimes these movements are less about developing an indigenous nuclear deterrent capability for nationalist purposes as it is to compensate for shortcomings of the security guarantees these states receive. This observation is especially applicable to East Asia. If we look at the region through the lens of the bilateral interaction between the United States and China, we will overlook the fact that Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea can engage in behaviors that destabilize that relationship. Ironically, they might undertake those efforts in order to gain more security from the United States and not less.

Second, credibility and reputation matter, and so we should remember that it is of the utmost importance that US defense planners take the time to think about the effects of their moves from more than just a budgetary or ‘rational” perspective. Indeed, having Marines
in Okinawa makes little tactical or operational sense. But this issue does not mean that shifting them 1000 miles away would not be seen as destabilizing. Symbols matter and they may matter more from the allies perspective, not ours.

And so we come to the third point. The United States will find itself making some hard choices in the upcoming years. A standard line put forward by the United States is that its allies should bear more of the defense burden. That is, they should develop their militaries more so that they can deter threats on their own. Yet making these efforts and satisfying these US wishes could encourage the United States to play a lesser role in the region. Should the United States signal some waning in its interest in the region, then allies might take it as a cue for withdrawal and then proceed to strive for nuclear weapons. But nuclear proliferation undermines a number of US objectives in East Asia such as strategic stability and a non-nuclear North Korea. A nuclear Japan would make its neighbors more insecure, especially China, thus creating a volatile region that is prone to calculation. Still, the United States will not want to give a green light to its allies to free ride, even if the security environment is such that complete free riding is unattractive. What the United States should not do is to threaten ‘agonizing reappraisals’ of its security relationships – that is, to punish undesirable behavior by threatening to re-evaluate the alliance and remove military troops, as it did with West Germany during the 1960s, amid a tense security environment and a relative decline in economic power. Such threats seem attractive to make, and indeed, they can be effective with certain types of allies that are uniquely reliant on the United States (such as South Korea in the mid-1970s). Yet these frustrated pleas could just as well backfire. The United States should encourage greater defense contributions from its allies, but it should make clear that these contributions would not necessarily come at the expense of security goods that those allies deem vital for their security.

Striking this balance would be harder in Central-Eastern Europe where the stakes for the United States are perceptibly smaller. The United States does not fear Russia or see it as a meaningful threat– a point it has emphasized in its NPRs. However, its new NATO allies
do. Though security dynamics in the region are still a far cry from what they were in the
1950s and the 1960s, these fears might grow, particularly as the Ukrainian question remains
unresolved (as of March 2014). Central-Eastern European allies might feel that the ‘pivot
to Asia’ comes at their expense, rendering them vulnerable to an increasingly authoritarian
Russia. As constraints on US grand strategy intensify, allies from different regions could
see themselves as being in zero-sum competition with each other for US support in face
of their prospective adversaries. Accordingly, the United States must not only design its
commitments in a manner that assures an ally while not antagonizing the adversary. It
has to design them to ensure that no ally feels sufficiently alienated. The EU could play a
greater role in assuring its front-line members; unfortunately, the states most active within
the EU on these issues tend to be those directly affected by them such as Poland. France
does not have a nuclear posture appropriate for extended deterrence. The United States
should maintain its presence in Europe so as to assure its security partners that no regional
trade-offs are being made.

**Into the Twenty-First Century**

It is tempting to presume that the world has become more peaceful and stable thanks to
extensive international trade and transnational production chains, the growth of democracy,
and economic growth in the Global South. Nuclear proliferation by states other than roguish
regimes seems to have been a problem that befuddled decision-makers when they still lacked
an understanding of the meaning of the nuclear revolution. Indeed, it has been about seventy
years since Bernard Brodie decided one early August day that his planned book on naval
strategy was pointless. We have come along way. Human progress has been made. And yet
dangers do remain. Alliances in the twenty-first century will need to experience adjustment,
just as they had already over the course of the Cold War. Grasping the history of nuclear
statecraft and alliance relations helps understand the risks involved, the policy options that
are available, and the mistakes that need to be avoided. When we take a more historical view, as the one imparted here, we can see similarities emerging between the contemporary era and the early nuclear age. Relative US decline, a global economic order under stress, the specter of multipolarity and its attendant hazards, the desire to retrench, and the fear of nuclear proliferation characterized both time periods.
### Table 1: States, Alignments, and Nuclear Behavior Years, 1945-2005

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<th>Years of Nuclearization</th>
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<tr>
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*Table 1*: Names of countries and time periods for beginning and end of nuclear weapons activities are drawn from Mueller and Schmidt (2010, 157), Jo and Gartzke (2007), and Singh and Way (2004). Disagreement exists over the precise timing of the onset and termination of nuclear behavior (Mueller and Schmidt 2010).
Appendix B: Additional Statistical Models
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*p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01. Errors clustered on country.
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